Colorado
Arapahoe, Garfield, Mesa, and Pueblo Counties

Early Learning Ventures (ELV) is one of the EHS-CCP grantees in Colorado. ELV uses a shared-services approach, in which their network of partners receives access to a variety of services, including an online record-keeping data platform, teaching and learning resources, intensive training and coaching, and support with family engagement and community connections. Their model emphasizes building the business administration capacity of partners, so that they can focus on doing what they do best: caring for and teaching Colorado’s youngest children and partnering with their families.

**FAST FACTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Directly Benefiting</th>
<th>Children Indirectly Benefiting</th>
<th>Child Care Partners</th>
<th>Local Communities Affected</th>
<th>Total Grant Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$3.1M</td>
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</tbody>
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**THE MODEL STANDOUTS**

**Business Development:** Child care partners receive access to two important technologies: a resource platform that enables them to access a variety of training and informational resources, and a records management system that allows them to centralize and streamline their record keeping. The record-keeping system helps programs track variables such as child enrollment and attendance, immunization records, subsidy information, and child eligibility for a variety of programs. In addition, it enables programs to track continuous improvement efforts, coaching schedules, and teacher credentials. This effort streamlines operations, saving partners money and critical staff time. A return-on-investment study shows a direct savings of $22 and 11 hours per child, totaling $225 per child annually.

**Leadership Development:** Directors at child care partner sites have opportunities to advance their credentials by enrolling in the Aim4Excellence leadership program at the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. This nationally recognized program provides a credential to early childhood program leaders. Directors at partner sites also receive on-site coaching by ELV specialists as part of the model’s continuous improvement process.

**Professional Development:** Child care teachers receive group and individual on-site coaching by ELV specialists. In addition, they are given opportunities to attain a credential or access higher education. For some providers, this means enrolling in an infant/toddler or FCC CDA program; for others, it means working toward an associate’s degree or a bachelor’s degree by completing college coursework with an emphasis on infant/toddler development. At the beginning of the EHS-CCP grant, less than 20 percent of partner providers met Early Head Start staff credentialing standards. During the start-up period, partnership funding enabled ELV to boost that number to more than 95 percent, with 100 percent of providers on a professional development plan.

**THE TRUE COST OF HIGH-QUALITY INFANT/TODDLER CARE**

Colorado calculates that the cost per child is about $15,800 per year, which they fund through a combination of federal and non-federal match resources.

Source: Photo of a family child care home in Grand Junction, CO. Photo provided by Early Learning Ventures.

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bipartisanpolicy.org
Family and Community Development: ELV specialists work with child care partners to coordinate family engagement opportunities and to work directly with families to set goals and timelines, support families in meeting their goals, and connect them to resources. ELV connects child care partners to an array of community-based service providers so that the families they serve have access to comprehensive services, including health, dental health, mental health, nutrition, and disability services.

THE RESULTS

- Four of the participating FCC providers were able to expand their business from 6 to 12 children, as the revenue funding allowed them to hire an assistant and increase children served.
- Classroom quality assessments indicated moderate to very large gains in facilitated exploration and early language support, both of which are critical to early learning.
- 185 providers earned a CDA (or equivalent) and accessed higher education coursework. An additional 38 providers are in the process of completing a CDA.
- Partner providers participated in 247 training hours in topics such as health and safety, infant/toddler development, and teacher-child interactions.
- 30 providers received pay increases.
- Before the grant, less than 40 percent of partners used a curriculum; now, nearly 100 percent are using a curriculum.
- Before the grant, 30 percent of partners offered mental health supports; after the start of the grant, that number jumped to nearly 80 percent.
- 5 percent of partners connected families to dental care before the grant; now, more than 90 percent do.
- Certified assessors found significant improvements in center-based providers’ business and professional practices, especially in human resources, center operations, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, and technology. On average, FCC providers made progress in their overall business practices, with the largest impacts on fiscal management and community resources.
- Prior to the EHS-CCP, only 60 percent of child care partners had a record-keeping system of any kind; now, 100 percent have a record-keeping system.

The Ripple Effect

- Though the EHS-CCP only directly serves 240 children, more than 1,700 children are indirectly impacted.
- Over 100 newly credentialed infant/toddler teachers are providing services to more than 400 children. Assuming they stay in the workforce, this benefit will continue to pay off for Colorado’s children long after the current cohort is served.
- Up to 460 children have access to a new research-based curriculum and enhanced outdoor space to help them learn and grow.
- Over 1,000 additional families have access to family engagement opportunities.

“This program has made it possible for me to finish my education so that we are able to provide a stable financial future for our family. It has helped us immensely.”
—Partnership Parent
THE TAKEAWAYS

Because of the EHS-CCP, more of Colorado’s working families have access to early care and learning programs that provide a level of service that would have been unimaginable before. The combination of supports for children’s health—including mental and dental health, nutritious meals, research-based curricula, qualified teachers, safe and enriching play spaces, and real partnerships with families—makes a difference in the lives of Colorado’s youngest children and their working families.

But more investments are necessary to reach all of the children and families who need services. In 2016, there were approximately 12,595 infants and toddlers living in poverty across the four counties the EHS-CCP grant serves. There are thousands fewer EHS slots in the entire state than the total number of infants and toddlers living in poverty in just these four counties.

The EHS-CCP is a vital source of funding and support for infants, toddlers, and their families in Colorado. It is producing change across the entire system by investing in the existing child care marketplace and giving working families a real choice about where to send their children during the most critical phase of their development.

“Through resources like these, my center will be able to realize financial savings that I can then use to increase quality. And, I hope these savings will allow me to put some dollars toward increasing salaries for my best teachers. Some of them have been with the center for over five years at the same wages due to how tight the budget is.”

—Partnership Center Director