

# OUR JOURNEY TO BUILDING HEALTHY FUTURES

HEALTHY *child*  
*care* COLORADO

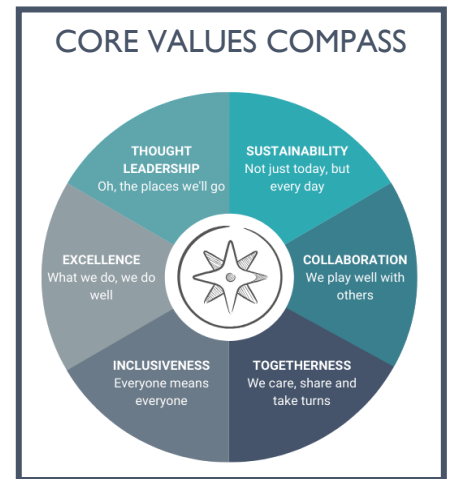
2019-2020 Impact Report



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The events of 2020 have left all of us waking up every day desiring a compass to point us in the right direction and the ability to know what's ahead. While we don't know exactly what's ahead, we have a strong compass and map, and we know the work of Healthy Child Care Colorado is vital to rebuilding a child care system that works for everyone.

Our staff and board remain dedicated to our mission to build safe, supportive, and healthy early childhood settings and systems. Our state has experienced a great deal of change this year--historic wildfires, a global pandemic and economic recession, and a reckoning of the need to address our nation's racial inequality and systemic injustices. All of these events have presented tremendous and unexpected climbs along our journey and yet we have elevated our mission and impact through intentionally building out partnerships, leaning on trust and collaboration, and adhering to the values on our roadmap. It is clear to us more than ever that accomplishing what we've set out to do through our strategic roadmap is not a path we can travel alone, but with other advocates, professionals, and the families we impact.



I'm proud of the work we've done this year to respond, pivot and meet the moment--a moment that is calling us to reimagine what we want and need for our families, early childhood professionals, and our communities to thrive. With Colorado voters resoundingly approving multiple ballot measures that will bring significant investment in our children and families, I am confident our state will rise to build a system of child care that *builds healthy futures for every child and family* in our state.

This 2019-2020 Impact Report serves to highlight key impacts of our efforts since becoming a nonprofit, along with outlining the journey ahead. We invite you to share what excites you most and to hear how we can partner together to build healthy futures for all of Colorado's children.



Taran Schneider  
Executive Director of Healthy Child Care Colorado

## About Healthy Child Care Colorado (HCCC):

The mission of HCCC is to build safe, supportive, and healthy early childhood settings and systems where children and professionals learn and grow. We promote and support best practices by providing grants, professional development, technical assistance, and advocacy. We collaborate with national, state, and local entities to meet the needs of the people and places serving our youngest children. Our focus on improving health, safety, and well-being in early childhood settings and systems is what ignites our passion for this important work.



OBESITY  
PREVENTION



SOCIAL &  
EMOTIONAL  
WELL-BEING



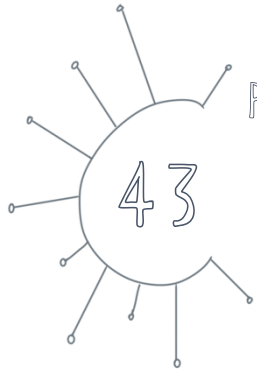
ORAL  
HEALTH



INJURY  
PREVENTION

# SNAPSHOT OF 2019-2020 IMPACT

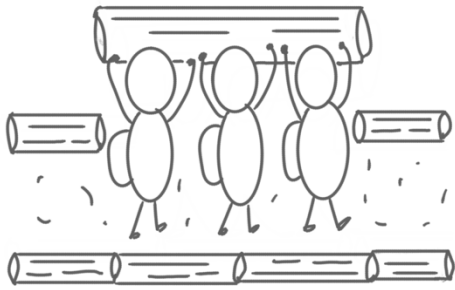
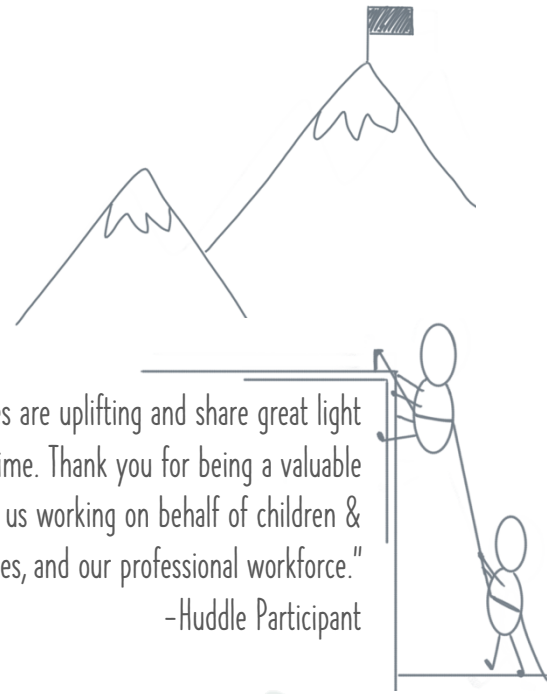
**OUTCOME:** Consultants and programs are prepared, supported, and motivated to improve their practice



Pandemic response huddles hosted since March reaching 3,357 professionals in 55 of Colorado's 64 counties

"These Huddles are uplifting and share great light during this time. Thank you for being a valuable resource to each of us working on behalf of children & families, and our professional workforce."

-Huddle Participant

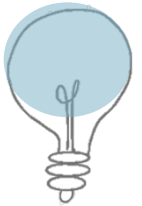


We experienced a significant increase in technical assistance requests, including over 3,000 calls between July 2019 to June 2020, spanning issues like cleaning protocols, health screenings, and child care health consultants.

**OUTCOME:** Strengthen early childhood systems and infrastructure

"The Keep the Lights on Fund embodies the idea of collaboration for the greater good. They are working to reduce the financial burden on early care and education programs which is being worsened by the pandemic." -Venture for Success

Through Keep the Lights On and partnerships with Mile High United Way, Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance, and Executives Partnering to Invest in Children we've awarded 76 grants totaling \$272,500 to keep child care programs running so families can work and children can learn and grow.

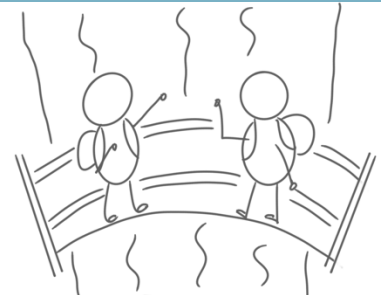


**THE GAP:** This financial investment directly supported programs in peril of closing, but also included over 500 applicants and \$3 million in requests. We will continue to build partnerships to rebuild and create the child care system our children and families need to thrive.

**OUTCOME:** Build bridges between sectors

HCCC facilitated daily calls between key state agencies in early pandemic stages and continues building these bridges to sustain these partnerships

"Healthy Child Care Colorado has been a key partner to public health during the COVID-19 response through frequent communication with CDPHE and health consultants who offer essential support to child care providers." - Amy Gammel, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment



When the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of 2020 and many of us were able to stay home, child care providers continued to work for families of essential workers, yet were not widely recognized as essential workers themselves. Healthy Child Care Colorado has stepped up during the pandemic to make sure our early care and education professionals and child care health consultants have a community of practice to ensure the health and safety of children in their care, along with connecting agencies and sectors to ensure strong alignment.

The work of Healthy Child Care Colorado (HCCC) originated out of the Healthy Child Care America initiative in the 1990's and transitioned from Qualistar Colorado to become its own nonprofit in 2019. We quickly developed our Strategic Roadmap for 2020-2022, including outcomes, activities, mission strategies, core values, and our "I4ers." The following impacts span the 2019-2020 fiscal year, but also include the fall of 2020 as we continue to respond to the pandemic's impact on the child care system and look forward to growing the infrastructure for families our child care workforce with the expansion of preschool.



## MISSION STRATEGY IMPACTS

### Strategy: Serve as a hub for consultation in early childhood

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in March, HCCC stepped up to make sure our early childhood professionals and child care health consultants could join a community of practice to discuss and understand best practices for the health and safety of children and staff in their programs, even as recommendations shifted almost daily. As HCCC continues to support statewide connections for child care, we must also help the industry rebuild. We need more investment for this recovery to occur, so we don't lose an industry that is foundational to Colorado's social and economic success. As a key supporter of our child care industry, HCCC will rely on support from our community partners and funders.



### Supporting Consultants and Professionals

Within a week of the statewide shutdown in March, HCCC began hosting weekly virtual huddles for providers and child care health consultants to connect with each other, share up-to-date information, and receive support as they work to keep their spaces open. We have since hosted 43 huddles spanning topics like cleaning protocols, peer connections for health consultants, emergency preparation, business training, and more. We have also seen a 46 percent increase in the number of user accounts created through [our website](#) where people can search for job, training and event postings and access our online resource center.



"I could not have modified my practice as efficiently or effectively during this pandemic without the guidance of HCCC staff. I am able to continue to serve my child care programs with high quality services, and I was able to add more programs that historically had been unable to find a qualified CCHC. I could not have done this confidently and competently without assistance. I am so grateful for their dedication and knowledge."

- Christine Frost, RN and Child Care Health Consultant



### Building Bridges between Programs and Agencies

HCCC was quickly able to pivot to **tele-consultation for child care health consultants** when the pandemic began to minimize exposure for providers and children. This has been the catalyst to change practice across the state and national partners have shown interest in this work. Tele-consultation will continue throughout the pandemic and we will be there to adapt the model and support consultants in the field.

HCCC hosted **conversations between state agencies** to help navigate health and safety measures in child care settings. Theresa Rapstine, HCCC's Child Care Health Consultant Coordinator, played a critical role in this, hosting daily conversations early on in the pandemic and Theresa continues to foster regular connections.

### Strategy: Support quality improvement efforts in early childhood programs

A child's earliest years are critical for laying a foundation for a bright future--including success in school and long-term engagement and contribution to their community. HCCC is an important partner in making sure children have strong experiences, relationships, and environments where they can learn and grow, along with making sure the adults who care for them are equipped with the training and resources they need to do what they do best--support bright futures for children in their care.



#### Strengthening Early Childhood Infrastructure

The future of child care is bright, but it will take all of us to build it. Our system of child care was built so providers exist on razor-thin margins, even in the best of times, and now the future is even tighter, unless action is taken. One effort HCCC is proud to be a part of is [Keep the Lights On](#), a collaborative effort to provide direct financial investments to child care providers to cover COVID-19-related expenses like paying staff, covering rent, cleaning supplies, health consultation, and other costs. Through Keep the Lights On, a total of \$272,500 has been awarded to 76 family child care homes and child care centers/school-age programs. Yet, we were only able to fund 15 percent of the 481 total applications submitted.

While Keep the Lights On made a difference in supporting our child care providers, the need far outweighs our ability to fill existing gaps. We need more investment for this recovery to occur so we don't lose an industry that is foundational to Colorado's social and economic success. More than ever, HCCC is relying on collaboration with our community partners and support from our funders and decision-makers.

Investments in health and safety improvements in child care come with big returns, both in the immediate well-being of children, and for the cognitive, social, and physical abilities that are the foundation for lifelong success.

HCCC has provided **capital improvement grants** to child care programs since 2008. Every child care setting has spaces and equipment that are well-loved and experience normal wear and tear, and early childhood programs often operate on tight profit margins, lacking the budgetary flexibility required for costly improvements to the building, classroom, or playground. Our grants are competitive opportunities for nonprofit early childhood programs and offer important capital improvement funding so children can thrive in child care.



#### Strengthening Quality in Programs

HCCC supports quality improvement efforts like breastfeeding friendly recognition, oral health supports, and assessments for playgrounds and other equipment to keep children healthy and families supported. HCCC has been supported to implement a **Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Recognition Pilot**, allowing child care programs to assess and improve policies and practices that contribute to creating a breastfeeding-friendly environment and culture for families, along with their own staff.





## Strategy: Advocate for best practices and sound policies

We are being called to reinvent our child care system and it is on those of us in the advocacy space to highlight and elevate the need for investment in infrastructure and best practices so children, providers, and communities can thrive.

HCCC works alongside other advocacy partners to share what works and build connections across agencies and sectors. We prioritize the promotion of inclusion in child care, supporting best practices and sound policies that enhance well-being and for all children, families and communities.

"Healthy Child Care Colorado is an important partner in the state early childhood system. Their efforts to ensure Colorado communities have safe facilities and healthy environments so that children have quality care and early learning opportunities is key to our economic recovery and vitality."

- Nicole Riehl, President & CEO at EPIC



### A Trusted Voice for Best Practices & Policy Development

Healthy Child Care Colorado is a leading expert in Colorado, with nationwide recognition, on best practices and we proudly sit at multiple decision-making tables, including the Early Childhood Summit, ongoing Family Child Care and Center licensing rule committees, along with multiple coalitions and partnerships. This year we were able to testify on Senate Bill 20-163 supporting School Entry Immunization policies, which has since been signed into law by Colorado Gov. Jared Polis.

Our Executive Director, Taran Schneider, serves as a board member for Care Aware of America, the nation's leading voice for child care, with the vision that every family in the United States has access to a high-quality, affordable child care system. In her role, Taran brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in child care settings, supporting military families, promoting health and safety, building quality early childhood settings, supporting statewide networks, and advocating at every level. Taran also serves as Co-Chair of the organization's Membership Committee.



### OUR "14ERS"

Our 14ers were identified through our Strategic Roadmapping process as major milestones symbolizing climbing the famous Colorado mountains standing at 14,000-plus feet. These are the momentous goals that take extensive time, energy and resources to meet, but are also significantly impactful in helping us achieve our mission and implement our strategies and outcomes. We are delighted about the progress we've already seen on these audacious goals and look forward continue the journey in 2021.



### Strengthen social and emotional well-being

The social and emotional well-being of children and families is especially critical as we continue to live through a global pandemic. Many families with young children are experiencing stress and instability in terms of jobs, housing, child care, education, food, health care, and more. We are dedicated to strengthening the social and emotional supports available in our state.

Through support from the Buell Foundation, a Transition Team of stakeholders worked throughout 2020 to successfully support the transition of the Colorado Pyramid Plus Center to HCCC. While we continue to shepherd this transition and plan for future sustainable programming, HCCC is proud to support Pyramid Colorado as a vital component of Colorado's growing and evolving early childhood mental health system. [Learn more about Pyramid Colorado here.](#)

"I have been a participant in and advocating for Pyramid work in Colorado since 2007, including my post as the Certification Coordinator at the Pyramid Plus Center. As a Member of the HCCC Pyramid Transition Team, I have witnessed a desire to honor past contributions as we forge forward, now part of an entity that embodies being proactively 'healthy' in every way!"

-Robin Levy, HCCC Pyramid Transition Team



## Create a culture of learning and evaluation

Our Strategic Roadmap for 2020-2022 includes several organizational development strategies to ensure the sustainability of the organization, including fiscal stewardship, organizational culture, and an engaged staff and board of directors.

As we implement the various activities and strategies in our roadmap, we know that we need to focus time and energy on learning and evaluation if we want to know whether or not and how we are successful. Early this year we set out to inventory the various data we gather connected to our bodies of work and identify which metrics carry the most value in telling us how we are doing and whether we've made an impact on our Strategic Roadmap. In addition to organizing our data, we've also crafted several "stories of impact" that add context to the data. We are in the midst of developing an evaluation framework which will guide us in determining what data to capture in the coming years and for which purpose and use.



## Looking Forward to 2021

We are facing a large shift in our early care and education system as we recover from the pandemic and prepare to make universal and free preschool a reality for all 4-year-olds in Colorado. HCCC is a critical partner in rebuilding our child care system into what it needs to be to effectively serve children and families and support a robust workforce. Our expertise on building safe, supportive, and healthy environments for children and improving practices for our workforce will be critical moving forward. A few key areas we will focus on in the coming year:

- > **Grants and Technical Assistance:** as child care programs work to stay afloat, continued support to keep their spaces and policies aligned with best practices will ensure we can build a system that works for families and providers. HCCC is an important partner in guiding programs through improvements and pandemic response. We need continued support to grow this work that is so valuable for professionals throughout our state.
- > **Advocating for a strong future for child care:** HCCC is eager to work with state and local partners to ensure healthy and safe early childhood spaces that will serve children through a mixed-delivery system of universal preschool. HCCC will strengthen early childhood systems and infrastructure on both the advocacy level and direct service level as it relates to the places and spaces used for early care and education.
- > **Early Childhood Mental Health:** HCCC has been identified as a partner to work with the Office of Early Childhood and other partners to expand and support Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation through the CARES Act.

Healthy Child Care Colorado is proud of what we've accomplished, and we know we must not only continue, but grow our efforts as our state faces the fragility of the child care industry, which has been neglected for too long. For our state to not only effectively recover, but thrive after the pandemic and economic recession, we need to invest in building a child care system that works for children, working families and our early care and education professionals. We are eager to work with our partners and the child care providers who have worked tirelessly to make sure children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

Help us on our journey to build healthy futures for all children in Colorado by [making a tax deductible donation](#) today



## Recognition

### Building Healthy Futures Awards

The Building Healthy Futures Awards recognize outstanding partners working to build safe, supportive, and healthy early childhood settings and systems in Colorado. These health and well-being partners contribute greatly to our shared vision in the Early Childhood Colorado Framework that all children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

Amy Gammel, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment  
Christine Perreault, RN  
Jamie Fanselow, Triad Early Childhood Council

Mile High United Way  
Sarah Scully, Boulder County Public Health

### Funders

Advancing Breastfeeding in Colorado

Boettcher Foundation

Buell Foundation

Colorado Department of Human Services

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Connie Burwell White & William W. White Foundation

Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

Gates Family Foundation

Mile High United Way

Rose Community Foundation

Share Our Strength | Cooking Matters

The Anschutz Foundation

The Colorado Health Foundation

The Women's Foundation of Colorado

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Kathleen Strom

Kelly Etter

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The Nice Group of Raymond James

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