

# WELD COUNTY'S EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL ANNUAL EVALUATION JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

## Executive Summary

Weld County's Early Childhood Council (WCECC) creates an environment where all Weld County children are valued, healthy, and thriving. The WCECC is a community partnership dedicated to improving the well-being of all children in Weld County focusing on the critical growth and brain development period from pre-birth to eight years of age to promote school readiness and lifelong success.

WCECC is a Weld County community collaborative that was formed in 2000 and is led by United Way of Weld County (UWWC). This concept of collaboration originated after the Colorado Children's Campaign presented their annual "Kids COUNT!" report to community members in Weld County; their findings demonstrated continuing decline in the well-being of Weld County's children and the urgent need for action.

At the same time, United Ways all over the world were changing their model from raising and distributing funds to bringing local communities together to tackle their greatest challenges. United Way of Weld County leaders recognized this opportunity to coordinate a focused collaborative effort to make real changes for young children.

In 2007, Colorado House Bill 1062 authorized the creation of Colorado Early Childhood Councils. The intent of the Councils as stated in the legislation is to "improve and sustain the availability, accessibility, capacity, and quality of early childhood services for children and families throughout the state." According to the legislation, these Councils were established "for the purpose of developing and ultimately implementing a comprehensive system of early childhood services to ensure the school readiness of children five years of age or younger in the community." Weld County's commissioners, having witnessed the work this UWWC-led collaborative had accomplished over the past seven years, endorsed it to serve as Weld County's Early Childhood Council.

## Description of Goals

Long-term indicators of success include:

- Local resources for health, development, mental health, education, and family support are easily accessible for Weld County families.
- Weld County community partners actively participate to form a safety net of services that ensures all children and their families receive the help they need.
- Early childhood professionals receive training opportunities in best practices to increase their knowledge, skills, and quality of care provided.



- Weld County children enter school ready to learn and continue to succeed as they progress, as demonstrated by critical milestones of reading proficiently by fourth grade and graduating on time.

As we work toward these long- range goals, short-term goals for our 2020-2025 strategic plan include:

- Family Support and Education: Increase coordination of resources to provide access to information about young children’s overall wellness and development for parents.
- Health and Wellbeing: Work with community partners to increase awareness of nutrition, physical activity, and mental health services available in the county.
- Community Awareness and Advocacy: Link public engagement/awareness efforts about early childhood issues, priorities, and challenges, and share/implement with stakeholders.
- Early Learning and Development: Outreach to informal and formal care environments to promote school readiness for all.

### Statement of Progress

- Family Support and Education: Increase coordination of resources to provide access to information about young children’s overall wellness and development for parents.
  - 103 caregivers were given support on a wide spectrum of skills necessary for raising a well-developed child through our Bright by Three program.
  - 319 new car seats were distributed to caregivers who participated in safety classes.
  - 17 Partners are now members of the Covering Weld Diaper Bank.
  - 486,996 diapers and 14,444 packages of wipes were distributed by the diaper bank and its partners.
  - 33 families were referred to early literacy, safety, or parenting support programs by Family Support staff.
  - \$82,500 of funding was secured from the State of Colorado thanks to Senate Bill 21-027 for use by the Covering Weld Diaper Bank.
  - The Northern Colorado Children’s Festival was cancelled this year, due to a lack of staff capacity.
  - 15 families received support through their employer offsetting the cost of child care. This affected 16 children in child care at nine programs.
  - 400 families received hygiene items and/or clothing.
  - 932 children received age appropriate books.
  - 71 families were educated on safe sleep.
  - 9,079 contacts and 19,668 referrals were made through 211 Colorado in Weld County and the seven other northeast Colorado counties. 211 Colorado connects families to multiple resources including child care, housing and food support, utility assistance, and more.

- Health and Wellbeing: Work with community partners to increase awareness of nutrition, physical activity, and mental health services available in the county.
  - Over **40** community partners, child care providers, parents and businesses sit on the early childhood council and various committees to ensure alignment, address gaps in service, and to keep each other informed.
  
- Community Awareness and Advocacy: Link public engagement/awareness efforts about early childhood issues, priorities, and challenges, and share/implement with stakeholders.
  - The Roadmap4Kids, created in 2018, had 1,713 website hits, which is down from 3,448 last year.
  - 2,550 Roadmap4Kids materials were distributed to 29 partners and their clients, compared to 1,762 promotional materials the previous year for the same number of partners.
  - Over 5,000 School Readiness Calendars (in English and Spanish) were given to parents of three- and four-year-olds to help them be prepared for kindergarten, which is up from 2,000 last year.
  
- Early Learning and Development: Outreach to informal and formal care environments to promote school readiness for all.
  - There are 284 licensed child care providers in Weld County (a net increase of eight providers from the previous year, +2 CCC, +2 FCCH, +3 PRS, +1 SACC).
  - 20 new family child care providers opened their doors for business. This supplants 18 that were lost over the year, providing a gain of two providers.
  - WCECC works to increase quality in child care environments to promote school readiness for all. Colorado Shines is the quality rating improvement system for all licensed child care providers. In Weld County: 10 providers are a level 5, 22 are a level 4, four are a level 3, 75 are a level 2, and 173 are a level 1.
  - \$503,689 in capital improvement, quality improvement materials, and quality improvement coaching was awarded to 68 licensed child care providers in 15 Weld County zip codes, up from 59 programs in 12 zip codes in the prior year.
  - 256 hours of child care professional development clock hours were facilitated through five Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler (EQIT) care training courses and the Building Blocks Conference.
  - 121 individuals completed the EQIT care training courses of which 49 attended a course in Spanish.
  - Building Blocks Child Care Provider Professional Development and Appreciation was held June 3.
    - Nine excellent speakers (two keynotes) and three different breakout sessions, offered six professional development hours. Two sessions were held completely in Spanish with English translation available; all other sessions were held in English and offered Spanish translation.
    - 11 vendors offered information and resources to child care providers.

- Six businesses/agencies donated door-prizes for participants, including \$250 and \$100 gift cards for quality improvement supplies, curriculum, and learning materials.
- 161 participants registered and 128 attended. Of the 128 attendees, 39 were Spanish speaking and used interpretation services (30%).
- 70% (221) of children who utilize CCCAP are currently receiving child care in a high quality program (level 3-5).
- 37 providers caring for 106 children graduated from two cohorts of the PASO Institute.
- To date, 221 Weld County providers have graduated from PASO.
- 11 PASO providers applied for and received their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

### Weld County Early Childhood Council Annual Evaluation

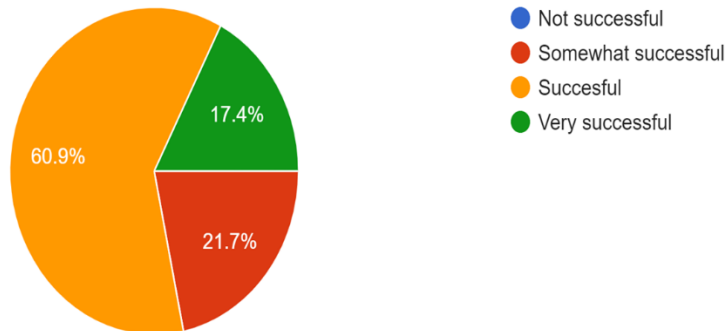
The goal of the WCECC annual evaluation is to improve and build a seamless system between parents, families, child care providers, and service providers to deliver early childhood services in areas of early care and education, family support, mental health, and health.

The annual WCECC survey was sent out in May and June to assess the council’s impact, partnerships, infrastructure, and ability to meet strategic goals, and ensure our services are meeting stated needs. The survey was sent out to 60 council members with a 38% response rate. A separate survey was sent out to Licensed Child Care providers, which received a 24% response rate. Key results include:

[Link to WCECC Strategic Plan for reference](#)

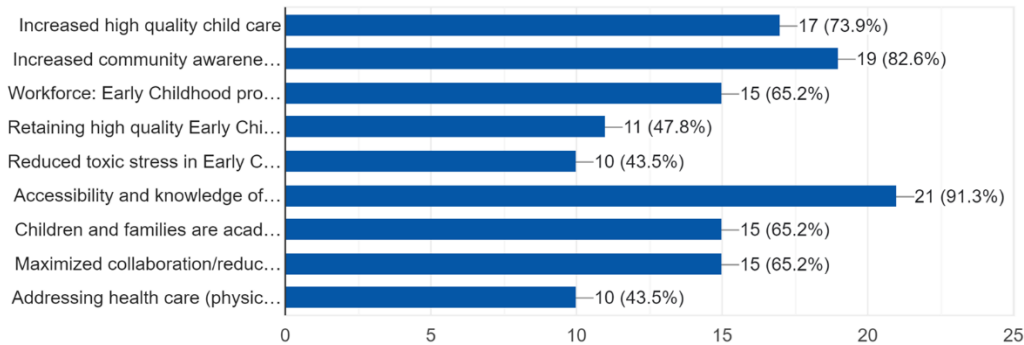
### WCECC Member Results

In your opinion, how successful has Weld County's Early Childhood Council been at reaching our goals? To review the goals and strategic plan cl...id:scds:US:cd6057a9-65cd-4088-a8e3-b2d554faa3a8  
23 responses



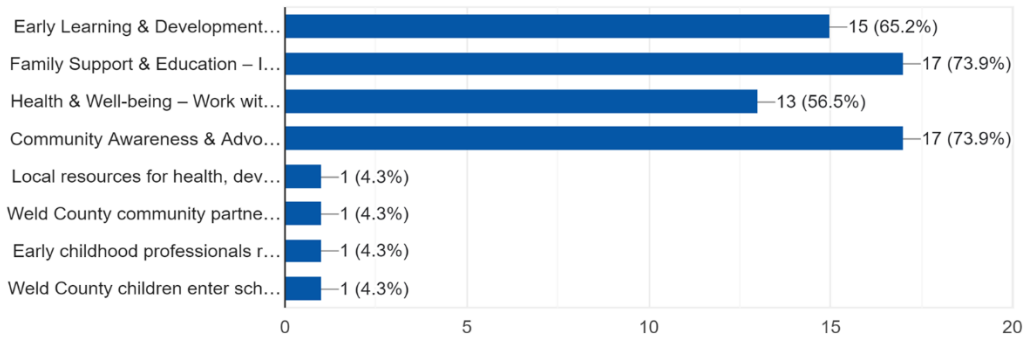
Please indicate any positive, successful outcomes of Weld County's Early Childhood Council's collaborative work in the community include or could potentially include. Check all that apply.

23 responses



What do you feel is Weld County's Early Childhood Council's most important outcome? Check all that apply.

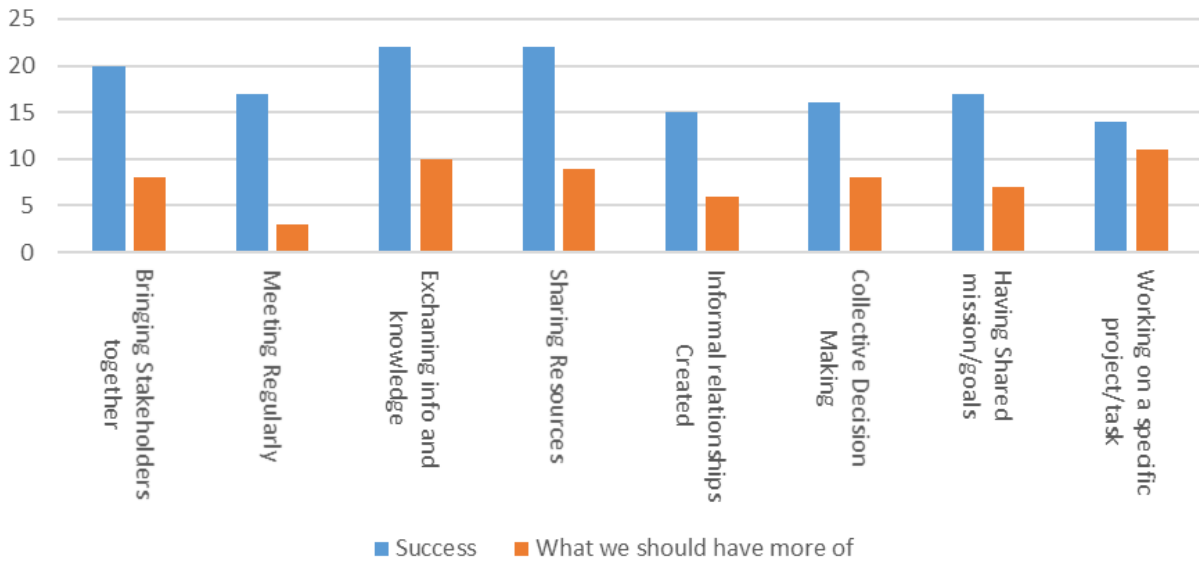
23 responses



“Other” answers included:

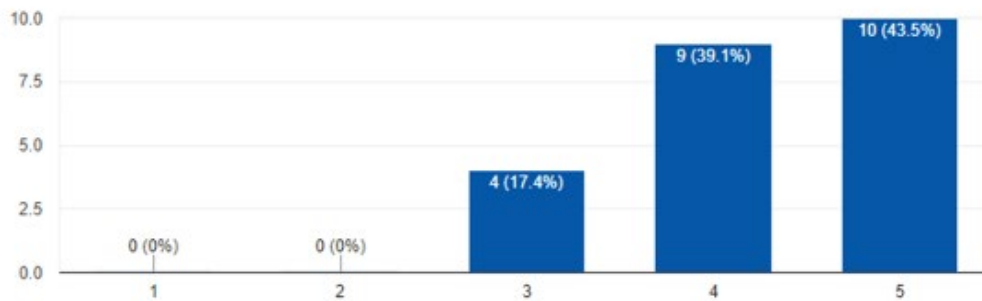
- Increased teacher pay.
- The importance of communication with partnerships and consistency.
- A school readiness metric to determine if efforts are successful.
- The impact of Universal Pre-K has been significant and may need to be recognized as it changed the original priorities.

### What aspects of collaboration contribute to success vs we should have more of?



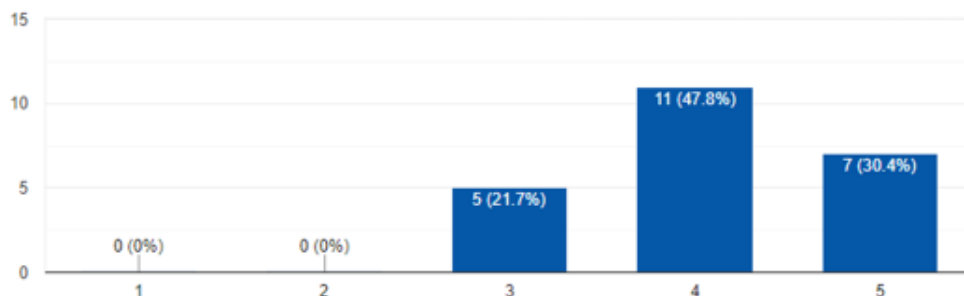
Please rate your perceived effectiveness of Weld County's Early Childhood Council in enhancing communication between partners and/or early childhood stakeholders:

23 responses



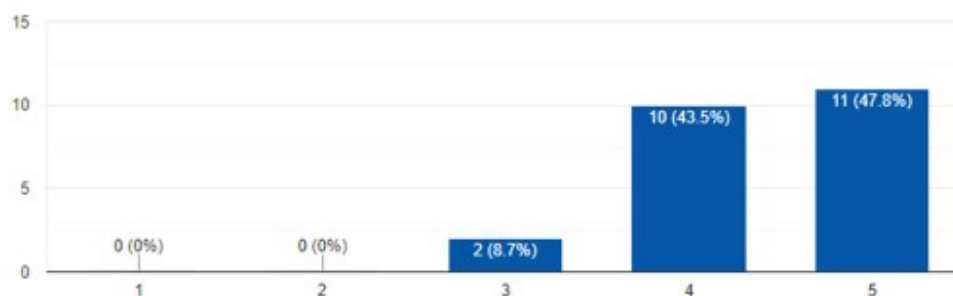
Please rate your perceived effectiveness of Weld County's Early Childhood Council in bringing about change for early childhood and families in the community:

23 responses



The level of commitment among the council and community partners/providers is high.

23 responses



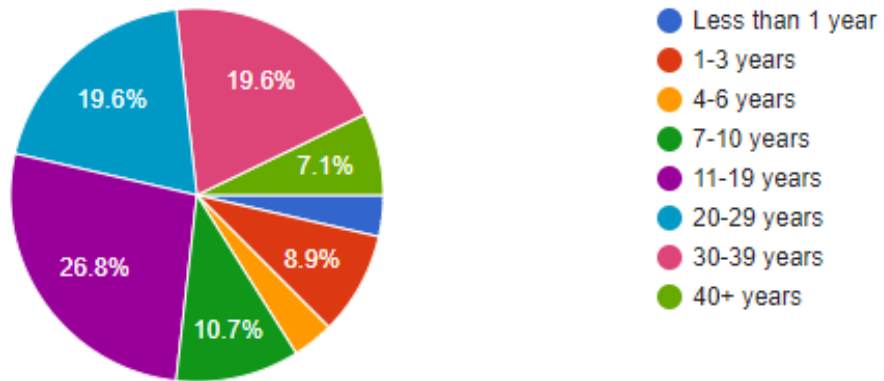
### **WCECC Success Stories**

- “We have been able to bring in partners into the community and provide professional development for staff next school year because of connections from the council.”
- “Thank you for the grants and the connections made through Weld County’s Early Childhood Council.”
- “The collaboration with our school district preschool program and Lisa Sadar. Her work to help us obtain the quality improvement grant to improve our level of quality has been positively impactful!”
- “I’m a home provider, so I share everything I learn with fellow licensed providers.”
- “Contractually, DHS has success in providing funding for child care professional development, health and safety, plus recruitment handoffs.”
- “SRA (Summer Reading Adventure).”
- “Have not shared through Child Welfare; however, we do pass out materials from the council.”

## Child Care Provider Results

How long have you been in the field of Early Childhood?

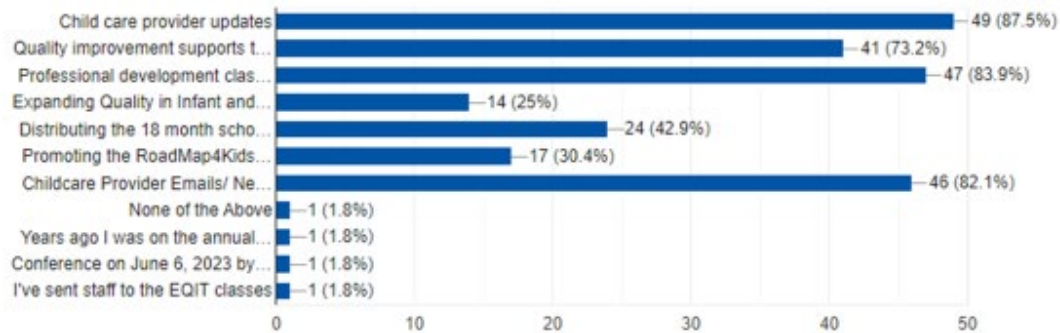
56 responses



**46.3% of respondents have been in this field for over 20 years!**

Please check the ways in which you interact/participate with Weld County's Early Childhood Council efforts:

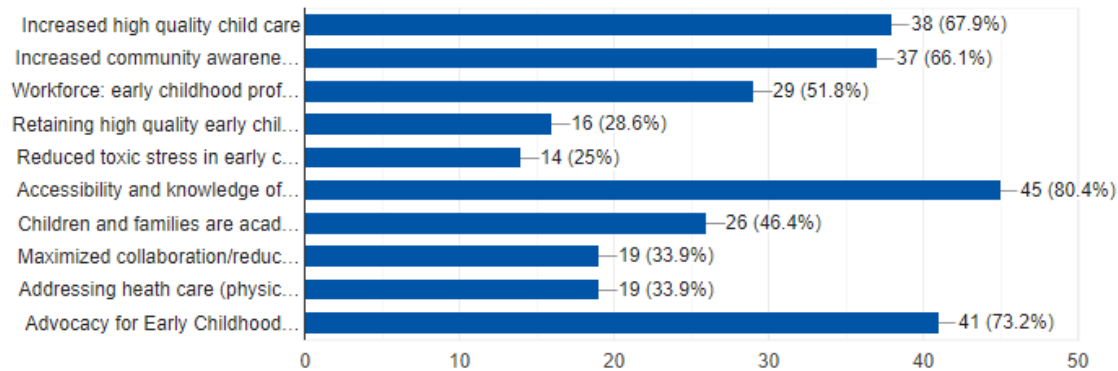
56 responses





What do you feel Weld County's Early Childhood Council is successful at? Check all that apply.

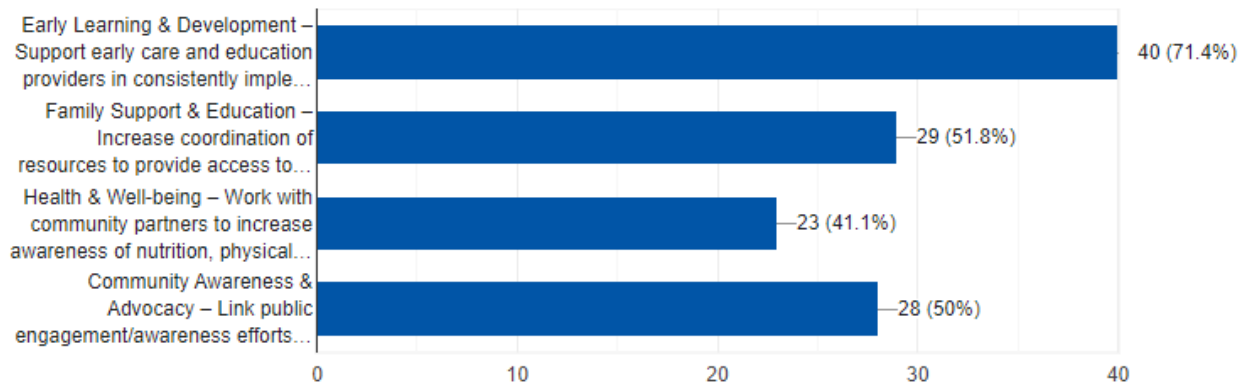
56 responses



What do you feel is Weld County's Early Childhood Council's most important outcome (Taken directly from WCECC's strategic plan)? To review the goals and FULL strategic plan click here: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:928dcdcc-7cd2-461d-b842-5c4d043799bc>

Check all that apply.

56 responses



**Is there anything that should be included in the strategic plan/ goals that is not currently?**

- Positive outreach to licensed providers
- Financial assistance to pay staff more - operations support
- Additional staff
- More responsive and timely communication
- More support/resources for organizational/business management
- Advocacy for private centers
- Support line for CCCAP
- Additional assistance with licensing, questions concerning next steps and process improvement

- Continuation of networking meetings
- More training opportunities

### ***Child Care Provider Success Stories***

- "When I was a new provider, WCECC helped set up our backyard for all the children. New toys. Fall zones from rubber mulch. It was incredible and only able to be enjoyed by the children for 10+ years and still going because of WCECC. THANK YOU!"
- "The council made the licensing process go very smoothly for me and they are helping me a lot."
- "I was able to obtain my child care license and it was because of the people there!!"
- "Being able to proactively problem solve over a child in my care that needed more assistance than was provided."\*
- "With their assistance I have been able to achieve my Colorado Shines Level 2 and coaching for Level 3-5. I have also received assistance and guidance for applying for grants to build a much better play space for my family home child care."
- "I have met some amazing providers who care about me and my success."
- "The conference was phenomenal."

*\* This comment was offered by many participants.*