

# Colorado Early Childhood Councils

## Quarterly Report: FY2008-2009—Second Quarter

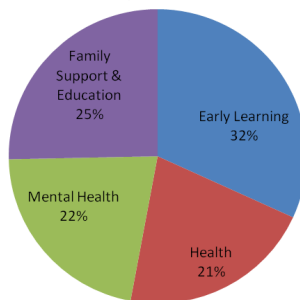


FY2008-2009, Second Quarter (Oct. 1– Dec. 31)

May 19, 2009

### Council Priorities

**Council Priority Areas  
by Domain**



Councils' priorities are fairly evenly distributed across the four domains.

As part of their funding from the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Human Services, Early Childhood Councils across Colorado are required to create strategic plans to guide the development of comprehensive early childhood systems at the local level.

These plans identify the range of goals and related activities that each Council is using to build an integrated system of early childhood services for children and families. Councils report on their progress toward achieving their top priorities from their strategic plans quarterly.

The number of priorities identified by each individual Council varies. In total, Councils

across the state had identified 141 priority activities they were focusing on by the end of the second quarter.

Of these priorities, all were fairly evenly distributed across the four domains. Early Learning priorities represented 32% of the total, while Family Support & Education, Mental Health, and Health represented 25%, 22% and 21% respectively.

This distribution of priorities across the domains indicates that Councils are effectively working toward a comprehensive system of early childhood services that coordinates services for the *whole* child. Because parents don't typically access just one realm of services for their child (e.g., just early learning or just health), this coordination is the a key component in

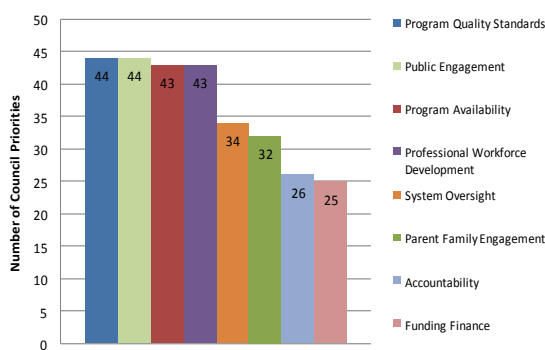
early childhood systems-building.

In addition to working across domains, Councils also seem to be focusing on a number of different areas of systems-building through their identified priority activities.

At the top of the list are activities and goals that address program quality standards and public engagement. Program availability and professional workforce development are also identified as priority activity areas for many Councils. Less frequently, systems-building activities focus on collaborative funding and accountability efforts.

As of the end of December 2008, Councils statewide

**Council Priority Areas  
by State Goals**



Program quality and availability, public engagement, and professional development rank as high priorities for Councils.

### Special points of interest:

- 61% OF COUNCILS UTILIZE DATA COLLECTED FROM THE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL DATABASE
- 32% OF COUNCILS USE IN-HOUSE DATA COLLECTION SOFTWARE TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA (E.G., MICROSOFT ACCESS)
- ALL BUT ONE COUNCIL HAD DEVELOPED A STRATEGIC PLAN TO GUIDE THEIR WORK BY THE END OF THE 2ND QUARTER

### Inside this issue:

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| COUNCIL PRIORITIES                       | <b>1</b> |
| TRENDS — UTILIZING THE FRAMEWORK         | <b>2</b> |
| LEVERAGING FUNDING                       | <b>3</b> |
| CASE STUDY — ALLIANCE FOR KIDS (EL PASO) | <b>4</b> |

# Colorado Early Childhood Councils

## Trends — Utilizing the Framework

“THE FRAMEWORK IS A GOOD TOOL FOR ARTICULATING TO GROUPS WHAT SYSTEM WORK IS ABOUT.”

— RURAL RESORT REGION, N.E. (GRAND AND SUMMIT COUNTIES)

In the fall of 2008, the early childhood team in the Colorado Lt. Governor’s Office released the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*, a compilation and distillation of a many different state-level strategic plans related to early childhood.

This one-page document provides a visual representation of early childhood systems-building that a number of Early Childhood Councils have found very useful in framing their local work.

During the second quarter of FY2008-2009, five Councils reported in their quarterly reflections that they had begun using the *Framework* as a guiding document to help rethink and revise strategic plans for their local early childhood systems-building efforts..

These five Councils are:

- Alliance for Kids (El Paso),
- ECHO & Family Center (Fremont),
- Rural Resort Region Early Childhood Council NE (Grand & Summit),
- Early Childhood Councils of the San Luis Valley (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande & Saguache), and
- Early Childhood Council of Larimer County

At the local Early Childhood Council level, one of the most important parts of the *Framework* has been the “foundations” section, which articulates the core of Councils’ systems-building work, including:

- Building and supporting partnerships;
- Funding and investing;

- Changing policy;
- Building public engagement;
- Sharing accountability; and
- Generating education and leadership opportunities

The work of Councils is to build the foundation (the partnerships, investments, policies, accountability, public awareness and leadership) upon which effective strategies, programs, and outcomes can be built across local partners. The stronger the foundation, the more effective, efficient and seamless the services can be for families with young children.

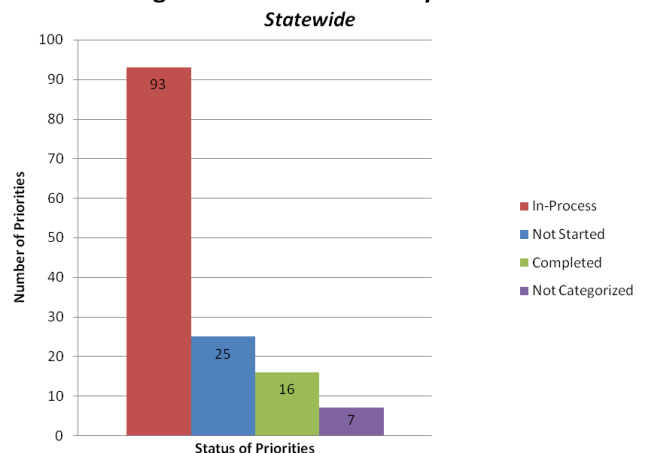
*Note: More than five Councils may be using the Framework, but these five are the ones that specifically called it out in their quarterly reflections for the second quarter.*

## Council Priorities (continued from page 1)

indicated that most of their priorities were still in-process. This is an expected finding, given that the fiscal year was only half over at the time of the report. Still, 16 priorities had already been completed by Councils and another 25 had not yet been started as of this reporting period.

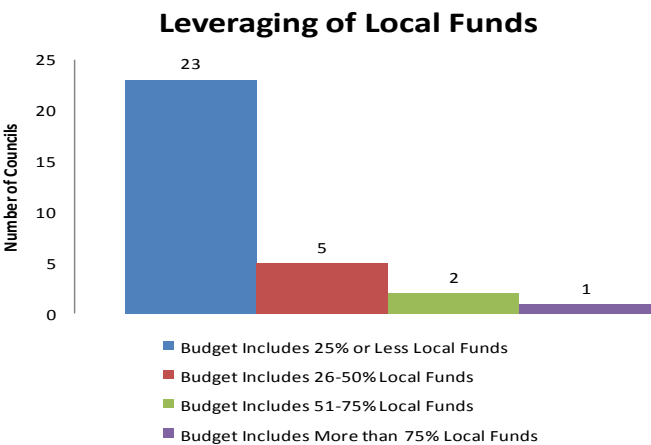
Of those priorities that had been completed, many related to systems-oversight activities that are necessary precursors to other strategic priorities.

### Progress on Council Priority Areas



Most Councils’ priority activities were in-process as of the end of the second quarter of FY2008-2009.

Leveraging Funding



In the second quarter of FY2008-2009, most Councils' budgets included 25% or less local funds.

One of the key functions of an Early Childhood Council is to facilitate more flexible, less categorical funding of the components of the early childhood system. This can take the form of braided funding streams (combining different existing funding sources toward one end) or leveraging of funding (using existing funding sources to encourage investment in the system by less traditional sources).

All of Colorado's Early Childhood Councils receive some funding for systems-building work from the State (administered by a collaboration between the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Department of Education). However, this state funding is generally not enough to fulfill the entire strategic plans of the local Councils.

Early Childhood Councils must seek funding from other sources (e.g., local government; philanthropic founda-

tions; businesses) to achieve their strategic goals.

As of the second quarter of FY2008-2009, eight Councils were deriving more than 25% of their budgets from local sources. Another eight Councils received some level of local funds up to 25% of their budget.

Similarly, seventeen Councils use foundation funding to make up some portion of their budget. Of these, three Councils have raised enough foundation funding to com-

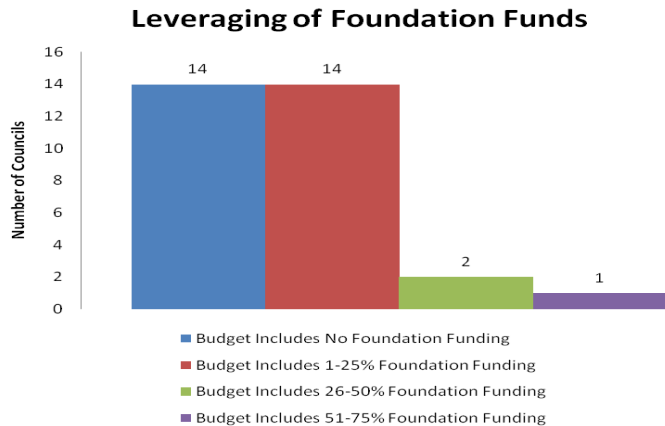
prise over 25% of their budget.

In addition to leveraging funding within their own budgets, many Councils facilitate policies and partnerships between local system components that have resulted in individual system partners combining funding sources toward a common goal or leveraging funding for the system.

Finally, Early Childhood Council partner organizations are also effecting change by altering their own organizational directions and practices to support the overall Early Childhood Council goals and objectives.

These funding partnerships make the entire early childhood system in that community more efficient and effective for families and children and reflect a key function of the Early Childhood Councils.

IN THE RURAL RESORT REGION, N.E. (SUMMIT/GRAND), LARIMER AND ARAPAHOE COUNCILS, NO ONE FUNDING SOURCE MAKES UP MORE THAN 50% OF THE BUDGET.



Councils may not be accessing foundation funding as much as they ultimately



**Colorado Department of Human Services**  
people who help people



## Case Study — Alliance for Kids' Child Health Liaison

"BECAUSE OF THE PARTNERSHIP, 10 OUT OF 11 PARTICIPATING SITES ARE NOW IMPLEMENTING REGULAR TOOTH-BRUSHING WITH THE CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE."

This fiscal year, one of the primary priorities for the Alliance for Kids (the Early Childhood Council for El Paso County) has been the funding and implementation of a Child Health Liaison Program.

Developed in partnership with the County Department of Health and Environment, this program has provided monthly classes and individualized coaching to twelve caregivers in eleven different early childhood settings.

The modules for the classes have ranged from abuse and neglect prevention to oral health. Other topics have included immunization, staff health, preventing illness and nutrition & food safety.

The program lasted ten

months, with pre- and post-tests demonstrating improvements on all modules. This is significant, since improvements in healthcare of young children can help achieve greater school readiness.

In addition, the program is a great example of how partnerships across traditional domains and agencies can benefit the entire early childhood system in a community, as well as the children and families that system serves. The partnership with the El Paso Department of Health and Environment brought health and early learning partners to the same table to work on behalf of children.

The result is not only the successful implementation of this program, but the opportunity

to build a lasting relationship between agencies and programs that can continue to build a more seamless early childhood system for all families.

More immediately, the Child Health Liaison Program in El Paso resulted in on-site health improvements for the participating early childhood programs and their children. Almost all participating programs, for instance, are brushing teeth regularly with the children now and hand washing among children and staff has increased..

Overall, 1,230 children were positively impacted by the program implementation in the eleven sites — a real success for these kids and for the system as a whole!

**Learn more about Colorado's Early Childhood Councils at:**  
**[www.cde.state.co.us/early/ECC.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/ECC.htm)**

*Colorado's Early Childhood Councils integrate services delivered through a comprehensive early childhood system that includes quality care and education, family support, health and mental health programs. Authorizing legislation calls on the Councils "To develop and ultimately implement a comprehensive system of early childhood services to ensure the school readiness of children five years of age or younger." (HB 07-1062)*

*The Early Childhood Councils program is funded by Child Care Development Block Grant/Child Care Development Funds and is administered at the state level by a partnership between the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Department of Education.*