



# Trust for Learning

December 15, 2021

Colorado Early Childhood Leadership Commission  
Attn: Co-Chairs Susan Steele, Tom Massey, and Pamela Harris, PhD

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Recommendations that will provide the groundwork for the implementation of preschool for all four-year olds in Colorado. We appreciate your facilitation of input from such a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the state and are eager to share with you our thoughts and resources to aid in this process.

As members of the Ideal Learning in Colorado Advisory Team, we stand united in our commitment to providing equitable access to high-quality early learning experiences for all of our children in a mixed-delivery system. We agree wholeheartedly with the Commission's recommendation about the need to establish a "unified definition of quality experiences for the early care and education of all children." Fortunately, [early childhood experts and researchers](#) around the country have developed an evidence-based set of [principles](#) that can guide this definition and provide a clear vision for what high-quality early childhood looks like at the programmatic level. As stated in our letter to the ECLC in September, the [Principles of Ideal Learning](#) offer a quality framework that can be used across models and settings to support children's growth and development and prepare them for lifelong learning. Drawn from world-renowned early childhood approaches, these principles outline the core concepts of high quality early education programs, including a commitment to play; equity; relationship-based interactions; personalized instruction; a child-centered perspective; and a strength-based approach with children, adults and families. A recent brief by Early Milestones, [Making the Case for Ideal Learning in Colorado](#), illustrates the many ways that these principles are being utilized in a variety of preschool settings throughout the state, and can serve as a helpful resource.

We appreciate the Committee's recommendations regarding development of a universal application as a way to make access to quality programming more equitable in Colorado. As you know, early childhood

education funding has been a very difficult component of the system for families of young children to be able to understand and navigate. The multiple, and often redundant, applications and paperwork needed can be daunting, especially for families whose primary language may not be English. In designing this application, we encourage the new Department to look at the work done by the [New Haven Children's Ideal Learning District \(NH ChILD\)](#) to create an interactive [Early Childhood Resource Network](#) for families to access resources and opportunities available for their children.

We agree with the Committee's focus on the workforce and its view that "providing high-quality programming for all 4-year olds in the state will require major investments in recruiting, developing, and retaining an effective early childhood workforce." The workforce shortage, caused by issues like low wages, have created difficulties for families in finding care and education for their children, particularly those seeking full-day care in order to return safely to work. In considering policy solutions to address these challenges, we encourage the new Department to take advantage of a workforce resource developed by Trust for Learning, [Ideal Pathways, How Ideal Learning Approaches Prepare and Support Early Childhood Educators](#). This report analyzes barriers and opportunities across 11 educator development approaches to scale training and professional development and highlights some innovative models to consider.

We look forward to working with the new Department on implementation of these and other UPK recommendations. It is our strong belief that Colorado can build a system for our youngest learners that will create a strong workforce for tomorrow and support all children in unleashing their fullest potential.

Sincerely,  
The Ideal Learning in Colorado Advisory Team

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