

**Colorado
Early Childhood and School Readiness
Commission**

Year One Report to the Colorado General Assembly

November 1, 2005

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people

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Bill Owens
Governor

Marva Livingston Hammons
Executive Director

October 5, 2005

Dear Member of the Colorado General Assembly:

We are pleased to present to you the first year report of the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission. This report details for you the progress Colorado continues to make through the efforts of the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission and many others on quality early childhood programs.

Despite the economic challenges in Colorado, the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission has the opportunity to synthesize the efforts of many into a sensible and sound evidenced-based policy approach that will improve the "school readiness" of Colorado's young children and the lives of their families by taking a 'system approach' to our work.

Following the final appointments made to the Commission in March of 2005, the Staff Director position, funded by several Colorado Foundations and the Division of Child Care (Appendix), was filled and contacts with the appointees were made to determine their interests for the work of the Commission. The first meeting was held in May and the Commissioners dedicated themselves to meeting monthly beginning in July. Meetings with full agendas and national and statewide experts are currently planned through 2005. Specific policy issue areas are being worked on in task forces that will develop policy recommendations made to the Commission.

Please let us know if we can answer any questions you may have about this report or the work of the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marva Livingston Hammons', written over the printed name.

Marva Livingston Hammons
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Human Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl M. Caldwell', written over the printed name.

Cheryl Caldwell, Chair
Early Childhood and School Readiness
Commission

Colorado Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission

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Members of the Commission

Cheryl Caldwell, Chair

Stephen Chapman

Mary Fecht

Brian Field

Representative Lynn Hefley

Stephen Heiling

Senator Ed Jones

Debra Lawrence

Ophelia Mejia

Representative Michael Merrifield

Elizabeth Ojeda

Dawn Taylor Owens

Mary Parsons

Marcia Rush

Senator Brandon Shaffer

Representative Judy Solano

Senator Suzanne Williams

Prepared by Laurie Beckel, Staff Director

Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary.....	5-6
The Commission’s Legislation.....	7
Background	
Charge to the Commission	
Overview.....	8
Early Childhood State and Local Planning Initiatives.....	9-11
Appendices.....	12-15
Early Childhood Funders	
Interim report to Funders	
HB 04-1277	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Created by House Bill 04-1277, the three year Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission will focus on the following priority areas as it utilizes specialized knowledge and expertise concerning the links between early childhood care and education, early childhood development, and school readiness indicators to create a comprehensive early childhood system.

Priority Areas

- Quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood programs and supports
- Continued study and strategic response to those critical issues impacting the quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood programs and supports
- Meaningful parental involvement in all aspects of early childhood systems and programs
- Quality in early childhood programs as measured by objective outcomes directly linked to school readiness, academic achievement and productivity in life
- Need to link the numerous early childhood statewide initiatives that have developed long-range comprehensive strategies and plans at the state and local level through a policy agenda that will lead to a comprehensive early childhood system

The previous Child Care Commission established by HB 00-1020 produced and adopted the “Blueprint for an Early Childhood Care and Education System” in 2002. This important approach became the tool for creating quality in early care and education settings.

Blueprint Goal Areas:

Program Quality
Program Licensing
Program Availability
Parent and Family Engagement
Professional Development and Credentials
Public Engagement
Systems Oversight
Accountability
Funding and Financing

In 2003, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant, a federal grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Early Childhood State Systems Team and the work of over 100 early childhood proponents focused on the task to broaden the nine goals of the “Blueprint” to include four components of an early childhood system – early care and education, health and “medical home”, mental health and family support and parent education. Support for the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission legislation emerged from these stakeholders working to develop a comprehensive early childhood system.

Despite the economic challenges facing Colorado, the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission has the opportunity to synthesize the efforts of many into a sensible and sound evidenced-based policy approach that will improve the “school readiness” of Colorado’s young children and the lives of their families by taking a “system approach” to our work.

Strategic Opportunities in Colorado

- Planning councils exist at local and state levels that have led to collaboration and hold the promise of seamless service delivery for families
- Collaboration on numerous early childhood projects has led to many positive outcomes. Among these are:
 - Positive working relationships among the state departments and local entities
 - Streamlined data collecting focused on agreed upon outcomes
 - Leadership in promoting the importance of early childhood throughout Colorado
 - Mobilized experts in the many aspects of early childhood willing to support the work of the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission

Current Work

Following the final appointments made to the Commission in March of 2005, the Staff Director position, funded by several Colorado foundations and the Division of Child Care (Appendix), was filled and contacts with the appointees were made to determine their interests for the work of the Commission. The first meeting was held in May and the Commissioners dedicated themselves to meeting monthly beginning in July. Meetings with full agendas and national and statewide experts are currently planned through 2005. Specific policy issue areas are being worked on in task forces that will develop policy recommendations made to the Commission.

Strategies

- Learn about and continue to support the work of the many early childhood initiatives and stakeholder groups in Colorado listening to the suggestions they have for policy action
- Learn from what other states are doing by coordinating efforts with national organizations i.e. National Commission of State Legislators (NCSL) and Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)
- Involve policy experts in developing the policy agenda of the ECSR Commission
- Listen to parents/families who will drive the process for school readiness for their children
- Build coalitions and look for strategic opportunities for “systemic” changes

Recommendations for Policy Action

- Building on the Master Articulation agreement for matriculation from community colleges to universities to offer professional degrees for early childhood professionals
- Development of safety requirements for legally exempt providers receiving CCCAP funding
- Developing stronger links between early childhood and public K12 education
- Improving services to young children with challenging behaviors
- Expanding quality, availability and integration in early childhood programs

THE COMMISSION'S LEGISLATION

Background

Following the 'sun setting' of House Bill 00-1020, "Child Care Commission Act", (the legislation that created the Child Care Commission 2000-2004), early childhood advocates supported the development of the new legislation passed in 2004 as House Bill 04-1277, the "Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission Act".

Charge to the Commission

"The Commission will play an important role in identifying ways to make easier access to quality services and early care and education available to all children and their families so that they can enter school ready for success." Cheryl Caldwell, Chair

The following are the duties laid out in HB 04-1277 for the Commission to pursue during its three year term. The Commission shall solicit input from parents, early care and education providers and others in carrying out the following:

1. 26-6-305 (1) the commission shall continue to study, review and evaluate the development of plans for creating a comprehensive early childhood system. In relation to the development of plans for creating an early childhood system, the commission shall have the following duties:

- (a) Evaluate plans for the creation of an early childhood system in the State of Colorado;
- (b) Work with the state and local departments responsible for the welfare, child care, and education of the children of the State of Colorado to develop a locally driven, state-coordinated system of care that improves the school readiness and quality and delivery of the early childhood system;
- (c) Involve parents, businesses, communities, early childhood professionals, service delivery providers, and policymakers in promoting an early childhood system; and
- (d) Serve as a resource for the implementation of an early childhood system.

2. 26-6-306 (1) The commission shall report to the members of the general assembly on or before November 1, 2005 and on or before July 1, 2007, concerning the matters it has studied and addressed. The report shall include recommendations of the Commission.

3. **26-6.5-106 (5) School readiness rating system. The state Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission created pursuant to section 26-6-304 shall adopt a voluntary school readiness rating system. Such system shall measure the level of preparedness of, and the quality of services provided by, a child care provider to prepare children to enter elementary school.

**These duties have been completed under the Child Care Commission (HB00-1020) and will not need to be considered by this Commission.

OVERVIEW

Public policy related to the care and education of young children has increased dramatically in recent years. Colorado has many early childhood champions who are looking closely at our young children's early years and considering carefully what needs to be done to support working families and to help all Colorado's children succeed in school and life.

Making the case for early childhood investments:

- Research has demonstrated that the care children receive during the first three years of life has a profound effect on brain development and lasting life-long effects
- Studies of student achievement have stressed the idea that learning begins long before children enter first grade and that the notion of "school readiness" must be considered early in a young child's life
- "School Readiness" is a comprehensive concept encompassing all areas of child development (physical well-being and motor development, cognitive development and general knowledge, language development and approaches to learning)
- Significant increases in working parents who have young children and need high quality, affordable and available child care in order to comply with state requirements under welfare reform initiatives
- Child care, early childhood education and other early childhood programs and supports are professions that create jobs, generate tax dollars and pump money into local economies
- Early intervention is supported by research as a successful strategy for promoting healthy development and school readiness with vulnerable children
- Because of the high cost and limited availability of good quality child care, state government's role in supporting families has become increasingly critical
- Intensive professional development efforts not only improve quality in early childhood programs, but are also linked to improved child outcomes

Early childhood policies support the investment in early childhood programs that benefit young minds and healthy development. During the first three years of life, a child's ability to think, feel and relate to others is formed and shapes what they will become, both academically and socially. Family relationship patterns of communication, culture and expectations are set down in these early years as well. Numerous studies have demonstrated that high quality early childhood programs improve children's school readiness, scholastic achievement, overall school competence and lifelong success (W. Steven Barnett, "Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Cognitive and School Outcomes." *The Future of Children* 3, no. 5 (1995): 25-50).

Quality early childhood programs have an important effect on emotional development. Empathy, altruism and impulse control – the basis for moral behavior – begin to develop before age three and grow from the modeling and teaching of parents and other adult caregivers. Research has shown that children without these emotional skills are more likely to have problems later in life and even may become violent and display anti-social behavior as they grown into adulthood.

EARLY CHILDHOOD STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

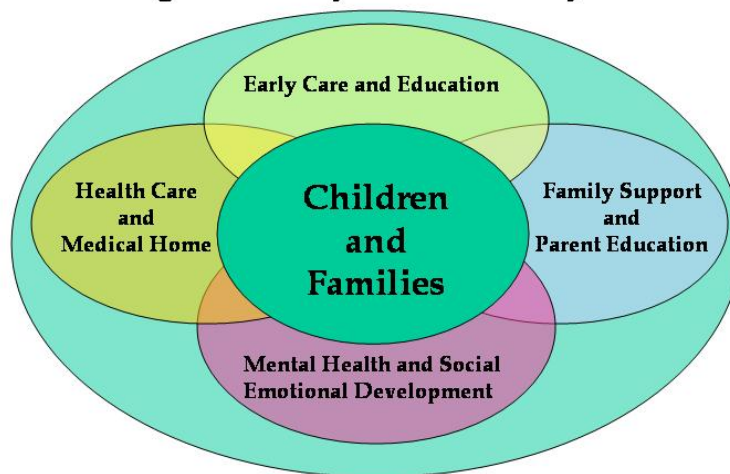
The Commission is charged with reviewing plans for systems of early care and school readiness. Leadership provided by the Commission and other related initiatives is striving to improve efficiency and accountability by creating a **system** of early care and education that promotes school readiness and ease of access for parents. The following state-wide initiatives, activities and organizations have developed plans to achieve these common goals.

Early Childhood State Systems Team

To set the stage for planning a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system, the Early Childhood State Systems Team (ECSST) developed a vision, mission and overarching goal.

Vision:	All children are valued and thriving.
Mission:	The Early Childhood State Systems Team is leading the development and implementation of a strategic plan for an early childhood system.
Overarching goal:	All children are ready for school. “School readiness” is a composite of the attributes of children, families, schools and communities that impact children’s success. School readiness is supported by a comprehensive early childhood system that includes health, social emotional development and mental health, early care and education, family support and parent education.

State Team Model of a Comprehensive and Integrated Early Childhood System



Based on the vision and the overarching school readiness goal, the ECSST adopted eight comprehensive goals. These goals were built on the Colorado Blueprint for an Early Care and Education System, which was adopted by the Colorado Child Care Commission in 2002. The ECSST broadened the goal areas to be inclusive of all of the disciplines that contribute to the school readiness indicators. The comprehensive goals and their associated objectives and activities are the Smart Start Colorado Strategic Plan. Each goal area is currently working to

identify and prioritize policy issues to bring to the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission in the Fall of 2005.

School Readiness Indicators Project

Colorado was chosen to be a part of a 17-state collaborative funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the E. Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the Ford Foundation in 2001. The Colorado application was made possible by the Governor's Office of Policies and Initiatives, led by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and coordinated by the Colorado Children's Campaign. The task force composed of staff from the Colorado Department of Education, Public Health and Environment, Human Services and private sector data collection and analysis specialists, as well as a host of early childhood content experts.

Colorado's School Readiness Indicators Project focuses on young children birth to eight years old. The intent of the project is to create a set of indicators to measure the readiness of the children themselves, their families, the communities in which they live and the schools they will attend. The task force worked with the other 16 states for more than two years to select, define and measure the 62 indicators chosen based on their meaningfulness, measurability and communication power. The school readiness indicator data set was created to:

- Describe child, family, school and community conditions
- Inform state and local community planning and policy making
- Measure progress in improving child outcomes
- Monitor impact of investments and policy choices

School Readiness Quality Improvement Program

SCHOOL READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The School Readiness Quality Improvement Program was enacted by House Bill 05-1238, in Section 26-6.5-106, C.R.S., as a reauthorization of House Bill 02-1297, the School Readiness Child Care Subsidization Program. The purpose of the program is to improve the school readiness of children, 5 years of age or younger, who are cared for at early care and education facilities located in neighborhoods with elementary schools which are receiving moneys from Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as reauthorized in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and which have received an overall academic performance rating of "Low" or "Unsatisfactory," or "Average" with an academic growth rating of "Decline" or "Significantly Decline," according to the School Accountability Report (SAR), pursuant to 22-7-604, C.R.S. The program develops the school readiness of the targeted children by improving the quality of the early care and education that they receive.

Grants for the program are awarded for a three-year period, issued through an RFP process. The projects must be coordinated by a Consolidated Child Care Pilot agency or, in communities that are not under the purview of a Pilot agency, by an interagency coordinating council, a Colorado Preschool Program advisory council, or an early childhood care and education council that meets the requirements set forth in statute and in 12 CCR 2509-8. Subsidies are allocated to early care and education providers according to the projects' individual plans. Participating providers must be licensed. All participating sites receive an annual Quality Performance Rating from Qualistar Early Learning and assistance in improving the quality of care through the use of enhanced

educational materials, specialized teacher training, mentoring/coaching, and increased parent involvement.

Consolidated Child Care Pilot Program

Since 1997, through the action of the Colorado General Assembly, 17 Consolidated Child Care Pilot (Pilots) communities in 30 of Colorado's counties are working to build a quality early childhood system through the collaboration of local partners. The Pilots are charged with the creation of a "seamless delivery system of early care and education services" that:

- ★ Ensures collaboration among public and private stakeholders;
- ★ Responds to the needs of working parents;
- ★ Enhances child care quality; and,
- ★ Consolidates funding sources to create an early childhood system.

Each Pilot is locally led by an early childhood council that develops, coordinates, and implements services for early childhood professionals, children, and families. The councils are composed of community leaders from early care and education, health, mental health, and family support. Their role is to assess community needs, base planning and activities around those, and to try out innovative approaches to building a local early childhood system.

The Pilots receive federal funding from the federal Child Care Development Block Grant (aka Child Care Development Fund), administered through a collaborative partnership between the CO Department of Human Services and CO Department of Education.

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/picccpilotrfp.htm

Prevention Leadership Council

The "PLC" was created by Colorado Law (Section 25-20.5 C.R.S.) in 2000 through House Bill 00-1342. The PLC consists of representatives from six state agencies, two universities and various partners. It was created through state legislation to promote coordinated planning, implementation and evaluation of quality prevention, intervention and treatment services for children, youth and families at the state and local level.

Accomplishments thus far include:

- Uniform minimum standards for prevention and early intervention programs approved by the Board of Health
- Establishment of the "Best Practices" web site containing information on over 200 effective, evidence-based prevention programs in 46 topic areas
- Development of an on-line Prevention Resource and Indicator database that provides information to local communities on over 40 state/federal programs and funding sources and lists over 1200 local prevention and intervention programs in communities across the state
- Memorandum of Agreement signed with the Early Childhood State Systems Team to enhance coordination and collaboration with early childhood prevention and early intervention services
- Completion of the Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Services State Plan that includes several goals of the Early Childhood State Systems Team

Appendices

**Colorado Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission
Funding Supporters**

**Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care
(Department of Revenue Cash Fund)**

Daniels Fund

Rose Community Foundation

Chambers Family Fund

Buell Foundation

Donnell-Kay Foundation

Denver Foundation

Interim Report

Colorado Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission

October 2005

Prepared by Laurie Beckel, MA/LPC, Staff Director

Created by House Bill 04-1277, the three year Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission will focus on the following priority areas as it utilizes specialized knowledge and expertise concerning the links between early childhood care and education, early childhood development, and school readiness indicators to create a comprehensive early childhood system.

The 17 Commissioners (11 Governor Appointees and 6 Legislators) were appointed in March of 2005. Once the Staff Director was hired in April, 2005, each of the Commissioners was individually contacted to discuss the charge of the Commission and their particular early childhood experience and interests. The first meeting was scheduled for May and the Commission has met monthly since July. Monthly meetings will continue the third Friday of each month.

Mission Statement (adopted May 2005)

The Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission is committed to the future of Colorado's Children. The safety, quality and accessibility of the early childhood system of services and supports will impact school readiness and our children's future. The Commission will identify critical issues, evaluate policies, make recommendations and propose legislation to continue to improve School Readiness in Colorado.

Priority Areas

- Quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood programs and supports
- Continued study and strategic response to those critical issues impacting the quality, accessibility and affordability of early childhood programs and supports
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The Commission meetings have been well attended and the agendas for the meetings have been developed from the concerns and interests of the Commissioners. The following topic areas have been presented thus far:

- ✓ Highlights of the previous Child Care Commission work
- ✓ Early Childhood State Systems Team presentation of Strategic Plan
- ✓ Funding, Regulations and Policy in Providing Early Education Programs
- ✓ Colorado Departments Collaborating on Early Childhood Initiatives
- ✓ Colorado Child Care Assistance Program
- ✓ Referendum C and D
- ✓ State Early Childhood Policy Audit and Action Plan
- ✓ Parents Perspectives on Early Childhood Programs through Experience
- ✓ Articulation Issues for Early Childhood Professionals pursuing degrees
- ✓ Safety Issues in Legally Exempt Care.

Development of Policy Action by the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission:

- Task force working on the Master Articulation agreement for matriculation from community colleges to universities to offer professional degrees for early childhood professionals
- Development of safety requirements for legally exempt providers receiving CCCAP funding; legislation being drafted for 2006 session
- Developing stronger links between early childhood and public K12 education through P-16 Council (2006 legislation), local school boards and work with elementary principals through CASE (Colorado Association of School Executives)
- Improving services to young children with challenging behaviors...moving from anecdotal to data driven policy action
- Expanding quality, availability and integration in early childhood programs

Strategic Opportunities in Colorado

- Planning councils exist at local and state levels that have led to collaboration and hold the promise of seamless service delivery for families
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Strategies

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- Involve policy experts in developing the policy agenda of the ECSR Commission
- Listen to parents/families who will drive the process for school readiness for their children
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Despite the economic challenges facing Colorado, the Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission has the opportunity to synthesize the efforts of many into a sensible and sound evidenced-based policy approach that will improve the “school readiness” of Colorado’s young children and the lives of their families by taking a “system approach” to our work.

Please call on me if you have questions and thank you for your support for this important work.
Laurie Beckel, Staff Director
Colorado Foundation for Families and Children

NOTE: This bill has been prepared for the signature of the appropriate legislative officers and the Governor. To determine whether the Governor has signed the bill or taken other action on it, please consult the legislative status sheet, the legislative history, or the Session Laws.



HOUSE BILL 04-1277

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Hefley, Carroll, Cloer, Romanoff, Rose, Stafford, Williams S., Clapp, Frangas, Paccione, White, Boyd, Butcher, Marshall, and Plant;
also SENATOR(S) Cairns, Groff, Hagedorn, Hanna, Tapia, Tupa, and Windels.

CONCERNING THE CHILD CARE COMMISSION, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MODIFYING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSION AND CHANGING THE NAME OF THE COMMISSION TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS COMMISSION, AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION THEREFOR.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. 26-6-301, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6-301. Short title. This part 3 shall be known and may be cited as the "~~Child-Care~~ "EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS Commission Act".

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

SECTION 2. 26-6-302 (1), Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6-302. Legislative declaration. (1) (a) The general assembly hereby finds that the future of Colorado children is of primary concern to the citizens of this state and that the quality of care provided to these young children is an integral component in the development of happy, functional, and contributing adults. However, the general assembly has learned that the safety and quality of available child care is at issue in Colorado. Reports by the state auditor's office released in April of 1995 and in August of 1998 have identified several areas in which the safety and quality of child care in Colorado has been compromised.

(b) The general assembly further finds that, based upon the evidence presented to the interim committee on child care established pursuant to SJR 99-034, there are many programs that should be considered, tested, evaluated, or established that may better serve children in this state and help to provide them with high quality, affordable child care. The general assembly recognizes that the interim committee on child care addressed a wide range of issues in proposed legislation, but further notes that many issues were of too great a nature to be thoroughly studied by the committee in the very limited time available to it.

(c) Accordingly, the general assembly finds that it is appropriate and in the best interests of the citizens of the state of Colorado to establish a commission ~~on child care~~ to continue studying the critical issues impacting child care in the state of Colorado in an effort to improve the quality of child care provided to the youngest citizens of the state.

(d) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOGNIZES THAT IT IS THE PRIMARY RIGHT AND OBLIGATION OF PARENTS TO DETERMINE AND PROVIDE THE PROPER EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER RECOGNIZES THAT PRESCHOOL CHILDREN RECEIVE THE BEST START IN LIFE WHEN THEIR PARENTS ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES AND ARE DIRECTLY PROVIDING THEIR CARE AND EDUCATION. RECOGNIZING THESE PRINCIPLES, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DIRECTS THE COMMISSION TO WORK TOWARD EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS THAT FOSTER AS MUCH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AS POSSIBLE AND MAINTAIN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARENTS.

(e) IN ADDITION, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION FILED WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SINCE NOVEMBER 1, 2001, AS WELL AS RECENT STATE AND NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES, INDICATE THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ARE DIRECTLY LINKED TO CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS. THESE STUDIES SHOW THAT QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION RESULT IN CHILDREN BEING ABLE TO ENTER SCHOOL WITH THE BASIC SKILLS NECESSARY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL. STUDIES ALSO INDICATE THAT QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ARE THE FOUNDATIONS FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY IN LIFE.

(f) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS THAT THROUGH THE PROCESS OF STUDYING AND ANALYZING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION ISSUES, THE COMMISSION HAS LOCATED NUMEROUS STATEWIDE INITIATIVES THAT HAVE DEVELOPED LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES AND PLANS RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL.

(g) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT THE COMMISSION, WITH SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE CONCERNING THE LINKS BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION, EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, AND SCHOOL READINESS, SHOULD EXPAND UPON ITS STUDY, REVIEW, AND EVALUATION OF SCHOOL READINESS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AND SHOULD CONTINUE ITS PLANS FOR CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM.

SECTION 3. 26-6-303 (3), Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended, and the said 26-6-303 is further amended BY THE ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING NEW SUBSECTIONS, to read:

26-6-303. Definitions. As used in this part 3, unless the context otherwise provides:

(3) "Commission" means the ~~child-care~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS commission created in section 26-6-304.

(4) "EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION" MEANS CARE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN THAT NURTURES SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, IS PROVIDED IN A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN, AND IS PROVIDED BY FOR-PROFIT AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT CHILD CARE CENTERS, CHILD CARE HOMES, AND

PRESCHOOLS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO FAITH-BASED CARE.

(5) "EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM" MEANS A COLLABORATIVE, INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF CARE-GIVERS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, ASSOCIATIONS, AND AGENCIES, THAT REGULARLY INTERACT IN FORMING COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATIVES AROUND CHILD PHYSICAL HEALTH, CHILD MENTAL HEALTH, EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION, AND FAMILY SUPPORT WITH THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

(6) "SCHOOL READINESS" MEANS THE ABILITY OF A CHILD TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL BASED ON THE CHILD'S PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, AND COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT FROM BIRTH TO AGE EIGHT, AND ALSO INCLUDES THE ABILITY OF SCHOOLS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND SUCCESS.

SECTION 4. 26-6-304, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6-304. Early childhood and school readiness commission - created. (1) ~~(a) In order to provide legislative oversight, and the continued study, and further development of recommendations for improvements in the delivery of child care in the state of Colorado, there is hereby created in the state department the child care commission.~~ IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THE STUDY AND REVIEW OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF COLORADO, THERE IS HEREBY CREATED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS COMMISSION. The commission shall consist of fifteen members to be appointed for terms of three years; except that, of the members first appointed, five members shall be appointed for one year, five members for two years, and five members for three years. The appointing authorities shall jointly determine which commission members shall serve reduced terms; except that the members described in paragraph (b) of this subsection (1) shall be included in the group of members first appointed for two years. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the original appointing authority for the remainder of the unexpired term. Initial appointments shall be made to the commission no later than August 1, 2000.

(b) The governor shall appoint nine members of the commission, no more than five of whom shall be from the same political party, who shall be representative of the cultural and geographic diversity of the state and at least one of whom shall have experience working with children with disabilities. The members of the commission appointed by the governor shall also be representative of the following interests, organizations, state agencies, and boards:

(I) The division of child care in the state department of human services;

(II) The community consolidated child care services pilot program established pursuant to article 6.5 of this title;

(III) Educators teaching children in preschool, kindergarten, or grades one through five;

(IV) The state board for community colleges and occupational education;

(V) The county departments of social services;

(VI) Child care facilities;

(VII) Parents of children currently enrolled in a public or private early childhood care and education program;

(VIII) The business community;

(IX) Non-profit or not-for-profit organizations that evaluate the quality of early childhood care and education programs and assign ratings thereto in an effort to assess the success of such programs and to improve the ultimate delivery of early childhood care and education.

(b.5) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH (b) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1), ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2004, THE GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION SHALL BE INCREASED BY TWO, RESULTING IN ELEVEN TOTAL APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION BY THE GOVERNOR, NO MORE THAN SIX OF WHOM SHALL BE FROM THE SAME POLITICAL PARTY. THE ADDITIONAL PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR SHALL BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

OF THE STATE. THE GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION SHALL BE FURTHER MODIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

(I) THE MEMBER REPRESENTING CHILD CARE FACILITIES APPOINTED PURSUANT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (VI) OF PARAGRAPH (b) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1) SHALL BE DEEMED REMOVED AS OF JUNE 30, 2004, AND THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT TWO MEMBERS TO REPRESENT CHILD CARE FACILITIES, ONE OF WHOM REPRESENTS A NONPROFIT CHILD CARE FACILITY AND ONE OF WHOM REPRESENTS A PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT CHILD CARE FACILITY;

(II) THE MEMBER WHO IS A PARENT OF A CHILD CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM APPOINTED PURSUANT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (VII) OF PARAGRAPH (b) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1) SHALL BE DEEMED REMOVED AS OF JUNE 30, 2004, AND THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT A NEW MEMBER WHO IS A PARENT OF A CHILD CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A NONPROFIT OR PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM WHO IS NOT OTHERWISE ENGAGED IN THE BUSINESS OF CHILD CARE OR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION;

(III) THE MEMBER REPRESENTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY APPOINTED PURSUANT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (VIII) OF PARAGRAPH (b) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1) SHALL BE DEEMED REMOVED AS OF JUNE 30, 2004, AND THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT A NEW MEMBER TO REPRESENT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WHICH MEMBER SHALL NOT BE ENGAGED IN THE BUSINESS OF CHILD CARE OR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; AND

(IV) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT A NEW MEMBER WHO IS A DIRECTOR OF A COLORADO HEAD START GRANTEE PROGRAM.

(c) Six of the members of the commission shall be members of the general assembly and shall be appointed as follows:

(I) The president of the senate shall appoint two members from the senate and the minority leader of the senate shall appoint one member from the senate to serve on the commission, no more than two of whom shall be members of the same political party;

(II) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint three members from the house of representatives to serve on the commission, no more than two of whom shall be members of the same political party.

(d) NOTWITHSTANDING THE TERMS OF APPOINTMENT REFERENCED IN PARAGRAPH (a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1), ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2004, THE MEMBERS REMAINING ON THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPHS (b) AND (c) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1) AND THE NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH (b.5) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1) SHALL EACH SERVE FOR A TERM OF THREE YEARS, WITH THE TERM COMMENCING ON JULY 1, 2004.

(2) The members of the commission who are members of the general assembly shall be compensated as provided in section 2-2-307, C.R.S., FROM THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS CASH FUND CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 26-6-306.5. ~~and~~ Members of the commission who are not members of the general assembly shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties while serving on the commission FROM THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS CASH FUND CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 26-6-306.5.

(3) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall have full and complete power to act upon and resolve in the name of the commission any matter or question properly before it at any meeting. The commission, as soon after appointment as practicable and each year thereafter, shall elect EXECUTIVE OFFICERS TO PRESIDE AT ALL MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION from among its members a ~~chairperson or vice-chairperson and~~ who shall hold office until their successors are elected. ~~The chairperson or his or her designee, shall preside at all meetings of the commission, and~~ The secretary, or his or her designee, shall make a record of the proceedings thereof that shall be preserved in the office of the state department.

(4) The commission shall meet as often as necessary to carry out its duties as specified in this part 3. In completing its duties, the commission shall solicit input from parents, child care providers, and other interested persons.

SECTION 5. 26-6-305, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6-305. Early childhood and school readiness commission - duties. (1) THE COMMISSION SHALL CONTINUE TO STUDY, REVIEW, AND

EVALUATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS FOR CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM. IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS FOR CREATING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM, the commission shall have the following duties:

(a) ~~To continue the study of the overall quality of child care in Colorado;~~ TO EVALUATE PLANS FOR THE CREATION OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF COLORADO;

(b) ~~To continue the study of the quality, training, and experience of persons providing child care and to make recommendations concerning the improvement of the quality of such providers;~~ TO WORK WITH THE STATE AND LOCAL DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WELFARE, CHILD CARE, AND EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE STATE OF COLORADO TO DEVELOP A LOCALLY DRIVEN, STATE-COORDINATED SYSTEM OF CARE THAT IMPROVES THE SCHOOL READINESS AND THE QUALITY AND DELIVERY OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM;

(c) ~~To continue the study of criminal history background checks of child care providers;~~

(d) ~~To continue the study of licensing requirements for, and flexibility needs of, child care providers;~~ TO INVOLVE PARENTS, BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES, EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS, SERVICE DELIVERY PROVIDERS, AND POLICYMAKERS IN PROMOTING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM; AND

(e) ~~To continue the study of methods for encouraging or facilitating the location of child care facilities in workplaces;~~ TO SERVE AS A RESOURCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM.

(f) ~~To study the level of training requirements of and credentialing options available to child care providers, including a study of the successes and shortcomings of the credentialing programs implemented by community consolidated child care pilot site agencies pursuant to article 6.5 of this title;~~

(g) ~~To evaluate the possibility of alternative approaches to monitoring, inspecting, and investigating child care facilities in an effort to use state department resources more efficiently, to eliminate, if appropriate, unnecessary inspections, and to implement self-auditing procedures, where appropriate;~~

~~(h) To study the extent, quality, and impact of unlicensed child care in Colorado;~~

~~(i) To study the possibility of complimentary state loan programs;~~

~~(j) To study methods for encouraging qualified individuals to enter the child care profession;~~

~~(k) To evaluate the community consolidated child care services pilot program established in article 6.5 of this title, taking into consideration the evaluation that is to be completed by October 1, 2001, pursuant to section 26-6.5-105 (3);~~

~~(l) To study such further issues related to child care that may improve the quality and delivery of child care in Colorado;~~

~~(m) To evaluate the data and results of the state tax credits and state tax exemptions impacting the child care industry that may be implemented in Colorado;~~

~~(n) To evaluate and make recommendations how the state department and county departments use federal child care development funds and other federal moneys toward the improvement of child care in the state of Colorado.~~

SECTION 6. 26-6-306 (1), Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6-306. Report - proposed legislation. (1) The child care commission shall report to the members of the general assembly on or before November 1, 2001 2005, and on or before November first each year thereafter for the following two years JULY 1, 2007, concerning the matters it has studied and addressed. The report shall include recommendations of the child care commission. The state department shall work with the commission in preparing the report.

SECTION 7. Part 3 of article 6 of title 26, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

26-6-306.5. Early childhood and school readiness commission -

authority to contract for staff - authority to seek and accept gifts, grants, or donations - creation of fund - expenditures from fund.

(1) THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR STAFF ASSISTANCE TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS AND PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3 IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS IN AN AMOUNT SUFFICIENT TO FUND STAFF ASSISTANCE.

(2) THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS AUTHORIZED TO SEEK AND ACCEPT GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3. ALL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNDS RECEIVED THROUGH GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS SHALL BE TRANSMITTED TO THE STATE TREASURER, WHO SHALL CREDIT THE SAME TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS CASH FUND, WHICH FUND IS HEREBY CREATED AND REFERRED TO IN THIS PART 3 AS THE "FUND". THE MONEYS IN THE FUND SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ANNUAL APPROPRIATION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PART 3. ANY UNEXPENDED AND UNENCUMBERED MONEYS REMAINING IN THE FUND AT THE END OF A FISCAL YEAR SHALL REMAIN IN THE FUND AND SHALL NOT BE CREDITED OR TRANSFERRED TO THE GENERAL FUND OR ANOTHER FUND. ALL UNEXPENDED AND UNENCUMBERED MONEYS REMAINING IN THE FUND AS OF JULY 1, 2007, SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE CHILD CARE CASH FUND, CREATED IN SECTION 26-6-114 (5).

(3) COMPENSATION AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 26-6-304 (2) FOR COMMISSION MEMBERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL BE APPROVED BY THE CHAIR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND PAID BY VOUCHERS AND WARRANTS DRAWN AS PROVIDED BY LAW FROM FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR SUCH PURPOSE AND ALLOCATED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE FUND.

(4) (a) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT NO GENERAL FUND MONEYS SHALL BE OBLIGATED OR APPROPRIATED TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PART 3.

(b) IF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS CASH FUND CREATED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION DOES NOT CONTAIN MONEYS SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004-05 BY DECEMBER 1, 2004, THEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOTIFY THE COMMISSION, THE STATE TREASURER, AND THE REVISOR OF

STATUTES, AND THIS PART 3 SHALL BE REPEALED, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2004.

(c) IF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS CASH FUND CREATED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION DOES NOT CONTAIN MONEYS SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005-06 BY DECEMBER 1, 2005, THEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOTIFY THE COMMISSION, THE STATE TREASURER, AND THE REVISOR OF STATUTES, AND THIS PART 3 SHALL BE REPEALED, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2005.

(d) IF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS CASH FUND CREATED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION DOES NOT CONTAIN MONEYS SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006-07 BY DECEMBER 1, 2006, THEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOTIFY THE COMMISSION, THE STATE TREASURER, AND THE REVISOR OF STATUTES, AND THIS PART 3 SHALL BE REPEALED, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2006.

SECTION 8. 26-6-307, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6-307. Repeal of part. This part 3 is repealed, effective July 1, 2004 2007; EXCEPT THAT, THIS PART 3 MAY BE REPEALED PRIOR TO JULY 1, 2007, IF REPEAL IS REQUIRED BY SECTION 26-6-306.5 (4).

SECTION 9. The introductory portion to 26-6.5-106 (5) and 26-6.5-106 (9) (b), Colorado Revised Statutes, are amended to read:

26-6.5-106. School readiness and early childhood child care subsidization program. (5) **School-readiness rating system.** The state ~~child care~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS commission created pursuant to section 26-6-304 shall adopt a voluntary school-readiness rating system. Such rating system shall measure the level of preparedness of and quality of services provided by a child care provider to prepare children to enter elementary school. The school-readiness rating system shall:

(9) **Evaluation - report.** (b) On or before October 1, 2005, the state department, or any private entity with which the state department is hereby authorized to contract for this purpose, shall submit a consolidated

statewide report, based upon the reports prepared and submitted by the county departments and pilot site agencies, addressing the items set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection (9) to the state ~~child-care~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS commission and to the members of the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate of the general assembly. The general assembly shall review the appropriateness of continuing school-readiness subsidies pursuant to this section during the 2006 regular session.

SECTION 10. Appropriation. (1) In addition to any other appropriation, there is hereby appropriated, out of any moneys in the early childhood and school readiness cash fund, created pursuant to section 26-6-306.5 (2), Colorado Revised Statutes, not otherwise appropriated, to the department of human services, for allocation to the division of child care, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004, the sum of twenty-six thousand one hundred dollars (\$26,100), or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the implementation of this act.

(2) In addition to any other appropriation, there is hereby appropriated, out of any moneys in the early childhood and school readiness cash fund, created pursuant to section 26-6-306.5 (2), Colorado Revised Statutes, not otherwise appropriated, to the legislative department, for allocation to the legislative council, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004, the sum of six hundred dollars (\$600), or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the implementation of this act.

SECTION 11. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds,

determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Lola Spradley
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

John Andrews
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Judith Rodrigue
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mona Heustis
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE

APPROVED _____

Bill Owens
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO