

Serve & Return

Brought to you by Colorado Project LAUNCH and LAUNCH Together

Welcome to the first edition of the Serve & Return Newsletter – your quarterly dose of all things early childhood mental health (ECMH) and social-emotional development with a special focus on progress and innovations across Colorado communities. Most are probably familiar with the [“serve and return”](#) metaphor and how important healthy interactions are in shaping the developing brain. Inspired by this powerful concept of connections, Colorado Project LAUNCH (COPL) and LAUNCH Together are partnering to share stories, learnings, and research with cross-sector champions. Just as neural connections are formed and strengthened over time, we hope to learn, collaborate, and communicate new ideas and strategies that spur action to advance the field of early childhood mental health. Need a refresher on the history of COPL and LAUNCH Together? Check out the bottom of this newsletter for more information or contact [Katie Poston](#).

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STORIES OF IMPACT

Stories of real life experiences ground us in the work we do. Learn how LAUNCH efforts are impacting children and families - and how children and families are impacting LAUNCH.

When the student becomes the teacher. Leadership can emerge within communities from individuals who seek opportunities to develop their skills by engaging in classes, training, and policy and advocacy efforts. Gloria Sanchez is a perfect example of a family leader in the South Adams County community. Gloria is focused, dedicated, and determined to support her children and family to the best of her ability. As a committed parent and continuous learner, she has come full circle from being a participant in parenting and leadership classes to now teaching and leading these classes for families with young children.

As noted in a recent interview with Ms. Sanchez, "this work all started with a speech I gave at a Growing

began in 2013 and is stronger than ever today. Along with her commitments at the systems level, Gloria is now providing classes at the service level. These classes include: The Incredible Years, Mother/Father Read, Cradling Literacy, and Grandcares. Research shows that family engagement and leadership in the community leads to an increase in positive outcomes for young children and families. Gloria is a strong advocate and leads by example in hopes of creating a happy, healthy, and strong childhood for her own children and the children in her community. The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County is honored to collaborate with Gloria Sanchez. ECPAC and its partners are confident that our collective efforts to support young children and families are stronger because of her dedication and service.



Gloria Sanchez & Family

Breathe in, breathe out. Pueblo's Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Specialist, Lorraine Njos, has been working with a little boy and his family through his child care center. ECMH Specialists work to promote healthy social-emotional development by integrating support into daily programming and encouraging families to do the same. Ms. Njos talks with the family weekly. Together, they practice building skills to help him recognize and express emotions in healthy ways using techniques like calm down time, breathing skills, and using his words. His mom shared that not only is he benefiting from this support, but he is sharing tips with his older sister explaining to her how to take deep breaths to calm down when she is upset.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

Communities are laboratories for creative problem-solving. See how one community is forging its own path forward.

When one door closes, another door opens. When Larimer County didn't receive a LAUNCH Together grant, that didn't stop community leaders from moving forward to improve children's social-emotional health in their own innovative way. What is now called "The Larimer County Leap Coalition" (Leap) grew from the efforts of an existing community cohort with a long history of collaboration. The key partners (Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, Health District, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, Larimer Department of Human Services, and United Way) had been working together to provide support to several different cross-sector county initiatives addressing social-emotional development. After they weren't selected for LAUNCH Together, this dedicated group of stakeholders reconvened to discuss how to harness the community's passion and energy around early childhood mental health. That meeting was on Leap Day, February 2016. Local leaders decided to continue to move forward with their work and formed an alliance known as Leap! The Coalition made the case to county commissioners and other local champions to support their effort. Today, the Coalition is comprised of 67 people representing 25 different businesses, agencies, programs, and community members all with a common purpose - to strengthen and connect systems in order to support young children's social development and emotional well-being in a culturally responsive manner. For more information about the Leap Coalition history, stakeholder engagement process, or action plan, please contact Leap Coordinator, [Bonnie Cowen](#).

TRANSLATING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Data is only useful if it is analyzed and communicated in a way that can improve day-to-day practice. We look forward to highlighting evaluation insights that inform community efforts.

Closing the Loop. Colorado Project LAUNCH is implementing health promotion and prevention strategies in South Adams County, where Hispanic, Latino(a), or Spanish residents make up **72%** of the total population. Care navigators at North Metro Community Services, Clinica Family Health Services, Mountainland Pediatrics/Community Reach Center, and Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics are critical Adams County partners in promoting best practices in screening and referral processes. Care navigation is making a big difference in “closing the loop” between screening, referral, and services, especially for disparate communities. In fact, **76%** of the **134** referrals where a care navigator was assisting resulted in successful follow-up services. Take a deeper dive into the numbers by checking out [COPL care navigation highlights](#) from Year 3. What role can care navigation play within local and state systems to close the loop from screening to referral to services?

Building Strong Partnerships. Successful coordination and collaboration across organizations is a cornerstone of LAUNCH Together. To assess partnerships and support continuous quality improvement, LAUNCH Together state and local partners are using the [PARTNER Tool](#) to measure collaboration. Upon completion of a survey and data analysis by the [Butler Institute for Families](#), LAUNCH Together partners will have information on the value of their interactions. Data collection is in process with Jefferson County partners being the first to reach 100% participation! This fall, state and local partners will have valuable information to strengthen the quality of the collaborative efforts needed to advance children’s social-emotional health and ensure lasting change.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Be sure to save the date for these upcoming partner events, trainings, and webinars this year.

- SAMHSA’s [Center of Excellence for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#) two-part webinar series on considerations for building an IECMHC model (starting September 11)
- [Colorado Medical Home Community Forum](#) on Community Linkages and the Health Neighborhood (September 12)
- Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County’s (ECPAC) [Equity Symposium](#) (September 25) in Westminster, CO
- Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics’ [Kids Health Symposium](#) (September 28) in Denver, CO
- Post-Partum International [Perinatal Mood Disorders Training](#) (October 2-3) in Loveland, CO
- National Academy for State Health Policy [Annual Conference](#) (October 23-25) in Portland, OR
- CoAIMH’s 9-Module Colorado Foundations Pilot Community Training (October 26-28) in Denver, CO and (December 7-9) in Grand Junction, CO. Email co.endorsement.coordinator@gmail.com for details.
- Civic Canopy’s [Collective Impact Summit](#) (November 29-30) in Denver, CO
- ZERO TO THREE’s [Annual Conference](#) (November 29-December 1) in San Diego, CA

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Check out timely resources and publications related to the [core LAUNCH strategies](#) and other relevant topics.

Communications & Public Awareness

- **Social-Emotional Communications Toolkit:** Through a cross-agency collaborative process, Colorado Project LAUNCH and the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County have developed a communications plan and toolkit to equip adults with information about social-emotional development. Contact your local [Early Childhood Council](#) to learn more.

- **Postpartum Support International's PRD Hub:** A [new online hub](#) with pregnancy-related depression and anxiety resources.

Trauma-Informed Care

- **Helping Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma - Policies and Strategies for Early Care and Education:** A [policy brief](#) by the National Center for Children in Poverty and Child Trends with information about early childhood trauma, its impact on child development, and strategies to help young children who have been exposed to trauma.

Home Visitation

- **Maternal Depression in Home Visiting - A Prevention Approach:** An [article](#) from Dr. Deborah Perry at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development introduces [Depression in Mothers: A Toolkit for Family Service Providers](#).

Cultural Competency & Inclusion

- **Entanglements of Discipline, Behavioral Intervention, Race and Disability:** A [recent publication](#) on positive behavioral supports by the Universal Council for Educational Administration.

Behavioral Health Integration & Financing

- **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Publications:** [Policy Statement](#) on Guiding Principles for Team-Based Pediatric Care and [Systematic Review](#) of Promoting Early Child Development with Intervention in Health and Nutrition.
- Series of national articles on the **impact of health care reform on children and families:**
 - [America's Babies Need Affordable Health Care: The Impact of Medicaid Restructuring on Young Children \(ZERO TO THREE\)](#)
 - [Health Insurance: A Critical Support for Infants, Toddlers, and their Families \(CLASP and ZERO TO THREE\)](#)
 - [Ten Things to Know about Medicaid's Role for Children with Behavioral Health Needs \(Kaiser Family Foundation\)](#)
- **Value-Based Payment Models for Children's Services:** An [archived webinar](#) about reimbursement changes in the coming years from the National Council for Behavioral Health.
- **CCHAP Practice Manager Update:** An [archived webinar](#) explaining Health First Colorado (Medicaid) EPSDT changes.
- **State Strategies for Building Integrated Care Infrastructure:** An [archived webinar](#) by the National Academy for State Health Policy.

Policy & ROI

- **Information and Resources to Assist States in Developing Policy on Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion:** A [new report](#) from The Center of Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes provides state regulation and policy strategies to reduce suspension and expulsions.
- **Advancing State Policies for Infants and Toddlers - Lessons from Three States:** A [report](#) from ZERO TO THREE highlighting efforts by Indiana, Oregon, and Vermont to take action toward cross-sector infant-toddler policy priorities.
- **Improving Social Emotional Skills in Childhood Enhances Long-Term Well-Being and Economic Outcomes:** An [issue brief](#) published by Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center at Penn State University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which outlines the economic benefits of social and emotional learning.

STATE & NATIONAL HAPPENINGS

Learn about the latest state- and national-level news impacting early childhood mental

Colorado Project LAUNCH (COPL) is moving and shaking! From moving critical infrastructure, training, and sustainability efforts forward through federal carry-over funding to updating the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, there is lots for Colorado to be excited about. If you have questions about any of the activities below, please contact [Ann Bruce](#).

- Continued development of the state Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Hub and onboarding process;
- Professional development and support for providers including trainings on the DC:05 Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorder, implicit bias, and the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS);
- Sustainability planning, including stakeholder engagement for collective, long-term impact beyond federal grant funding; and
- Research and evaluation activities, including the development of an early childhood expulsion and suspension survey, a qualitative study of care navigation practices and implementation in Adams County, and market research of women affected by pregnancy-related depression and anxiety in Spanish-speaking, Latino/Hispanic communities to inform a Spanish-language public awareness campaign.

Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce 2020 Plan: Developed by early childhood stakeholders throughout the state and endorsed by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC), [the plan](#) provides an ambitious roadmap to ensure a comprehensive professional development system that promotes a high-quality, effective, and diverse early childhood workforce in Colorado.

The **San Luis Valley Community Advisory Board (CAB)** invited Lorraine F. Kubicek, Ph.D., IMH-E (IV-Research Faculty), the lead evaluator for Colorado Project LAUNCH, JFK Partners/Pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and [David Olds, Ph.D.](#) of Nurse Family Partnership, to discuss infant and early childhood mental health. The presentation focused on importance of positive caregiver-child relationships to children's long term health and well-being and the Partners In Parenting Education (PIPE) curriculum. The CAB was presented with the [Community-Based Participatory Research Award](#) by the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center, which is part of the Colorado School of Public Health, University of Colorado School of Medicine.

The **Maternal and Child Health Link Scholarship Program** is an innovative program through the [Colorado School of Public Health](#) aimed at addressing the educational and training needs of practicing Maternal and Child Health professionals working in hard-to-reach rural, frontier, or tribal areas of the Rocky Mountain region. For more information, contact [Elizabeth Greenwell](#).

Federal funding for the **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)** is set to expire on September 30, 2017. Nationally, about 8.9 million kids and their families use CHIP for their health insurance. In Colorado, approximately 90,000 kids and pregnant women had coverage in Colorado's CHIP program (CHIP+) at some point this year. The [All Kids Covered Coalition](#) is leading an advocacy effort to extend federal funding for important program through 2022 at the currently established levels that enable Colorado to implement a successful program. Contact [Sarah Barnes](#) for more information about how to get involved.

[Project LAUNCH](#) is a national effort funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) with the goal of improving social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and cognitive outcomes for young children (birth through age eight) and their families. Colorado is fortunate to have received two federal Project LAUNCH awards: Weld County Systems Navigation Project (2010-2015) and Colorado Project LAUNCH, or COPL (2014-2019). COPL represents partners across the Colorado Department of Human Services, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, JFK Partners at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County (ECPAC). LAUNCH Together, inspired by the experiences and outcomes of Project LAUNCH, was created through a unique collaboration of eight Colorado-based foundations. Through this private funding, four communities across the state are supported in enhancing early childhood mental health prevention and promotion practices and building coordinated community systems.