

# **La Plata County Food Equity Coalition Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education in the LatinX Community**

**2023 - 2027**



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## Background

The Good Food Collective (GFC) contacted Transform Consulting Group (TCG) for assistance in forming an early care and education task force in La Plata County to help address their child care issues, specifically how these issues relate to the county’s Hispanic and LatinX community. The GFC wants to deepen their understanding of the need for early care and education among the Hispanic and LatinX community to inform their future strategy.

To understand the landscape and needs in La Plata County, TCG gathered quantitative data gathered from public sources and qualitative data from a variety of key stakeholders. TCG summarized this information into an early care and education community needs assessment report.

The LatinX Early Care and Education Task Force worked to identify goals and strategies to further their efforts to strengthen early care and education in La Plata County. The goals and strategies are outlined in this document, along with action items and a timeline.

## Goals

The Grupo de Cuidado Infantil and the Task Force reached a consensus on identifying three goals to focus on over the next five years.



## Strategic Action Plan

Goal	Strategy
<b>Accessibility</b>	Build strategic partnerships to align early care and education expansion with other efforts
	Create opportunities for LatinX families to connect with early care and education programs and subsidies
	Set a goal to increase early care and education spots by xx%
	Identify and improve barriers preventing the LatinX community from accessing early care and education
	Create a sustainability plan to help new early care and education spots be long lasting
	Create a Friend and Family Care Co-op
	Increase early care and education workforce to fill current vacancies and increase seats overall
	Work with the city and county governments to create planning and zoning laws that support early care and education facilities
	Diversify program offerings of non-traditional hours and infant and toddler care to meet community needs
<b>Affordability</b>	Develop a comprehensive communications plan that outlines the key messages, tactics, methods, and timeline for building awareness in the community to address inequalities
	Maximize use of state incentives
	Work with early care and education programs to support sustainable business practices
	Engage all employers in supporting their entire workforce
	Launch a scholarship or financial aid fund for LatinX families with young children
<b>Cultural Celebration</b>	Collaborate with existing coalitions and workgroups to elevate the LatinX voice
	Include linguistically diverse teaching strategies
	Embrace an asset-based mindset
	Design a dual language immersion early care and education program
	Practice culturally responsive teaching

## Timeline

This is a proposed overview of how the strategic plan will be implemented over the next five years. Some of the strategies will be carried out over multiple years.

Year 1 - 2023	Year 2 - 2024	Year 3 - 2025	Year 4 - 2026	Year 5 - 2027
<p>Build strategic partnerships to align early care and education expansion with other efforts</p> <p>Create opportunities for LatinX families to connect with early care and education programs and subsidies</p> <p>Set a goal to increase early care and education spots by xx%</p> <p>Identify and improve barriers preventing the LatinX community from accessing early care and education</p>	<p>Create a sustainability plan to help new early care and education spots be long lasting</p> <p>Maximize use of state incentives</p> <p>Work with early care and education programs to support sustainable business practices</p> <p>Include linguistically diverse teaching strategies</p>	<p>Create a Friend and Family Care Co-op</p> <p>Embrace an asset-based mindset</p> <p>Design a dual language immersion early care and education program</p>	<p>Increase early care and education workforce to fill current vacancies and increase seats overall</p> <p>Work with the city and county governments to create planning and zoning laws that support early care and education facilities</p> <p>Engage all employers in supporting their workforce</p>	<p>Diversify program offerings of non-traditional hours and infant and toddler care to meet community needs</p> <p>Launch a scholarship or financial aid fund for LatinX families with young children</p> <p>Practice culturally responsive teaching</p>

<p>Develop a comprehensive communications plan that outlines the key messages, tactics, methods, and timeline for building awareness in the community to address inequalities</p> <p>Collaborate with existing coalitions and workgroups to elevate the LatinX voice</p>				
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**La Plata County Food Equity  
Coalition Strategic Plan - Implementation Framework**

**Goal 1: Increase equitable access to quality early care and education.**

*Strategy: Build strategic partnerships to align early care and education expansion with other efforts*

**Indicators of Success:**  
*-Many community efforts incorporate early care and education strategies/action steps  
 -Early care and education programs are included in affordable housing developments*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Create and implement advocacy plan		Year 1

Work with early care and education programs to create a strong network of leaders to move the work forward		Year 1
Identify stakeholders that have not been reached for this effort and educate them about this plan		Year 1
Share this strategic plan to find synergy		Year 1
Work with affordable housing to incorporate early care and education centers or home-based programs in developments		Year 2
Work with other community plans/organizations and initiatives		Year 2
Collaborate with existing coalitions to support the early care and education workforce		Year 2
Join in collective advocacy efforts / Inform Task Force members of opportunities to engage in advocacy		Year 2
Apply for joint funding with partners		Year 3

<i>Strategy: Create opportunities for LatinX families to connect with early care and education programs and subsidies</i>		
<i>Indicator of Success: LatinX families are connected with early care and education programs and the subsidies available to them</i>		
Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Host a child care fair where early care and education and subsidy providers meet with LatinX families		Year 1
Hire a local navigator to connect families to programs and assist in applying for subsidies		Year 2

*Strategy: Set a goal to increase early care and education spots by xx%*

*Indicators of Success: 1-, 3-, and 5-year goals are met*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Set a 1-, 3-, and 5-year goal to increase early care and education spots for 6 weeks to 3 years-old by xx%		Year 1
Set a 1-, 3-, and 5-year goal to increase LatinX early care and education spots by xx%		Year 1
Set a 1-, 3-, and 5-year goal to increase high-quality early care and education spots by xx%		Year 1

*Strategy: Identify and improve barriers preventing the LatinX community from accessing early care and education*

*Indicator of Success: The LatinX community is able to access early care and education programming because language and cost barriers no longer exist*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Assist all programs in creating enrollment forms and other documents in Spanish		Year 1
Host a physical day with a local clinic to help families get the physicals they need at an affordable cost		Year 1
Translate all materials into Spanish		Year 1
Provide grants to families for physicals or other things they need		Year 3

*Strategy: Work with the city and county governments to create planning and zoning laws that support early care and education facilities*

*Indicator of Success: Planning and zoning laws support new early care and education facilities*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Identify planning and zoning laws that are not friendly when creating early care and education facilities, and work to change those laws		Year 1

*Strategy: Create a sustainability plan to help new early care and education spots be long lasting*

*Indicator of Success: Using the plan creates long-lasting early care and education spots*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Look at the early care and education seats the community is trying to create and focus on longevity		Year 2

*Strategy: Create a Friend and Family Care Co-op*

*Indicator of Success: A network of friend and family care decreases the early care and education gap, specifically among the early care and education community. The network is filled with people who are trained to take care of young children and feel supported and engaged through training and networking.*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Work with families to set up home-based care		Year 2
Target families in child care deserts		Year 3
Provide training to caregivers		Year 3
Provide networking opportunities for social		Year 3



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<i>Strategy: Increase early care and education workforce to fill current vacancies and increase seats overall</i>		
<b>Indicators of Success:</b> <i>-Members from the LatinX and/or affordable housing communities are filling the early care and education workforce gap</i> <i>-Potential and current early care and education staff understand the steps to enter the workforce</i> <i>-Internal and external challenges to credentials are addressed</i>		
Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Gather detailed data on early care and education staff qualifications		Year 4
Educate, market, and offer existing early care and education training programs to the LatinX community		Year 4
Educate and market existing early care and education training programs to people entering affordable housing		Year 4
Increase the number of qualified early care and education staff with credentials		Year 4

<i>Strategy: Diversify program offerings of non-traditional hours and infant and toddler care to meet community needs</i>		
<b>Indicators of Success:</b> <i>-Early care and education gaps are filled with necessary care</i> <i>-Parents are able to work and be fully present in their jobs knowing their kids are safe</i>		
Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Create child care during nontraditional hours		Year 1

Provide evening/weekend early care and education to LatinX families at existing centers		Year 1
Implement a program for children who have short-term illnesses that prevent parents from working		Year 5

**Goal 2: Create an equitable, affordable, and sustainable early care and education system.**

*Strategy: Develop a comprehensive communications plan that outlines the key messages, tactics, methods, and timeline for building awareness in the community to address inequalities*

*Indicators of Success: The community understands how to access early care and education and subsidies available because they are educated about the services available*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Create awareness of safe and healthy environments		Year 1
Create awareness of the enrollment/priority processes		Year 1
Create awareness of publicly funded resources		Year 1

*Strategy: Maximize use of state incentives*

*Indicators of Success: Available incentives increase the number of early care and education seats*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Ensure the community is taking advantage of all early care and education tax credits, grants, and resources provided by the state		Year 2

*Strategy: Work with early care and education programs to support sustainable business practices*

*Indicators of Success: Early care and education programs are sustainable*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Help programs understand how to create a sliding scale fee structure based on a		Year 1

family's income while taking into account budget items that are specific to Latinx families		
Train programs on creating a positive work environment		Year 2
Assist programs in creating a budget and understanding their break-even amount (where their revenue covers all their expenses)		Year 2
Connect programs to state resources they may not be aware of		Year 2

<i>Strategy: Engage all employers in supporting their entire workforce</i>		
<b>Indicators of Success:</b> -More young children are in early care and education seats -Parents are working at their potential knowing their children are safe		
Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Assist employers in setting up Dependent Care Assistant Plans		Year 4
Work with employers to offer tuition scholarships to offset the cost of child care		Year 4
Work with employers to pay for back-up care/sick care		Year 4
Explore <a href="https://www.coloradoepic.org">https://www.coloradoepic.org</a>		Year 4
Work with employers to providing near-site or on-site care		Year 5
Work with employers to reserve spots for their employees' children at early care and education programs		Year 5

*Strategy: Launch a scholarship or financial aid fund for LatinX families with young children*

**Indicators of Success:**

- The number of young children in early care and education increases
- The number of children prepared for school and success in life increases

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Create eligibility criteria		Year 1
Develop a fundraising campaign for funds		Year 5

**Goal 3: Build a culturally inclusive early care and education community.**

*Strategy: Collaborate with existing coalitions and workgroups to elevate the LatinX voice*

**Indicators of Success:** *The community hears the LatinX voice throughout various efforts in the county and begins to incorporate their needs in all initiatives*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Create a shared message		Year 1
Engage with other coalitions/workgroups		Year 1
Use Language Justice at community meetings		Year 1
Identify and share stories		Year 1

*Strategy: Design a dual language immersion early care and education program*

**Indicators of Success:** *All children are learning both Spanish and English in a Spanish Immersion Program that helps students and their parents understand the cultures represented in the program*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Conduct a feasibility study		Year 1

Establish a program type		Year 2
Fundraise		Year 2
Work with the local school district to create a pre-K-12 program, partnering with an entrepreneur to start a program, or work with an existing program to add Spanish Immersion		Year 4

*Strategy: Include linguistically diverse teaching strategies*

*Indicators of Success: Children develop strong oral and written language skills*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Work with existing programs to provide dual language signage, and purchase toys and books that make everyone feel welcome in the classroom		Year 2
Provide training sessions to early care and education programs on different cultures in the area and how each one handles child care		Year 2
Provide a cultural competency assessment to early care and education programs to help them know where they are, and areas to improve		Year 2
Provide Language Justice training to early care and education providers		Year 2
Implement Language Justice at all early care and education programs		Year 2

*Strategy: Embrace an asset-based mindset*

*Indicators of Success: Materials and curriculum in early care and education programs match the interests and skills of the children and their families*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Work with early care and education programs to use child's and parent/grandparent's interests, skills, and knowledge to guide creation of classroom		Year 3

*Strategy: Practice culturally responsive teaching*

*Indicators of Success: Early care and education programs understand the cultural needs of the children and families that are part of their programs*

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Work with early care and education programs to create student-centered classrooms		Year 5

## Potential Partners

Task Force members provided the following list of potential partners for early care and education efforts:

- Bayfield Early Education Programs (BEEP)
- Bayfield School District
- Candado
- Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)
- City of Durango
- Colorado Community College System
- Colorado Department of Early Childhood
- Colorado Family Friend and Neighbor Care Program
- Grupo de Cuidado Infantil
- Current early care and education programs

- Durango Adult Education Center
- Durango Business Improvement Center
- Durango Small Business Development Center
- Early Childhood Council of La Plata County
- Economic Development Alliance
- Employers
- Housing Solutions for the Southwest
- Language interpretation
- La Plata County Board of County Commissioners
- Pediatricians
- Resource assembly and maintenance workgroup
- Durango School District 9-R
- State funders
- Statewide Coalition for Workforce Development
- Southern Colorado Community Action Agency (SoCoCAA)
- The Community Treehouse, Bayfield
- The Durango Network
- Tri-County Head Start