The Goal

Address the child care workforce crisis by creating an accelerated pathway for individuals to earn their Early Childhood Teacher professional credential.

The 4 Levers of Change

Denver's Early Childhood Workforce Initiative aligned with 4 identified levers of change

1. Targeted Recruitment

- 32 applications were received with the goal of recruiting 25 participants.
- 15 applicants enrolled in ECE courses.

Diversity that reflects Denver's kids and families

Language diversity

- 33% English only
- 33% Prefer Spanish, some English
- 33% Speak Spanish, prefer English

- 14% African American
- 72% Latinx
- 14% White

Challenges

- Tight job market
  - low unemployment
  - competition with entry level wages in other industries

Lessons Learned

Flexible approach

- A supportive program was created for those new to early childhood, but it was discovered there were individuals already working in the field who needed guidance and resources to obtain their Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) qualifications.

2. Education & Career Pathways

- Licensing waiver obtained
  - Waiver 18-02 opened up the Accelerated Pathway pilot program as a new ECT qualification pathway.

College course completions

- 12/14 completed ECE 101 grade 'C' or better.
- 12/12 completed ECE 103 grade 'C' or better.

50% of participants expressed interest in continuing higher education and were connected to advising resources.

Challenges

Complex personal barriers

- Some participants experienced personal challenges with transportation and unfamiliarity with the higher ed system.

Lessons Learned

Community-based learning

- Elimination of financial and logistical barriers allowed for better access, completion & success via a community-based cohort higher ed model.
- On-site coaching and mentoring supported skill development.

Child care and early learning experiences are critically important to the economy and school readiness of children.
### Challenges

**Shortage of administrator time**
- Directors are often pulled in many directions with little time to support new classroom staff.

**Attracting new teachers**
- Child care wages rarely reflect a livable wage as Denver’s economy thrives and the cost of living continues to increase.

### Lessons Learned

**Program involvement**
- Programs with more investment in selecting their candidates through a traditional job interviewing scenario had the most success.

**Informed advocacy**
- The concurrent launch of the Metro Denver Early Childhood Sector Partnership has brought industry voices together to address public awareness and policy change.

### Key Partners & Contributors

- Mi Casa Resource Center
- Focus Points Family Resource Center
- Community College of Denver & MSU Denver
- Denver Office of Economic Development & Opportunity
- Denver Preschool Program
- Early Milestones Colorado & Mathematica Policy Research
- Gary Community Investments
- Buell Foundation
- Mile High United Way
- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood

### Stories of Impact

**One first-year participant working in the food service industry made a commitment to the program after her young daughter said she wanted to grow up and make pizzas for a living just like her mom. The participant’s career path is now aligned with the goal of attaining a profession that she feels her daughter can look up to and aspire to.**

Another participant simultaneously completed the college courses within the program while navigating the immigration system to obtain a valid work permit. As he met obstacles along the way, he took initiative to seek out additional resources such as legal support, never losing sight of his end goal of becoming an early childhood educator.

### What's Next?

Informed adaptation to fit an emerging understanding of our community’s needs

### Building on our successes for Year TWO:

- Continue career navigation
- Expand eligibility via adaptive learning model
- Continue waiver and use project data for systems improvement
- Add new partners to assist with access to refugee communities
- Leverage $10K Colorado Scholarship Opportunity Initiative (COSI) to secure sustainable funding
- Strengthen key partnerships for wraparound supports