




Planning to Prevent Child Maltreatment

 A progress report on the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action:

*mobilizing action to ensure all children
are valued, healthy, and thriving*

July 2019

co4kids.org/framework



Investing in Colorado's future

Colorado prospers when our children thrive. They are our future workforce, leaders, and community members; and we can help them reach their potential through thoughtful services and policies that strengthen families, prevent child maltreatment, aid caregivers struggling with adversity, and develop positive relationships across all stakeholder groups.

Each sector of the community should be involved in planning and implementing strategies that improve the accessibility of resources and make it easier for parents to know how and where to get the help they need.

We all play a role in preventing child maltreatment

It is essential for community leaders, philanthropists, policy makers, and advocates to understand child maltreatment prevention. We must be committed to ensuring that children are valued, healthy, and thriving, which requires us to listen to the needs of parents and closely examine our community planning processes.

Ask yourself...

“What is my community doing to prevent child maltreatment?”

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PREVENTING CHILD MALTREATMENT

According to the **Child Welfare Information Gateway**, successful child maltreatment intervention reduces risk factors and promotes protective factors to ensure the well-being of all children and families.



Primary prevention activities are directed toward the general population and attempt to stop maltreatment before it occurs.

Five protective factors are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents
- Knowledge of parenting and of child development
- Social and emotional competence of children

PROMOTION



Secondary prevention activities focus on high-risk populations that have one or more risk factors associated with child maltreatment, such as poverty, parental substance abuse, young parental age, parental mental health concerns, and parental or child disabilities.

PREVENTION



Tertiary prevention activities focus on families for whom maltreatment has already occurred or likely occurred and seek to reduce the negative consequences of the maltreatment and to prevent its recurrence.

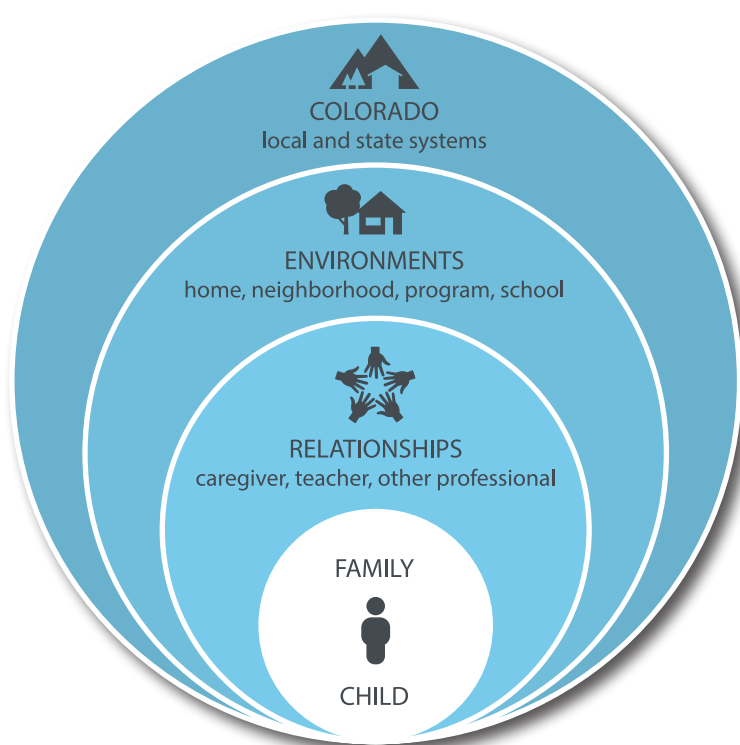
RESTORATION



A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

In April 2017, Governor Hickenlooper released a new comprehensive child maltreatment prevention plan. The Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action (Prevention Framework), built on the foundation laid by the *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*, empowers communities to work collectively and locally to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Prevention Framework highlights six foundational principles for working with children and families. It outlines best strategies toward achieving four overarching outcomes to ensure that all children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

The *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*, whose primary results are depicted below, and the Prevention Framework are mutually supportive. Investments in early childhood programs promote strong families, improve school readiness, and decrease child maltreatment.



Results



CHILD

Young children reach their developmental potential and are ready to succeed in school and in life



ENVIRONMENTS

Environments that impact children are safe, stable and supportive



RELATIONSHIPS

Adults are knowledgeable, responsive and interact effectively with and on behalf of children



COLORADO

Localities and the state attain economic and social benefits by prioritizing children and families

ADOPTING THE FRAMEWORK

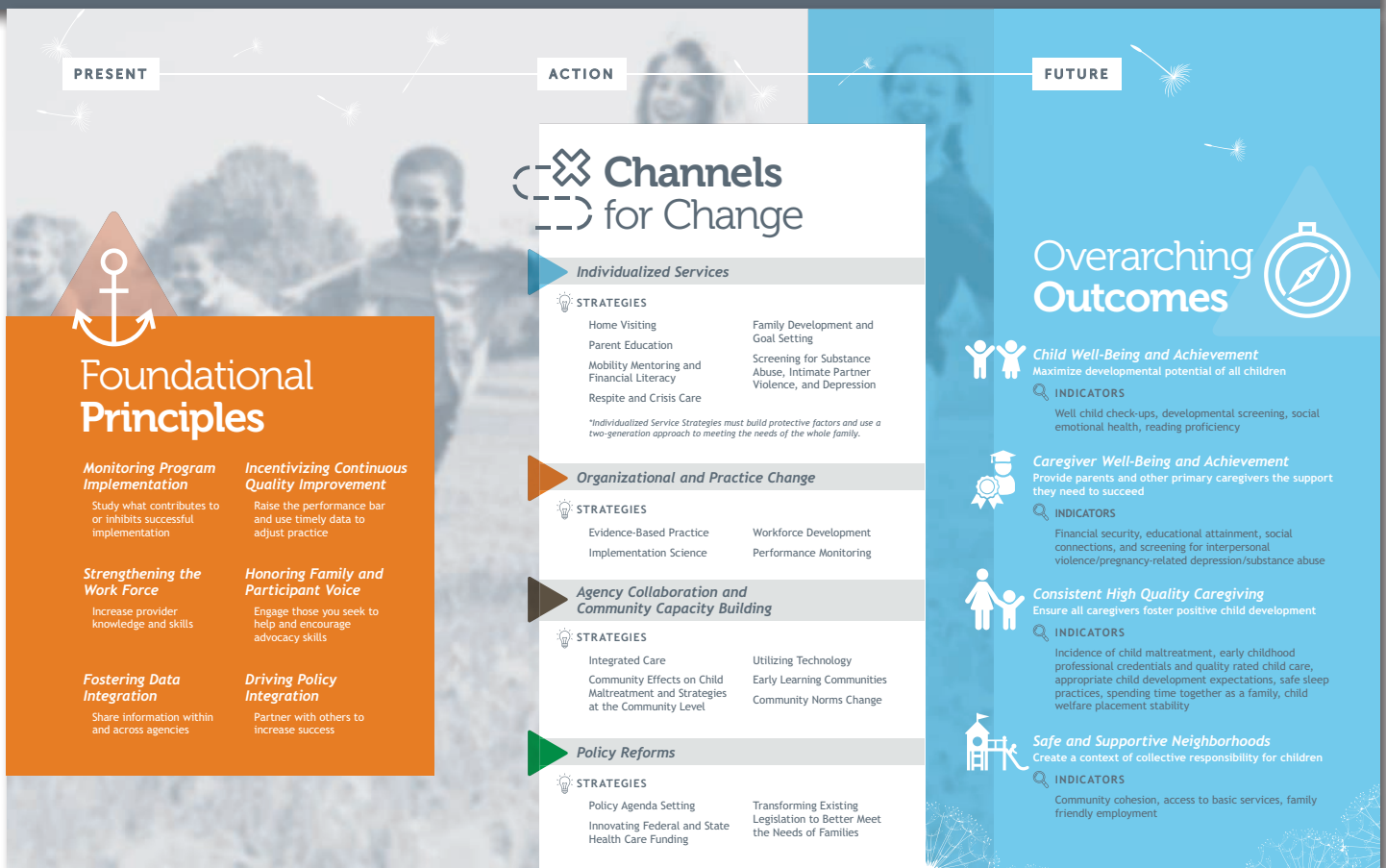
The Prevention Framework was developed to empower local communities and serve as a national model for child maltreatment prevention by the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood, the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, the Children’s Trust of South Carolina, the Children’s Bureau at the US Department of Health and Human Services, and numerous Colorado agencies and partners. Over the course of a year, input from parents was gathered to better understand the resources and supports they value in caring for children. The team also compiled and evaluated the latest research for best practices and upcoming innovations, identifying ways to measure progress on shared outcomes across the strategies.

State governments in California, Indiana, Massachusetts, and South Carolina have embraced Colorado’s Prevention Framework as a useful roadmap for local community planning.

The Prevention Framework guides investments, programs, and policy under the purview of the Colorado Department of Human Services, including the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Funds for Colorado.

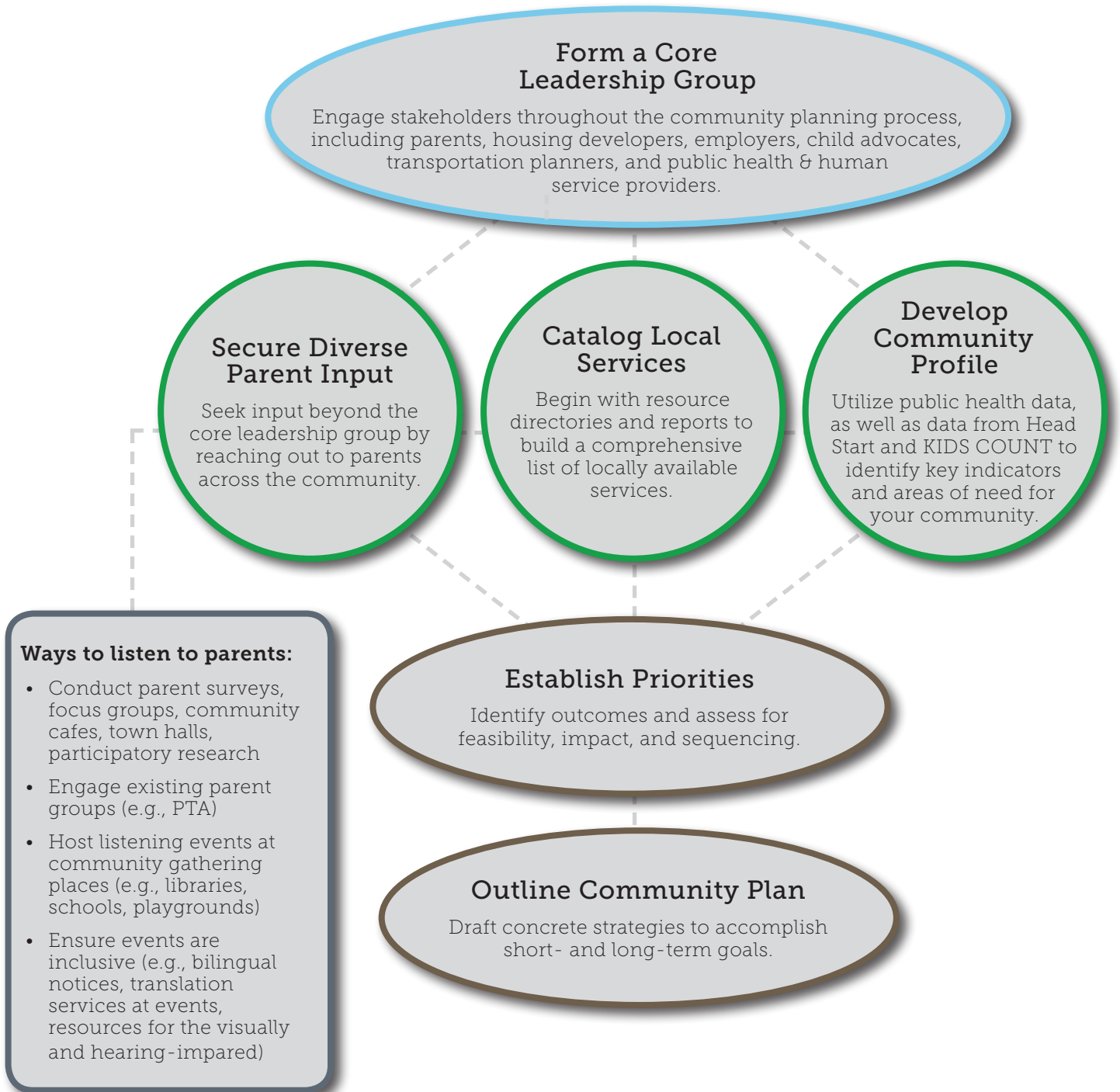
The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has adopted the Prevention Framework as a guide to inform child maltreatment prevention efforts. Local community plans have been generated as well.

Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action



LOCALIZED PREVENTION PLANNING

Developing a community plan is not a paint-by-numbers process, and investment from all stakeholders will result in building a better Colorado for our children.



PLANNING PROCESS GOALS

The following goals were adapted from and align with Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2007 *Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*.

- Short-term:** Build organizational capacity and alliances, empowering communities to strengthen their base of support and secure funding.
- Short-term:** Improve community social norms around the prevention of child maltreatment.
- Long-term:** Improve policies and programs that strengthen families.
- Long-term:** Increase the impact that such efforts have on families and children in the community.

Community Planning Toolbox

The complete Toolbox includes:

- The Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action Toolkit from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- The Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action
- Tips for maximizing survey & focus group participation
- Sample parent survey questions & feedback report
- Sample community cafe questions
- Sample parent & community asset survey
- Sample community profile
- Parent & community survey results
- A literature review by Chapin Hall to provide useful guidelines for selecting specific interventions & building an infrastructure to support high quality implementation

This toolbox and other useful resources are available via www.co4kids.org/framework.

COLORADO'S COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

In 2017, 15 Colorado organizations were selected to participate in an eight-month planning process using the Prevention Framework, as well as other methods included in the community planning Toolbox.

Funding from the ZOMA Foundation and the Colorado Department of Human Services enabled each of the 15 grantees to receive technical assistance from Early Milestones Colorado, plus between \$15,000 and \$17,000 in financial support to engage in a community-led planning process for preventing child maltreatment.

The community champions were geographically diverse, and different lead agencies coordinated local efforts. Lead agencies included:

- nine family resource centers,
- two early childhood councils,
- one child abuse coalition,
- one department of public health,
- one department of human services, and
- one regional care collaborative.

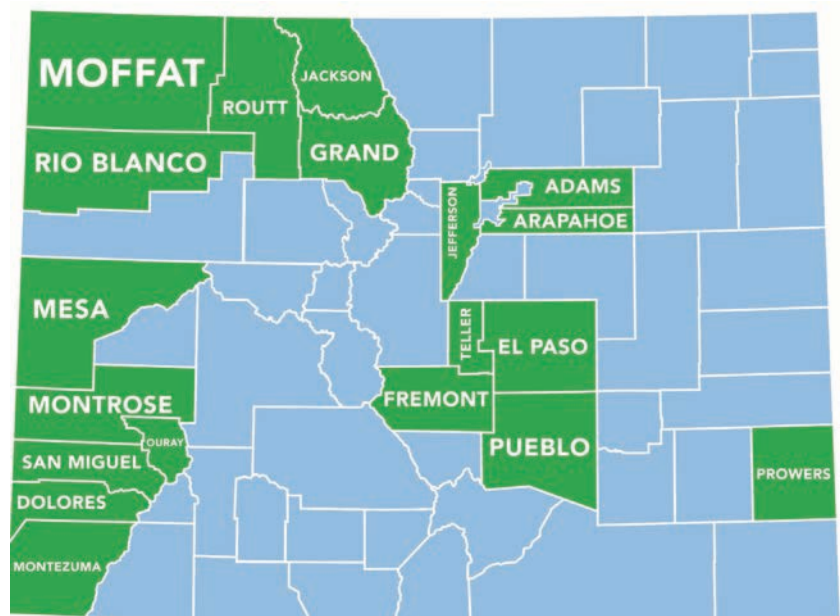
This funding and support empowered local communities to tailor local plans for child maltreatment prevention: each community established unique priority areas of improvement, created corresponding action plans, and identified opportunities and support for implementation of changes and tracking progress for the future.

A process and outcome evaluation with this first cohort of community planning grantees was conducted by Sarah Prendergast, Ph.D. The evaluation was designed to identify what worked well, opportunities for improvement, and the benefits of engaging in this planning process.

The findings from this evaluation affirmed that the Prevention Framework is a viable approach for coordinating community-level efforts for child maltreatment prevention.

Communities that engaged in the planning process experienced **increased capacity, strengthened alliances among partners, and increased community support for strengthening families and preventing child maltreatment.**

This map depicts the 19 Colorado counties engaged by the initial grantees.



PROGRESS REPORT

A deliberate, cross-sector community planning process to prevent child maltreatment ultimately ensures that all children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

Measuring outcomes for a community planning process is not easily accomplished. For example, changing attitudes impacting child maltreatment is a long-term outcome that is unlikely to be realized during the planning period or the first few months post-planning.

Participating counties have already demonstrated two key outcomes:

- **93% of communities that engaged in the planning process have funded programs or initiatives in their plans.**
- **100% of communities better understand parent needs following strategic listening efforts.**

Many of the programs have been funded through federal and state grants, while others have found support from the philanthropic community. One community successfully utilized a portion of a local early childhood tax to support the community plan.

Through the Prevention Framework, communities are better positioned to be effective in mobilizing action toward preventing child maltreatment across the state.

Everyone plays a role.

State legislators, county commissioners, and local municipalities should consider strategically prioritizing programs that give all Colorado communities added capacity to plan to prevent child maltreatment using the Prevention Framework.

Philanthropists and foundations can work with other local organizations to develop programs in support of community plans.

Individuals can engage with elected officials to develop and promote activities that strengthen families and proactively prevent child maltreatment.

What is next?

- Five new counties began work toward local plans in 2019.
- In the next phase of the Prevention Framework development, the Colorado Department of Human Services will build a data dashboard for monitoring outcomes at each participating site.
- There are efforts to align the Prevention Framework with the child welfare system changes outlined in the Family First Prevention Services Act.
- The Toolbox is available to anyone interested in planning to prevent child maltreatment at the community level.

OTHER COMMUNITY BENEFITS INCLUDED:

- The creation of a focused and integrated approach to preventing child maltreatment and promoting child well-being.
- Community leaders, policy makers, and philanthropic organizations now have a guide for strategic resource investments.
- Monitoring systems have been identified for tracking implementation and measuring progress.
- Alignment of strategies was maximized by a collective use of the Prevention Framework across all levels of government.
- Community planning teams became more structured, collaborative, and process-oriented by the end of the planning period.
- Teams developed long- and short-term goals, as well as methods to measure progress, obtain resources, and confront and resolve performance issues.
- Improved concern for child maltreatment prevention by community leaders.
- Improved knowledge and awareness of child maltreatment by local communities.
- Policy and program improvement is a long-term outcome. However, the majority of leadership teams (77%) were actively working on intermediate activities related toward improving policies or programs within 90 days.

I think that the heightened communication between the organizations that were all on the leadership team is pretty great. Each of the counties we worked in is really different, but in both scenarios, I think organization relationships have been strengthened.

[This process was] different because we are typically planning for one sector or another—we are always planning for early childhood—but it wasn't only early childhood folks who came out. It went across many sectors to benefit all children and families and we should be proud of that.

THEMES IN LOCAL PREVENTION PLANS

While the 15 communities followed the same planning tasks outlined in the Toolbox, each prevention plan reflected unique local priorities. The following infographic provides examples of specific planning activities.

100% Included Enhanced Individualized Services



- Increase capacity in evidence-based, two-generation, child maltreatment prevention programs; home visitation; parent education; and child social-emotional development.
- Select evidence-based parenting programming. Recruit and train professionals to deliver services.

66% Included Community Norms/Messaging Campaigns



- Develop a targeted messaging campaign on early childhood mental health and the importance of well-child doctor visits.
- Craft messages that promote community and encourage families to seek/accept needed assistance.

53% Included Community Partner and Provider Trainings



- Facilitate cross-training opportunities with organizations that interface with families (e.g., libraries, schools, referral organizations) to support multi-agency navigation for families.
- Further embed the Protective Factors Framework through training and implementation support to families and organizational partners.

33% Included Family-Friendly Policies



- Identify and actively engage partners in a collaborative approach to promote family-friendly policies.
- Distribute Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) toolkit to help employers support employees and facilitate conversations about family issues.

33% Included Social Connections



- Draft proposal for creating cohesion across neighborhoods (e.g., neighborhood captain models).
- Create monthly idea-sharing events on topics targeted toward families with children.

20% Included Culturally Appropriate Services and Supports



- Increase the number of people trained in interpretation (simultaneous and consecutive).
- Train partner agency staff on opportunities available to non-English/non-Spanish speaking families.

20% Included Integrated Services



- Offer integrated family services and supports that addresses the needs of families, including support toward self-sufficiency.
- Identify an opportunity to build a centrally located family center that provides an accessible space for families to interact socially and access community resources.

20% Included Housing



- Collaborate with the housing authority to understand the current housing process and address community needs.
- Create a map of total affordable housing units, as well as those that are currently available.

20% Included Community Awareness of Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences



- Host trauma-informed community trainings for: families, early care and education sites, schools districts, colleges and universities, primary care professionals, faith communities, and other organizations.
- Organize community presentations on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and resilience; develop a social media campaign to use as outreach.

LOCAL PLANNING LESSONS

Leadership team coordinators, core team members, and a diverse group of community members completed evaluation surveys at the start of the planning period (i.e., pre-planning), at the end of the planning period (i.e., post-planning), and again approximately 90 days following the end of the planning period (i.e., 90-day follow-up).

The following opportunities for improvement were identified through these surveys to aid other Colorado communities aiming to develop child maltreatment prevention plans.

Broaden the name of the Framework.

Including “Child Maltreatment Prevention” in the title of the framework was misleading to partners not familiar with primary prevention. Those partners expected to learn more about how to recognize and prevent maltreatment among at-risk families.

Use facilitators with an in-depth understanding of child maltreatment prevention to guide the process.

The facilitator role was widely agreed to be critical for this planning process. A neutral party experienced with facilitating diverse groups to provide guidance and support was beneficial for planning.

Create a simplified summary of planning steps and common language.

Nearly all community planning teams reported that using common language is important for prevention. However, participants not in the early childhood field found language in the Toolbox to be challenging.

Maintain consistent participation at each planning meeting.

Communities were tasked with identifying a lead organization and forming a core leadership team to guide the process. Several teams struggled with maintaining consistent membership at meetings. Suggestions included obtaining signed agreements from members and better engaging them in the development of the process timeframe.

Ensure diverse representation and parent engagement in the planning process.

All communities agreed that securing parent input was critical for developing a plan. A variety of strategies were used to engage parents, including surveys, focus groups, and parent participation on leadership teams. Many teams did not have the capacity to conduct a parent survey on their own but were able to partner with researchers at the University of Denver to administer a survey and analyze the data.

Create more tools for data analysis.

Each community developed a profile with basic demographics, such as number of residents, children, racial composition, economic status, etc., to inform the planning process. Most groups found the community profile to be valuable. However, some teams struggled with locating and analyzing data. It was important for at least one leadership team member to have experience in data collection, reporting, and analysis.

Use existing resources to seed conversation.

Many teams were able to use existing reports and resources (e.g., community needs assessments) to identify providers offering services to children and families and determine the capacity and quality of these options. For others, it was a time-consuming task. Some teams completed a list of local services informally via group discussions. For some, it was particularly useful because the community did not previously have a way to locate relevant community services.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2014, the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood, in partnership with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago and the Children's Trust of South Carolina, various state and local agencies, and partners began working together to design a framework to serve as a national model for the prevention of maltreatment.

Partners reviewed literature and talked to hundreds of parents and professionals to identify principles, strategies, and data-driven outcomes for the prevention of child maltreatment. Together, partners evaluated Colorado's programs, services, and policies based on the **Strengthening Families™** research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

Thanks to the support of the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood, the Ben and Lucy Ana Walton Fund of the Walton Family Foundation, the Office of Child Abuse and Neglect in the Children's Bureau, an Office of the U.S. Administration for Children and Families, and the Child Abuse and Neglect Technical Assistance and Strategic Dissemination Center, Colorado launched the Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action in April 2017 to help local communities create a more focused and better integrated plan to prevent child maltreatment and promote child well-being.

The ZOMA Foundation, a new Ben and Lucy Ana Walton family charitable organization with a focus on funding initiatives that have a positive impact on early childhood development, is helping turn the Prevention Framework into action at the state and local community level in Colorado.

With funding and support from the Colorado Department of Human Services and the ZOMA Foundation, Early Milestones Colorado (Milestones) served as the lead agency for the Prevention Framework initial community planning process.

Milestones served as the fiscal agent and provided facilitation and technical assistance support to 15 community champions. Milestones


served as a partner, information hub, and champion with a deep commitment to and engagement with community grantees. Thanks to Dr. Deborah Daro for her leadership in the development of the Prevention Framework, her commitment to translating research into practice and policy reforms, and her contributions to the field of child maltreatment prevention.

Sarah Prendergast, Ph.D., conducted an evaluation of the community planning process.

Finally, thank you to the 15 community sites, countless partner organizations, and parents that participated in the community planning process.

Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council
Bright Futures
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pueblo
Community Partnership Family Resource Center
Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County
Mesa County Public Health
Morgan County Family Center
Mountain Family Center
Mountain Resource Center
Northwest Colorado Community Health Partnership
Peaceful Households
Piñon Project Family Resource Center
Prowers County Department of Human Services
Starpoint Fremont County Family Center
West End Family Link Center





This document is designed as a tool to guide strategic thinking at the state and local levels concerning resource investments toward the prevention of child maltreatment and the promotion of child well-being. As Prevention Framework tools are implemented across the state, the resulting strategic alignment will maximize the impact on shared outcomes.

Get Involved

Colorado's communities, large and small, are coming together to strengthen families and help children thrive.

Coalitions of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local advocates are seeking neighbors to proactively contribute to planning for the prevention of child maltreatment.

Learn more about the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action and the role you can play in building a Colorado for kids.

co4kids.org