

Our Mission

To provide high quality, comprehensive early care and education for ALL children.

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Photos by Melani Tutt

Accomplishments

Dear Friends and Supporters:

Thank YOU for your support in 2016. If it was not for friends and partners like you, we would not be able to impact the lives of hundreds of families in Colorado Springs each year. Your support of Early Connections Learning Centers changes the lives of children every day.

We continue to provide high quality comprehensive early care and education for ALL children. This report illustrates many successes; here are few additional accomplishments I'd like to highlight broken out by our five year strategic plan focus areas:

Financial Growth and Sustainability

- Successfully worked at the state level to influence CCCAP reimbursement rate increases on behalf of early education centers and family child care homes
- Received a State Historic Fund matching grant award for the rehabilitation of the Historic Day Nursery windows, work begins in 2017 – currently have 53% funds raised www.historicdaynursery.org

Early Childhood Services

- Cross-walked into a Level 4 on Colorado Shines because of NAEYC accreditation
- Identified as a Pyramid Plus Implementation site through Alliance for Kids
- Partnered with KidPower to provide KidPower lessons in classrooms
- Expanded Behavioral Health Program to support the social/emotional development of our children

Professional Staff

- Implemented pay increases organization-wide

Community Engagement

- Expanded our volunteer program for businesses and individuals
- Partnered with American Advertising Federation where a \$20,000 investment brought a total value of \$179,625 in media, design, coordination, website redevelopment and strategy
- Redeveloped our Community Engagement Department to emphasize community outreach and increase funding

2016 was a fantastic year, filled with many accomplishments for Early Connections Learning Centers. Thank you for your continuing support of this incredible organization. It is your energy, passion, and commitment that helps to make a difference in hundreds of children's lives every day.

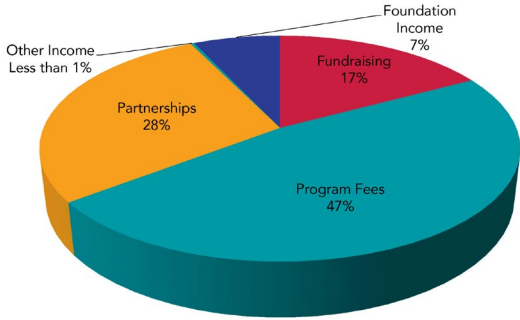
Sincerely,

Robert J. Gonzales
2016 Board Chair



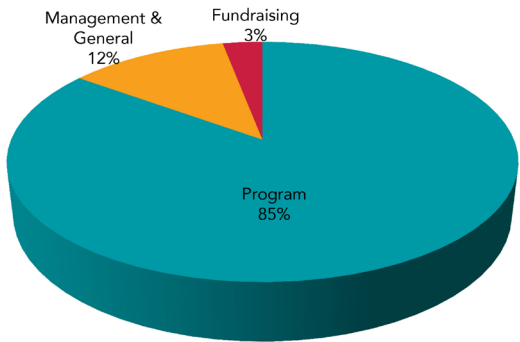
Chair Robert Gonzales reads to a classroom

Financial Summary



2016 Income*

Fundraising	\$	749,101
Program Fees	\$	2,071,796
Partnerships	\$	1,228,053
Other Income	\$	13,053
Foundation Allocation	\$	304,167
	\$	4,366,170

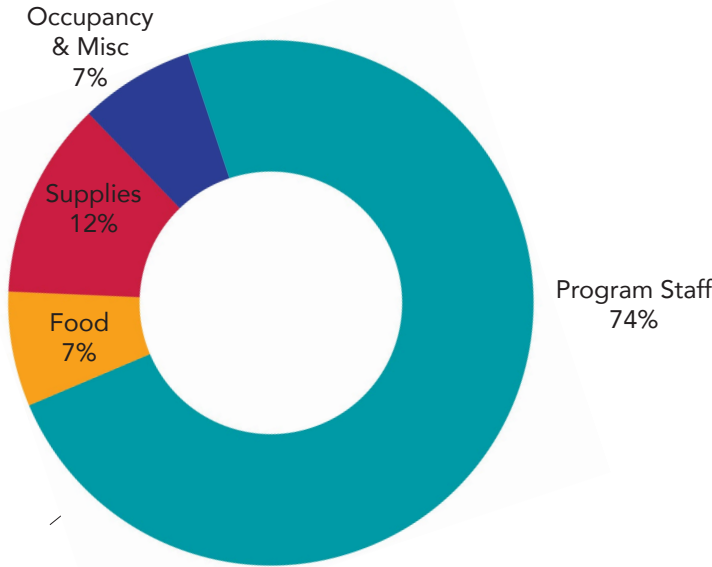


2016 Expenses*

Program	\$	3,607,254
Management & General	\$	509,259
Fundraising	\$	127,315
	\$	4,243,828

* UNAUDITED

Program Expense Distribution



Locations



Antlers Place
Ages 18 months to 6 years



Day Nursery
Ages 2 1/2 to 13 years



Sand Creek
Ages 3 to 12 years



South Chelton
Ages 6 weeks to 6 years



Fremont
Ages 3 to 5 years



Trailblazer
Ages 3 to 5 years

Early Care & Education

Curriculum and Assessment

Our curriculum, The Storybook Journey, integrates learning and literacy into all facets of the classroom through immersion in excellent children's books. Using the concepts in the books, teachers tailor lessons and activities to meet the individual needs of the children based on each child's development and progress. Early Connections uses Teaching Strategies GOLD® to assess children's growth and learning over time. GOLD measures the knowledge, skills and behaviors that are most predictive of school success. Our goal is for all children to demonstrate progress and growth throughout the year and for our children to meet or exceed "widely-held expectations" for their age.

Family Engagement & Support

Families play a critical role in preparing their children for success in school. Home visits and conferences enable teachers to learn more about each child, share information regarding progress and to set goals with the parents for the child. Family nights and classroom celebrations bring parents into classrooms to see first-hand what their child is learning and to participate in fun, educational activities with their child.

Nutrition & Health

Children are served two nutritious meals and a snack daily. Our menus emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and minimally-processed food.

Across the country, child care providers are reporting high numbers of children enrolling with challenging behaviors and behavioral health issues. We are no different. In response to this, we increased the number of on-staff Behavioral Health Specialists to two in 2016. We also implemented the Pyramid Plus Approach, a social/emotional curriculum aimed at addressing such issues and preparing teachers with strategies to improve classroom behavior.



Home Network of the Pikes Peak Region

The Home Network of the Pikes Peak Region is a partnership with independently licensed family child care home professionals to offer high quality choices to families who prefer a home setting for their child.

In 2016

- The Home Network worked with 67 Family Child Care Professionals
- Coached Family Child Care Professionals (FCCP's) towards Accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care. At the end of the year, 41 out of 53 Accredited FCCP's in the state were coached through the Home Network. This represents 77% of the Accredited FCCP's in Colorado.
- There are 23 Family Child Care Professionals in the Home Network with a Colorado Shines Rating between 3 and 5.

77% of Colorado's accredited Family Child Care Professionals were coached through the Home Network



Early connections. Lifelong results.

2016 Community Report



104 E. Rio Grande
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
www.earlyconnections.org

Partnerships



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Tobi Mondejar
Law Firm of Jaray & Webster, LLC
Law Office of Thomas M. James,
PC
Law Office of Pit Martin

Lodestar Financial Planning
Alyssa & Tad McClurg
Public Service Credit Union
Rockrimmon Vision Source
Wyatt's Real Estate & Appraisal

2016 Granting Organizations

Anna Keesling Ackerman Trust
Anschutz Foundation
Daniels Fund
El Pomar Foundation
Ent Credit Union
Everett Trust
H.A. & Mary K. Chapman
Charitable Trust
Jerome V. Bruni Foundation

Joseph Henry Edmondson
Foundation
Molina Foundation
Nutrition Camp School
Foundation
Pikes Peak Community
Foundation
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Rotary Club of Colorado Springs-
Interquest

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Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation
The Gazette
The Marson Foundation
US Bank
USAA Foundation
Wells Fargo Community
Assistance Fund

For complete donor list, visit earlyconnections.org.



IMPACT

48% of our
teaching staff
hold higher
education
degrees.

4,166
volunteer
hours saving
\$98,166

\$80,000
raised at
our most
successful
Gingerbread &
Jazz.

133,197 meals served with
77% of children qualifying for
free or reduced lunch.

208 Home Visits, 634 Parent/
Teacher Conferences, 237 New
Family Orientations, 12 Family
Nights and 10 Parent Advisory
Committee Meetings

Our 2016 results from the
National Association for the
Education of Young Children
Family Survey placed us in the top
25% with a score of 89.36%.

126
Colorado
Preschool
Program slots.

129 Head
Start and
Early Head
Start slots.

3,050
books
distributed
through
Books at
Home.

709 children served in 2016
56% from single parent homes
66% eligible for the Colorado
Child Care Assistance Program

Provided
404,997
hours of care.

The overall percentage of
children meeting or exceeding
widely-held expectations
increased from 58% in fall 2015
to 85% in spring 2016.