

Early Learning Ventures Alliance at Early Childhood Options Summit County, Colorado

Sponsoring Organization:

Early Childhood Options
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Service Delivery Area/Type of Organization:

Early Childhood Options was incorporated in 1991 and serves as a hub organization for a variety of comprehensive early childhood initiatives in Summit County, Colorado. Summit County is located 75 miles west of Denver and includes 6 mountain resort municipalities. Summit County has a year-round population of just under 30,000 and a daily population of more than 100,000. Summit County currently has approximately 45 licensed childcare facilities (centers and homes) with the capacity to serve just over 800 children. Early Childhood Options also provides services in the neighboring communities of Lake and Grand Counties.

Some of the programs that Early Childhood Options oversees are the Summit County Head Start Partnership Program, the Right Start Program and Child Care Resource and Referral. The Board of Early Childhood Options works in partnership with Grand Beginnings in Grand County to serve as the local Early Childhood Council. Early Childhood Options is a community based non-profit agency. Agency programs are funded through federal, state and local government grants and contracts, as well as private foundation and donor support. Early Childhood Options' strategic partners include the Summit County Board of County Commissioners, the Summit School District, the Family & Intercultural Resource Center and Grand Beginnings.

Summary of Approach:

Early Childhood Options will serve as the central hub for the local Early Learning Ventures Alliance. Early Childhood Options will form a single member LLC which will enter into an ELV licensing agreement with the Merage Foundation. Early Childhood Options is recruiting a network of local ECE programs to join with the hub and work together to deliver services in a streamlined and efficient way. The initial goal is to recruit 12 licensed child care centers to become affiliate members of the alliance. The long term goal is to recruit family childcare homes in Summit County, and eventually to expand to the broader rural resort region of Colorado.

Type of Approach:

Each participating ECE program will become an affiliate of the ELV Alliance at Early Childhood Options and will enter into a contractual agreement outlining the services and benefits of being an Alliance member. Specific services may vary by participant, but will include some or all of the following broad categories:

- *Quality Improvements;*
- *Tuition Collection and Fiscal Management;*
- *Bulk Purchasing;*
- *Recruitment and Enrollment;*
- *Human Resources;*
- *Administration, Operations and Development;*
- *Support Services for Families.*

The Alliance hub employs the Executive Director, a Chief Financial Officer, a Program Manager and a Program Assistant. Early Childhood Specialists are employed on a contract basis to provide Coaching and Consultation to Alliance members.

Funding:

Start-up funding for the Alliance is provided by the Summit County Government, Board of County Commissioners, via the Right Start Project. Right Start is a local child care initiative funded from a dedicated property tax. The Board of Early Childhood Options and the Board of County Commissioners are mutually committed to ensuring the most efficient and effective use of these and all public investments in quality early care and education. Additional funding for some support services comes from public and private grants.

The long term strategy is to fund the ELVA at Early Childhood Options through membership fees paid by the affiliates, in addition to public and private fundraising. The fee structure for each affiliate will be a percentage of their monthly child care revenue or a flat monthly fee, depending on the affiliate's gross revenues. This fee structure will be phased in incrementally as affiliates begin to realize cost savings and added value as a result of being an Alliance member.