



Brief History of the Community Partnership for Children

The Community Partnership for Children, Inc. (CPC) is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to excellence in the care and development of young children. CPC facilitates alliances with other community groups, promotes educational programs, and obtains resources to support the direct services of local organizations working in behalf of children and families.

CPC has four goals: 1) Advocate for implementing high quality childcare standards that address the nutritional, social, emotional, and educational well-being of young children and their families, 2) Create additional options for early care and education in center-based and home care settings, especially in under-served areas, 3) Increase awareness of the positive impact of quality, early education on young children, and 4) Promote the improvement of the relevant skills and knowledge of all people who live and work with young children.

CPC began in 2003 as a coalition of concerned childcare providers and early interventionists, dedicated to improving the quality of early care and education for children in Grant County, NM, an economically distressed, rural area with a child poverty rate of 28.6%. The County has a population of approximately 30,000 and is more than 48% Hispanic. The Partnership's first tasks included conducting a series of comprehensive community assessments of childcare needs in the community. This was done through two large scale surveys of parents and providers and a series of more than 75 community interviews. The results of this research were presented to the community in a series of meetings beginning in January 2004.

CPC membership expanded, and the Partnership became a grassroots community coalition in July 2004, when more than 75 community members attended a meeting to discuss the need for additional early care and education programs. Volunteers to serve on an Executive Board for the Partnership were recruited at the meeting, resulting in a board of 10 members.

The Executive Board held its first meeting on August 26, 2004 and has met monthly since that time. At a retreat in December 2003, the Board established four goals for the Partnership. In January 2005, the Board resolved to become incorporated as a non-profit organization. In March 2005, the Board of Directors passed a resolution of incorporation (01-2005). Articles of incorporation were approved and registered with the State of New Mexico Public Regulation Commission. A Certificate of Incorporation #2570026 dated April 1, 2005 was received. A set of by-laws for the corporation were approved May 4, 2005.

In June 2005, a community meeting was held to launch the fund raising effort for an infant/toddler program in the Mining District. Local businesses and individuals contributed \$1,700. Local partner organizations, including Western New Mexico University, El Grito Head Start, Life Quest Early Intervention, and local municipalities pledged \$49,679 in goods and

services to the project. The WNMU Foundation agreed to serve as the Partnership's fiscal agent until such time as federal tax exempt status can be achieved.

A Code of Ethics and a Conflict of Interest Policy were adopted by the Board on July 6, 2005. Board members began working on the federal application for 501(c)3 status which was approved in July 2007.

In 2008, CPC received a federal grant for \$162,117 to furnish and equip a new childcare facility being built by the County with CDBG funds. The Board of Directors worked closely with County officials to design the building and seek a manager for the facility, which was scheduled to open in June 2009. There were many delays in finally opening the facility in the summer 2010, but the initial management was not successful in starting up the program. That contract was terminated and a new manger was found. The program successfully reopened as Baby Boot Camp in March 2011.

The Board of Directors also serves as community advisory board for two early childhood programs at Western New Mexico University. CPC participates annually in the Red Hot Children's Fiesta, a Child Development Fair, which it helped to establish. In 2008 more than 2,000 children and parents participated in the event which featured booths sponsored by local organizations with activities and information on children's health issues. CPC also provides volunteers for an annual kite flying event and participates in other children's events in the community.

CPC has received grant funds (2008 & 2009) from the New Mexico Children's Foundation to sponsor a series of "Playful Parenting" trainings, conducted by Mary Hokom. In the first year of the grant, training series were conducted in T or C, Lordsburg, and Deming for 82 parents, childcare providers and therapists. For 2009-10, CPC expanded the trainings for specialized groups in Grant County, including treatment foster parents, a father's group at La Familia Resource Center, parents and teachers at El Grito Head Start, and Child Protective Services workers and foster parents at CYFD.

CPC applied and was awarded grant funding from FreePort McMoRan in 2015 to begin a pilot project of 'shared services' for child care centers in Grant County. During that first year this *project* became the Grant County Community Early Care and Education: LINKS (LINKS) establishing a vision/mission to move this group forward. Efforts to seek other funding continued in 2016/2017 and CPC was awarded funds from Con Alma, Brindle, and Thornburg Foundations.

The LINKS project is a collaborative partnership among CPC and five of the larger child care centers in Grant County. The objective is to strengthen the network of early child care providers in the county, to build the capacity of each center, to share business costs among the centers, and to strengthen the delivery of quality early child care and education. Of the 718 child care slots in the Silver City/Mining District of Grant County, LINKS partners are licensed for 563 of them, representing almost 80% of the capacity of licensed child care centers in the target area.

The shared services model developed by CPC and its LINKS partners took several years to gain traction because sharing common operating costs and personnel among individual businesses requires enormous trust among the variety of for-profit, non-profit, and faith-based centers. The partnership set common goals for strengthening the quality of the programs and identified common strategies to assist the business side of the centers' operations.

The project has continued to grow in scope with a number of accomplishments. It developed a pool of trained child care substitute workers (Relief Squad), provided the leading early childhood education business management software (ProCare) to partners in the network, provided ongoing training and technical assistance from a national expert in shared services for early childcare operators, and it contracted with both a business manager and a mentor/facilitator for childcare workers (both part-time). Although ultimately unsuccessful, the consortium also worked tirelessly as a team to save a fellow center from closing its doors in an action that helped unite the partners into a common force. CPC, as the coordinating partner, has managed all activities and it has secured small pots of funding for the project from foundations, local donations, memberships, and in-kind support.

CPC and LINKS continue to incrementally develop the shared services, which we call the Hub. The project is a multi-year commitment to build back-office business services most needed by the partners for the economies of scale shared services model, especially while reliant on year-to-year funding from a variety of sources. Each new service identified by and developed for the partners is another spoke extending from the hub to strengthen the outer rim of the collaborative wheel. Increasing the capacity of the Hub to provide additional services builds the operational ability for the partner centers to focus on their true mission – providing adequate quality early childhood care and education for young children, their families, and the community.

CPC, through the LINKS project, is building the business capacity of childcare centers in Grant County while simultaneously assisting the centers to deliver higher quality early childhood education. By taking over some of the time consuming administrative functions through the Hub, CPC provides center directors and staff more time to focus on the children in their care. These efforts will also encourage others to enter the childcare milieu with the expectation of success and collaboration within the local childcare industry, thus increasing the overall numbers of available childcare openings in the community as well as adding skilled child care jobs.

In 2017/2018, CPC focused to strengthen the Board of Directors to help support the growth as the budget has grown from \$6,000 to \$96,000, with three contracted staff members. Collaboration is the foundation of this growth. Key project partners with CPC include: current LINKS partners - Guadalupe Montessori, Foy Day Care, Let the Children Come day care, WNMU Child Development Center/Growing Tree, and El Grito Head Start; WNMU School of Business for research and business plan development; Grant County Community Foundation and United Way of SWNM for shared office space; and Opportunities Exchange for technical assistance in the shared services model for early childhood development.

CPC goals were adjusted in 2016 to align with the LINKS project (see Mission and Goals for details). During 2018–2021, CPC revised and updated the By-Laws, Policies, History, and the Board of Directors Notebook to reflect the growth of the organization.

In August 2019, CPC developed a *White Paper* titled *Learning Communities to Support Early Childhood Education in Rural New Mexico*. The primary purpose of the *White Paper* was to inform lawmakers and the general public of the critical need to further develop and support shared services in Grant County and other rural counties across New Mexico. CPC's goal was to advance funding for regional efforts to create and expand rural early childhood education services through the establishment of learning communities. Using a learning community approach, CPC saw opportunities to engage local organizations, leaders, practitioners, family members, employers, and others in strengthening business practices and pedagogical leadership across community-based early childhood education programs. CPC's believes that, as local leaders and practitioners engage in collective and robust dialogue, they are empowered to achieve common goals through intentional activity, shared reflection, and participatory decision-making.

The *White Paper* is a compelling document that includes specific information and current state data indicating a dire need for accessible, affordable, and high-quality early childhood education opportunities. In response to consecutive years of poor outcomes for young children, CPC's *White Paper* identified several major challenges to providing quality, affordable early childhood education programs in New Mexico's rural communities. A multitude of specific recommendations and research-based, innovative ideas were shared to serve as potential remedies to each challenge.

CPC's *White Paper* was shared with local and state leaders, including New Mexico's Governor, state legislators, and the newly appointed Secretary for the state's Early Childhood Education and Care Department (NMECECD). The *White Paper* continues to serve as a platform for robust discussion of the state funding and resources necessary to support the development and expansion of rural early childhood learning communities and quality programs.

Increased participation in the LINKS project happened during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. All programs serving young children birth through age 5 joined the network and were assessed the \$200 membership fee. Programs joining CPC/LINKS included Amplified Early Intervention, Gila Regional Medical Center's Beginning Years Home Visitation, the four Licensed Child Care Homes, Hiz Kids Child Care in Deming, and Little Angel's in Lordsburg.

The CPC Hub office continues to share space with Grant County Community Foundation. A Website <https://www.grantcountycpc.com/> and Face Book pages were developed to provide outreach, information and resources for the local community, region and state. CPC's online presence has provided an avenue for LINKS partners to advertise their program information, events, job opportunities, and program needs. In 2020, when COVID-19 hit communities, the workload increased for CPC's Executive Director and with added responsibilities to communicate and coordinate COVID-19 safety practices with partners and the state ECECD leadership. The CPC website became a tool for disseminating important information.

In 2020, two CPC leadership staff were appointed, from a pool of 300 applicants, to serve on the newly developed, 30 member ECECD Advisory Council, requiring participation in four meetings over four months. The Council was to develop goals and strategies for the new

department to carry forth into the 2021 Legislative Session. The UNM Family Development Program held a Collaborative Summit, beginning in October and ended in late November. Again, CPC leadership was at the table, along with 11 other early childhood coalitions from around the state. The purpose was to provide a learning exchange for community teams to share knowledge, best practices, and planning recommendations aimed at strengthening early learning leadership development as an essential asset for NM and the new department's important work ahead.

During the 2020-21 fiscal year, CPC received funding from Freeport-McMoRan to develop and disseminate Early Learning Kits (ELKs) for local families with infants and young children, ages one to four. Each ELK contained learning materials (toys, books, etc.) for parents to actively engage their child in learning at home. CPC partnered with two local home-visiting programs, *Hidalgo Medical Services–Family Services Program* and *Gila Regional Medical Center's Beginning Years Program* to provide the ELKs to families. CPC developed age-appropriate kits for targeted families that were currently enrolled in a partner home-visiting program. Partner home-visiting staff were trained to disseminate and demonstrate the ELK contents and participated in family survey activities. Home-visiting staff were also surveyed at the end of the project (February 2021) to determine the efficacy and outcomes of the partnership project. The ELK Project was a big success, serving 50 families with in-home learning materials and activities for their children.

After recovering from the pandemic, the fiscal year 2022-23 brought in many changes for CPC. The newly developed ECEC Department was put into place and has funded up to 15 coalitions here in New Mexico. (CPC being one of them) After obtaining the grant CPC went into full swing with the Scope of Work. CPC hired a Program Coordinator that will transition into the Executive Director position by next year. Over the course of the year CPC participated in many events;

- Week of the Young Child
- Jump into Summer
- Give Grandly
- Community Wide Needs Based Assessment

In 2022, we started 4 projects that transpired from the Community Wide Needs Based Assessment (CNA) that is now a part of our strategic plan and are growing rapidly:

1. A Family Leadership Team (FLT) was created and is functioning with 8 active members. CPC continues supporting their work with stipends and support in advocating and becoming the voice for families in the community. CPC is working to involve the FLT in developing a County wide newsletter that will inform families of upcoming events and opportunities for families. During the month of September CPC showcased the Community Wide Needs Based Assessment as well the FLT to the local leaders and the community.
2. CPC developed a collaboration between the Town of Silver City and Southwest Council of Governments as the entity for funding the Pilot Program, WNMU Child Development Center of Excellence (serving as fiscal agent) and Silver Consolidated Schools to develop school age program housed at Stout Elementary School. CPC will continue to provide training and support to the program.

3. The next project is the Home-Grown Network for Childcare, a simplified process for potential providers to come together and support the growth of Family Childcare Homes in grant County. In collaboration with Growing Up NM we have been able to support 5 individuals to become registered or licensed providers and disseminated stipends along the way.
4. The LINKS network of connecting all providers serving children ages 0-5 has intensified incorporating training, facilitating dialogue to obtain challenges and barriers faced, in order to advocate and support to address rural community challenges

Numerous community wide presentations have been conducted, the CPC website has been improved, marketing the organization has increased donations and CPC continues to advertise and educate the community on the need for the support to Early Childhood Education.