

Jefferson County Bright Futures Roadmap

Action Plan:
June 2022 – June 2023

This action plan developed in partnership with



EARLY MILESTONES
COLORADO
ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

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Introduction

While planning for Jefferson County's future, few things are more important than ensuring the success of young children and families. The [Jeffco Bright Futures Roadmap](#) (Roadmap) reflects a shared community vision to support the county's children, prenatal through age eight, and their families. The Roadmap was published in December 2019, and as the COVID-19 pandemic spread through our communities in early 2020, Roadmap partners shifted much of their focus, energy, and staff capacity to adapt and respond to the pandemic. While the convening of Roadmap partners paused, partners made progress on some of the action steps in the plan.

Because Roadmap partners still believe in the vision set forth within the Roadmap, we embarked on a process to reconvene the original Steering Committee with the addition of new voices; hear from Jeffco families and employers to understand how the pandemic has impacted their experiences within the four Roadmap Cornerstones; update stakeholders on the evolving state and federal early childhood landscape; and create an action plan to guide stakeholders in moving this work forward over the next year.

The Steering Committee concluded that the Roadmap still aligns with community needs and developed the following action plan based on the current early childhood landscape. The action plan identifies decision points requiring immediate attention, outstanding infrastructure needs for Roadmap implementation, and priorities for action over the next year. While this action plan serves as a guide, Roadmap partners noted the ongoing need for flexibility to change course and adapt based on further shifts in the early childhood landscape.

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Decision Points Requiring Immediate Attention

Identify Jeffco's local coordinating organization applicant.

As outlined within [HB22-1295](#), communities across the state should begin discussions to identify a local coordinating organization (LCO) to implement universal preschool. The LCO is a community agency, organization, or partnership between organizations that will be responsible for supporting local access and equitable delivery of early childhood and family support programs. The LCO will serve as a liaison between families, the local early childhood system, and the state. Due to the timeline to apply, this community decision needs to be made as soon as possible.

Determine the future of Jeffcofamiliescolorado.org website.

The Jeffco Families website was created to connect parents with early childhood-related information, supports, and services in Jeffco. Staff at Jeffco Public Health currently manage and maintain the website content, but they have indicated limited staff capacity to continue ongoing management of the website after December 2022. An evaluation of the website's effectiveness is currently underway with results expected in June 2022. Based on the evaluation results and utilization analytics from the website, Roadmap partners should discuss the future of the website and, if appropriate, identify a local entity to own those responsibilities moving forward.

Identify an organization to host the Home Visitation Collaborative.

While Jeffco Public Health has temporarily absorbed this role, they have limited staff capacity to provide ongoing convening support. Before December 2022, Roadmap partners need to identify the local entity best suited to host the ongoing convening of the Home Visitation Collaborative.

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Outstanding Infrastructure Needs for Roadmap Implementation

Because of the comprehensive nature of the Roadmap, no one organization can achieve these goals alone as implementation will require ongoing cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration, trusting partnerships, and shared accountability. Since Roadmap partners have experienced multiple transitions in leadership, conversations with organizations' leaders to **assess commitments and buy-in to Roadmap cornerstones, strategies, and action steps** could inform implementation efforts.

Steering Committee members expressed a desire to understand how the Roadmap intersects and aligns with their organizational strategic plans and recommended each Roadmap partner organization **crosswalk Roadmap cornerstones, strategies, and action steps to organizational strategic plans.**

Steering Committee members are employed within multiple organizations that play key roles in the implementation of the Roadmap. Some of the work within the Roadmap is already built into existing roles; however, other aspects of the Roadmap plan (i.e., new policy development, public opinion polling, public will building) may fall outside of the current scope of Steering Committee members' roles in their day-to-day jobs. Moving forward, it will be important to **assess and understand the amount of time and staff capacity that partner organizations can lend to implementation efforts.**

To fully implement the Roadmap, stakeholders will need to **explore potential models for collaboration to (1) ensure dedicated staff time** to convene and coordinate among the multiple implementation partners, (2) hold partners accountable for making progress on components of the Roadmap, (3) develop and disseminate regular communications to various audiences, (4) continue to hold space for the Roadmap vision in local early childhood ecosystem, and (5) support fundraising efforts for operational tasks and programmatic elements of the Roadmap. In addition, Roadmap partners should **identify a governance model, collaborative decision-making protocol, and group norms to guide their interactions throughout implementation.**

Implementation of multiple components of the Roadmap will require input from many community stakeholders including parents of young children; early care and education providers in community-based centers, family child care homes, school-district-run classrooms, and license-exempt settings (family, friend, and neighbor providers); other early childhood workforce members like home visitors, early childhood mental health consultants, early intervention providers; and employers in the county. Moving forward, Roadmap partners should **intentionally create opportunities for those most impacted by decisions to inform implementation.** Roadmap partners could begin convening groups of those most impacted to provide ongoing input and feedback on implementation. In addition to creating opportunities for input, Roadmap partners can ensure equitable and inclusive conditions for engaging those most impacted by providing compensation for their time and expertise, arranging for

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interpretation and translation of materials, providing childcare and meals when meetings are in-person, and considering alternative meeting times to accommodate schedules.

Additional funding will be required to set up the infrastructure and move forward with the implementation of the Roadmap plan. While the federal and state stimulus funding streams do not directly align with any specific Roadmap action step, they do provide multiple opportunities to help Jeffco realize the overarching ambitious goals articulated in each of the Cornerstones. It will be important to **ensure eligible entities apply for and maximize the impact stimulus strategies can have in Jeffco's early childhood systems**. Additionally, as Roadmap implementation efforts continue, Roadmap partners could consider **convening philanthropic partners to gauge interest and willingness to fund components of the Roadmap**.

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Roadmap Priorities

Organized by the four Roadmap Cornerstones, the following priorities were identified for action within the next year. These priorities were highlighted during conversations at Roadmap Steering Committee meetings on March 30, April 6, and May 12, 2022.

Cornerstone 1: Families in Jefferson County have a variety of high-quality early care and education options that meet their needs and are provided through a mixed-delivery system.	
Strategy	Priority Actions
Develop an implementation plan and secure a dedicated public funding stream for universal preschool and other early care and education initiatives by 2024	<p>Engage employers and Jeffco Economic Development Corporation to generate interest from the business community to invest in child care. Leverage existing efforts of Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) in Jeffco.</p> <p>Determine geographic areas of need using child care availability data.</p> <p>Monitor, discuss, and brainstorm solutions for the impacts of universal preschool implementation on infant-toddler care availability.</p> <p>Revisit the <u>multiple action steps written under this strategy</u> and note the pre-work needed to develop the policy parameters, model the costs, and conduct public opinion polling to determine the political feasibility of a successful ballot measure.</p>
Recruit, retain, and support a qualified early care and education workforce across child care and preschool settings.	<p>To support recruitment and retention, ensure all early care and education providers (from licensed providers to license-exempt providers) in Jeffco are aware of and have the support needed to apply for available stimulus funding to <u>support the workforce</u> and increase <u>family access</u> to care. Information regarding open funding opportunities can be found at www.coecstimulus.com.</p> <p>Coordinate implementation efforts for <u>SB22-140</u> and <u>SB22-213</u> to leverage additional funding to support, train, and recruit the local early childhood workforce.</p>

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	Ensure businesses are aware of the funding available to create on- or near-site child care settings for employees and highlight the benefit of offering child care as a tool to recruit staff.
Ensure school-district and community-based enrichment programs and activities (e.g., library reading programs, before- and after-school programs, summer camps, child care, etc.) are accessible to all who want to engage across the age continuum of prenatal to eight years old.	Jeffco families and employers noted a need for expanded, affordable access to before- and after-school child care. When the plan was originally written, partners hoped the Jeffco Families website could serve as a “one-stop-shop” platform to connect families to enrichment programs among other resources. Based on evaluation results and usage of analytics of the website, further discussion about how to make this information accessible to Jeffco families is needed.

Cornerstone 2: Families in Jefferson County are supported in their roles as children’s first and most important teachers through an array of home visitation services that meet their diverse needs.

Strategy	Priority Actions
Develop an implementation plan and explore funding for a universally accessible home visitation system, delivered through a cohesive mixed delivery model in Jeffco by 2024	<p>Coordinate among Roadmap partners to advocate for federal reauthorization of MIECHV funding with increased investment.</p> <p>Test existing messages about home visitation with culturally and linguistically diverse families to identify what resonates. Co-develop or co-tailor messages to increase public awareness around what home visitation is, how it works, the benefits to families, different types of programs, and how to access them.</p> <p>Ensure connections to and monitor outcomes of the Family Connects pilot. Some federal funding has been secured, but additional resources will be needed. Leverage lessons learned from the pilot program to inform future efforts to expand home visitation programs.</p>

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Create coordinated intake and referral system to home visitation in Jeffco, including navigators, accessible via technology and in-person, supported by a referral database, and beginning with a pilot project	<p>Conduct local home visitation environmental scan (or leverage existing data) to understand the existing capacity of home visitation programs. Identify programs with the capacity to serve families who speak languages other than English. Determine which programs have existing capacity to serve more families and which programs can serve culturally and linguistically diverse families.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to strengthen connections between home visitation programs and family, friend, and neighbor child care providers.</p> <p>Ensure connections between home visitation family navigators and family liaisons in Jeffco Public Schools.</p>
Recruit, retain, and support a qualified home visitation workforce	<p>Train and cultivate multilingual individuals to join the home visitation workforce and build capacity to serve families who speak languages other than English.</p> <p>Identify organization to continue staffing support and convening of the Home Visitation Collaborative.</p>

Cornerstone 3: Programs and providers in Jefferson County have access to mental health consultation in order to fully support families' social-emotional well-being.

Strategy	Priority Actions
Build public awareness of the importance and value of supporting the social-emotional health of young children and their families	<p>Explore partnerships with WELL Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center to leverage resources, data, and narrative to continue building public awareness of the importance of the social-emotional well-being of children and the early childhood workforce.</p> <p>Consider partnerships with Communities that Care, Teens for Social Justice, and youth interns through JCPH to leverage and build upon existing mental health awareness-building efforts and cultivate champions in Jeffco.</p>

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	Revisit Cornerstone 3 (ECMH Consultation) to explore additional opportunities to support parents' mental health.
Recruit, retain, and support qualified infant and early childhood mental health consultants	<p>Explore expansion of early childhood workforce scholarships and loan forgiveness for early childhood mental health consultants to offset the costs of attaining qualifications.</p> <p>To support recruitment efforts, gather success stories of those in the field to build awareness of and highlight the importance of the role, benefits of ECMH consultation, and the importance of social-emotional well-being of young children and the early childhood workforce.</p> <p>Identify and promote alternative pathways into the profession to support recruitment efforts and work towards an ECMH workforce that is culturally and linguistically representative of the community.</p> <p>Crosswalk qualification requirements for ECMH consultants with other states' requirements to better understand degree, credential, and qualification articulation across geographic boundaries. Engage with the ECMHC Network Hub to leverage existing efforts, inform, and learn from state-level recruitment and retention efforts.</p>
Assure the availability of mental health consultation for all types of child-serving settings	The Steering Committee concluded that this is still a need, but no action steps within the next 12 months were identified. Additional funding would be needed to hire more ECMH consultants.

Cornerstone 4: Jefferson County has a robust screening, assessment, and referral system that addresses physical, social-emotional, behavioral, and social determinants of health.

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Strategy	Priority Actions
Create and implement coordinated early childhood development screening, assessment, and referral systems to provide the most appropriate services to each individual child	Monitor upcoming changes to the streamlined statewide early intervention program.
Create consumer-facing, cross-agency data sharing technology solutions to improve families' connection to community supports and work more efficiently across agencies	Connect and partner with Healthy Jeffco Alliance to leverage existing efforts to build coordination between multiple partners in the screening, assessment, and referral systems.
Create a coordinated early childhood navigation system (processes, infrastructure, staff)	Conduct listening sessions with Jeffco families to better understand parents' experiences, viewpoints, and hesitations around screening, assessment, and referrals; who they consider to be trusted resources for information; and how to reduce stigma, encourage, and make it easier for parents to seek out and act on referrals.

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Additional Resources

The following documents were used to inform the reconvening process or were developed alongside Roadmap Steering Committee during the reconvening process (Jan – May 2022) and have informed the content within this action plan.

- [Lessons Learned from Listening Sessions with Jeffco Families](#)
- [Lessons Learned from Listening Session with Jeffco Employers](#)
- [Crosswalk of the Roadmap Cornerstones to State and Federal Stimulus Strategies](#)
- [Progress Update Summary with Steering Committee Additions](#)
- [Presentation to the Roadmap Steering Committee on March 30](#)
- [Presentations to the Roadmap Steering Committee on April 6](#)
- [Steering Committee Roster](#)