



## Colorado

Cohort 6, Funding Period 2014–2019

### [Colorado Project LAUNCH](#)

#### *Grantee Overview*

Colorado Project LAUNCH improves and strengthens the early childhood system by increasing the coordination of key child-serving systems, increasing the expertise of behavioral health providers in primary care and other local programs, and improving access to and availability of evidence-based prevention and wellness promotion practices that support young children ages birth to 8 years and their families. The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County is the lead organization for local implementation; the Partnership works to target three southern Adams County school districts that serve 30% of the county’s student population. The population of focus for Colorado LAUNCH includes Spanish-speaking families and families who identify as Hispanic/Latino (both Spanish and English speaking). The student population in south Adams County is 72.2% Hispanic.

#### *Project Milestones*

All [Project LAUNCH](#) grantees implement five promotion and prevention strategies intended to increase access to preventative care and to raise the quality of prevention and promotion services available to children and families. In Colorado LAUNCH, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Colorado LAUNCH offers technical assistance and implementation support for best practices in screening, assessment, and referral for children from prenatal to 8 years. Staff have provided training on the Referral Roadmap and screening tools, including the [Ages and Stages Questionnaire®](#) and the [Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social–Emotional™](#). LAUNCH also supports the use of care navigators to employ best practices in locations where screening, referrals, and accepting referrals occur. Collaboration among care navigators is facilitated through monthly meetings held by the Care Navigation Learning Collaborative to discuss practice, share lessons learned, identify gaps in service, and support each other through data collection and evaluation. The care navigators, from Project LAUNCH and non-Project LAUNCH sources, ensure that screenings and referrals are conducted utilizing best practices in a variety of settings, including health clinics, [Early Intervention Colorado](#) programs, school district [Child Find](#) programs, and a local mental health center. In addition, care navigators from multiple partner organizations, including Early Intervention Colorado, Child Find, the local mental health center, a federally qualified health clinic, and two local pediatric clinics work together to bridge services across physical and mental health, streamline processes, and identify best practices. Action teams bring together partners across Adams County to improve access to high-quality services and supports. For example, the maternal mental health action team held a “Dinner and Learn” for medical providers and created a video and toolkit to promote maternal wellness,

raise awareness about maternal mental health, and encourage open conversation between women and medical providers. Materials were made available in both English and Spanish. Members of this team also participate in the Pregnancy-Related Depression Advisory Council to ensure alignment with state-run efforts.

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC):** Colorado LAUNCH is providing ECMHC to six early care and learning programs that are involved with the [Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County](#) Quality Improvement Project. The consultation is program/classroom based and is designed to promote social–emotional development and prevention of challenging behaviors. Child-specific consultation and referrals for intervention are provided as needed. Additional support is provided to early care and learning professionals through 24 hours of training and follow-up implementation support using the [Pyramid Model](#) framework. Workforce development for mental health consultants includes Pyramid Model trainings as well as monthly “learning collaborative” meetings that provide opportunities to share support, best practices, and cross training. LAUNCH is also supporting development of an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) consultation hub, which will include trainings and resources to support all IECMH consultants in the state and create a standardized state model for IECMH.
- **Integrating Behavioral Health into Primary Care:** In order to support the behavioral and physical health needs of children in Adams County, Colorado LAUNCH partners with local health clinics to support Integrated Behavioral Health Care (IBHC) providers. Staff provide professional development surrounding best practice prevention and integrated care practices geared toward children ages birth to 8 years and their families as well as women with prenatal and/or postpartum mental health concerns. This work includes meeting with clinics to design a professional development proposal, identify training needs, and utilize the Project LAUNCH organizational processes and culture assessment. The Young Child Wellness coordinator and the Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County executive director also meet quarterly with local clinics, behavioral health care organizations, and mental health centers to discuss various issues related to IBHC, including billing, professional development, implementation, and evaluation. LAUNCH is also supporting training for clinicians on the [Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders in Infancy and Early Childhood](#) (DC:0-5).
- **Enhancing Home Visiting:** Colorado LAUNCH is integrating ECMHC into Home Visiting efforts with the goal of increasing the capacity of home visitors to address the social–emotional needs of children and support the mental health needs of families. To this aim, a mental health consultant is available to accompany home visitors, provide support, and help facilitate referrals to treatment. Project LAUNCH provides one-on-one and group consultation to home visitors as well as training on topics such as Motivational Interviewing, Strengthening Families, toxic stress, vicarious trauma, and support for obtaining the Infant Mental Health Endorsement. In addition, Project LAUNCH is increasing awareness of and referrals to all home visitation programs available in the community through [Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting](#) funding.
- **Family Strengthening:** Colorado LAUNCH is providing a number of parent classes focused on supporting children’s social–emotional development. In partnership with the Tri-County Health Department, Project LAUNCH staff is facilitating [Partners in Parenting Education](#), an 8-week class for parents with children less than 3 years old. Project LAUNCH has also partnered with three community programs to co-offer [Incredible Years](#) classes in three locations for parents

with children ages 3 to 5 years and supporting Mama Talk/Mama Habla support groups for parents with children under age 2. Colorado has used simultaneous interpretation during parenting classes so that parents speaking English and Spanish can participate together. Community Cafés are also being offered to build a stronger parent organizational support network. Colorado LAUNCH is encouraging parents to take on leadership roles in the community through involvement in the state and local Young Child Wellness Councils. They are further working to increase family involvement and leadership through a local family engagement and leadership action team, which meets monthly and identifies effective strategies for engaging parents and supporting leadership development. They have held multiple storytelling workshops to help parents learn how to effectively tell their story and advocate for their children.

### ***Systems Integration***

[Project LAUNCH](#) is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. Colorado LAUNCH has supported workforce development activities across the five LAUNCH strategies, including trainings on the [Pyramid Model](#), sleep concerns for children ages birth to 3 months, perinatal mental health, [Frameworks Institute](#) messaging, storytelling, Motivational Interviewing, and planning for reflective supervision. These trainings have been open to various groups such as early care and education providers, integrated behavioral health providers, early childhood mental health consultants, care navigators, and other local and state-level partners to thoroughly engage all stakeholders to successfully support young children.

Colorado LAUNCH has also focused on increasing parent participation, including engagement of eight family members to serve on the state Young Child Wellness Council, which is co-chaired by two parent representatives. A family-focused work team has been created and is led by members of the state council. Through this and other actions, including provision of simultaneous Spanish translation for meetings and parenting classes, LAUNCH staff have successfully increased capacity of families and parents as key agents in supporting the young children of Adams County.

To communicate the importance of social–emotional development, LAUNCH staff partnered with the Colorado Department of Human Services as well as the Department of Public Health and Environment, JFK Partners at the University of Colorado, and [Early Milestones with LAUNCH Together](#). This collaboration has culminated in the inclusion of mental health promotional messages in Colorado’s [Early Childhood Shared Message Bank](#). In addition, materials have been developed to provide a variety of audiences (e.g., parents/caregivers, child care providers, home visitors, policymakers, and business leaders) with messages related to social–emotional development, early childhood mental health, and the LAUNCH initiative. Colorado LAUNCH and affiliated staff have also participated in multiple round tables and panels to discuss collaborative efforts to address health disparities in early childhood. In addition, LAUNCH partners with the substance and child abuse prevention network, [illuminate Colorado](#), to include information about substance use in a video on maternal wellness, learn about screening practices for pregnant women, and collaborate through the Young Child Wellness Council, which now includes the network’s executive director.

Colorado LAUNCH has also had a strong focus on building equity. The local Equity Action team conducted a survey among partner organizations to determine the extent to which organizations were



---

implementing [CLAS standards](#). LAUNCH is hosting an Equity Symposium in September 2017 as a first step to addressing the needs identified in the survey.

### ***Vignette***

At the local level, care navigation has been the most highly valued strategy implemented. In one scenario, the care navigator met with a family that had been speaking with their physician for years about a possible referral but had consistently failed to follow through with services. The care navigator worked closely with the family to provide guidance, emotional support, and relevant resources. A decision was finally made by the family to proceed with a referral for their young child. The child, who was identified with a significant hearing loss, is now receiving full, specialized services at the local school.

---

***This grantee profile is a product of the National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, under funding provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Cooperative Agreement 5U79SM061516-02. The views, opinions, and content of this grantee profile do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), SAMHSA, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention is operated by American Institutes for Research (AIR) in collaboration with the Center for School Mental Health, ZERO TO THREE, Community Science, FHI 360, National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, National Latino Behavioral Health Association, National Leadership Council on African American Behavioral Health, and the Council of State Governments.***

---