

# Estimating the Costs of a Comprehensive Early Childhood System

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Early Childhood Progress and Possibilities Symposium

November 18, 2010

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# Today's Agenda

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1. Overview of Cost Estimation for Early Childhood Systems
2. Introduction to The Colorado Early Childhood Cost Model
3. Explore the Cost Model in Small Groups
4. A Real World Example: Boulder EC Council Finance Task Force
5. Discussion and Wrap Up



# What Is An Early Childhood System?

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- ❑ An interconnected sets of supports available to all young children
- ❑ Encompasses a range of services and programs, including early childhood education, family supports, and medical and behavioral health care
- ❑ Places importance on quality standards
- ❑ Incorporates collaborative relationships among local organizations, parents, and service providers



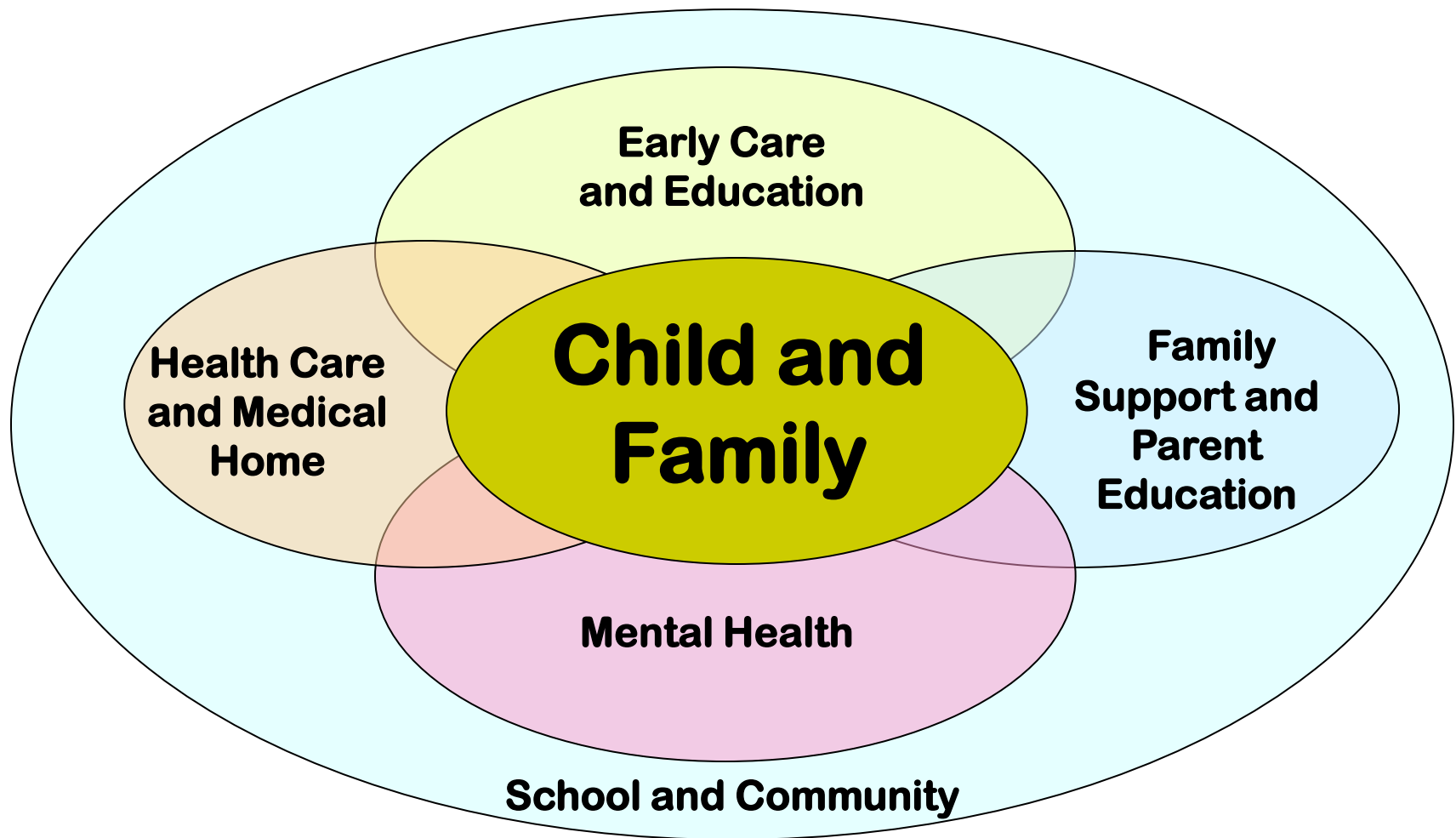
# What do we know about system we have in place today in Colorado?

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- ❑ Various programs of support available to certain groups of young children
- ❑ Existing programs managed and housed in different agencies and sometimes different sectors
- ❑ It is difficult to know the percentage children in need that are covered by programs currently in place.
- ❑ Funding streams are difficult to follow and evaluate

# Early Childhood System Domains

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# EC Cost Estimation Considerations

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- ❑ **Which children** are included (ages? Income? At-risk status? Geography?)
- ❑ What is the **scope** of the system (programs? Domains? Infrastructure?)
- ❑ **How much** does it cost (costs per children)
- ❑ What is the **cost of quality**
- ❑ What is the **current state** of the system (funding and enrollment)



# The Colorado Early Childhood Cost Model

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- ❑ Originally conceived by the Colorado ECSST in 2007 and created by the Colorado Children's Campaign and Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates, with extensive input from Colorado's early childhood community.
- ❑ Data are from 2007
- ❑ In the near future
  - ❑ The data will be updated
  - ❑ The Excel model will be migrated to a web-based version
  - ❑ Additional features, including ROI estimator



# Cost Model Goals

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1. Maps Colorado's early childhood system, including state and federal funding streams
2. Computes the additional cost necessary to build a larger and higher quality system (the "funding gap")
3. Allows users to adjust a variety of settings, such as participation rates and quality levels, and see resulting cost implications.



## A few things to keep in mind ...

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- ❑ Model provides broad state-level view
- ❑ Captures federal and state public funding only
- ❑ Assumes some user knowledge of programs
- ❑ Elements do not interact with each other
- ❑ Universe of children is prenatal through 5
- ❑ Data were collected in 2007
- ❑ Data and calculations are transparent
- ❑ Your suggestions/feedback are welcome!

# Boulder County Example

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- Used Colorado Early Childhood Cost Model to:
- ❑ Peak interest in serving on FTF
  - ❑ Educate FTF on variables impacting costs
  - ❑ Demonstrate impact of policy decisions on cost estimates
  - ❑ Validate simplified approach to cost estimates
  - ❑ Estimate costs for subgroups



# Scenarios To Try

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1. How much would a statewide preschool program to serve all children cost?
2. What would it cost to expand the system for at-risk children, starting with one program in each domain.
3. If you had an additional \$100 million, how would you spend it?
4. How much would it cost to build a robust system of family supports?

# Boulder County Example

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Finance Task Force was convened to:

- ❑ Estimate the cost of a comprehensive early childhood system for Boulder County
- ❑ Recommend financing strategies
- ❑ Define affordable early care and education