



CITY OF LEADVILLE

800 HARRISON AVE.
LEADVILLE, CO 80461

COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA

Tuesday
November 28, 2023

6:00 P.M.

Council Chambers & Zoom

<https://leadville-co-gov.zoom.us/j/83526944548?pwd=aEdjdGtpNlEyZmt5YVQ1bDBQbnN4dz09>

Meeting ID: 835 2694 4548

Passcode: 80461

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6:00 pm	1.	Call to order of regular meeting of the City Council
	2.	Roll call
	3.	Approval of agenda
	4.	Public comments about items not on the agenda
		Citizens wishing to speak to council on issues <u>not</u> on the agenda are requested to raise their hand in the participant's section of Zoom or in person. The Mayor will call on the public in order. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes (not including council questions). Action, if required, will be assigned to City staff. For matters <u>on the agenda</u> (which are not a public hearing) at the discretion of the Mayor, public input can be heard prior to a vote being taken on the matter.
6:10 pm	5.	Main Street Budget Requests
6:40 pm	6.	Leadville City Hall Budget
7:10 pm	7.	Other Funding Requests (Cloud City Conservation Center, Chaffee Housing Trust, Lake County Community Fund, etc.)
7:40 pm	8.	Final Considerations/Balance Budget
8:10 pm	9.	Public Comments
8:15 pm	10.	Adjournment

* These items may not have briefs or may have additional briefs Tuesday before the Council meeting.



The Lake County Early Care and Education Fund Proposal

August 2023

To: The City Council and County Commissioners

Presented by: Representatives from Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council and Lake County Build a Generation's Child Care Coalition (Stacy Petty + Brooke Carlsen)

In an effort to address challenges that families in Lake County face in accessing quality and affordable care and education for young children (ages birth-5) as well as ultimately reduce health inequalities, Lake County Build a Generation created a Childcare Coalition in the year 2020. Since then, representatives from the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council (RMECC), local licensed programs and other affiliated organizations have worked to identify the root of those challenges and create projects and systems that work to support positive change. Around the United States, local sustainable funding sources directly supporting the Early Care and Education system have served as an incredibly successful way to address the multifaceted challenges the system faces. In our neighboring counties, there are already tax allocations going towards supporting local Early Care and Education systems.

With this information, The Childcare Coalition decided to involve representatives from the City and County in identifying what sustainable funding for our Early Care and Education system looks like in Lake County. The determination was that a local fund needed to be created and would be housed under the fiscal agent of The Lake County Community Fund (LCCF), called The Lake County Early Care and Education Fund (LCECE). The LCECE's mission is to support and promote licensed high quality Early Care and Education programs in Lake County.

Countless studies over the past several decades from accredited organizations as well as State and Federal agencies have clearly demonstrated the significant social and economic impacts that quality Early Care and Education provide to a community. The key here is QUALITY care and its influence on individual growth and development as well as the high economic return on investment to that quality. Termed as the 'foundation for all future health, learning and well-being' for children and their families, these vital years of a child's life (birth to 8 years old) are the most impactful than any other period of development with 90% of our brain growth happening during this time. High quality early childhood programs help lead individuals to lifelong benefits including but not limited to: academic success, higher future earnings, improved overall health and lower participation in social service programs and the criminal justice system. Financial investments in these effective programs during the early years offer a return of 13% over time-about \$6 for each \$1 invested, not to mention the additional economic benefits of parents returning to the workforce, attracting new businesses and potential employees and more.

Over the past four months, the Childcare Coalition has collected data from our three local licensed providers and saw common themes that emerged in terms of their financial needs. Based on the budgets and information provided, the LCECE will be requesting \$50,000 from The City of Leadville and \$80,000 from Lake County to start the initial year of financial support. Following the pilot year with demonstrated proven success, the LCECE will be requesting a financial renewal option with potential for multi-year commitments from both the City and County. The success of the fund will be closely tied with improved quality efforts from local licensed providers and increased access to families. The \$200 yearly fee and 10% indirect costs to LCCF will also be included in the budget for this fund to remain open. We will also be approaching additional philanthropic funding opportunities (such as Freeport McMoRan grants) to diversify this fund.

The fund has been established and we are now in the process of creating a committee who will manage the funds. The committee will be composed of representatives who hold professional positions in the field of Early Childhood Education and have no conflicts of interest (staff/board members of providers receiving funds). It would then be the committee's responsibility to manage and allocate the funds based on equitable allocation across identified allowable expenses. This committee will be tasked with establishing eligibility requirements for anyone who applies for financial support as well as to help determine needs and gaps accordingly. Allowable costs and sustainability plans will be clearly defined within these eligibility requirements as well. Additional potential guidelines for applications can include but are not limited to: participation in other initiatives such as Universal Preschool, Colorado Shines and Colorado Child Care Assistance Program in order to maximize and leverage all funding available to licensed providers. This blending of multiple financial programs will also help support efforts for equitable, high quality programming available for all children and families in Lake County. To be clear, these funds are not meant to supplant funds that already exist but are to be used to supplement and fill the enormous gap of financial need.

Once guidelines have been established for applicants, licensed providers will submit an application including a breakdown of how funds will be utilized. Using a rubric, the Committee will issue award letters. Funds would go to support several different targets according to the data collected from local licensed centers: staff recruitment and retention efforts, operational costs and tuition assistance. More specifically, staff benefits and stipends, recruitment incentives, quality improvement costs, capital funding for program expansion, tuition assistance for families and more. Funding for these specific needs are incredibly hard to come by for licensed providers and thus, the LCECE fund would fill the large gap of financial need. More specifically, it would help to support families as there is a significant population of families who do not qualify for State/Federal programs but desperately struggle to afford childcare. Again, financial support from this fund will not be completely unrestricted, but it will be much more accessible for licensed providers to utilize within their budget where the largest gaps are and other financial programs cannot assist. Providers that receive financial assistance from other programs will be required to report out all current funding sources on a yearly basis before their applications are approved. Recipients will also have mid-year and final-year reporting requirements to determine how the funds are being utilized and to support reporting and documentation.

The Lake County Early Care and Education Fund works In Partnership with:



Addendum- Bright Start Family Testimonies

My name is Taryn, I am a full-time resident in Lake County. I have a 4-year-old and a 1-year-old in my home. We have struggled for the last 4 years to provide childcare for our children as we are in a family with two full-time working parents. The only way we have been able to provide childcare for our children under 3 in the last few years is to create a nanny-share with other local families. There is no childcare for infants in our community and I switched jobs in January 2023 to move to a place where they have an infant-at-work policy to supplement the expensive cost of the nanny share and to be able to bring my child to work.

We need sustainable childcare for kids who are not yet in school because of the conundrum of working parents. We just got our house appraised by the county and apparently, it's worth \$980,000 so how is a family supposed to live in this community without two working parents as a primary question and then as a secondary question, even if we are able to support childcare providers, how can we expect them to stay in Lake County on a wage of \$15-20/hour? It's impossible.

We need affordable housing for families and working childcare providers, a living wage for childcare providers and we need support for families of young children or else everyone will be forced to move to a more affordable community.

Sincerely,

Taryn Barrette

To whom it may concern,

My name is Gabby Voeller and I am the mother to two young children under the age of 5. We are full-time residents of Lake County. My family depends on childcare in order for both working parents to keep their jobs. Compared to peer communities, Lake County's childcare support is severely lacking in options and financial support. I understand the complexities of keeping

childcare centers running, and that affordable housing for staff is a huge barrier. However, Leadville and lake County will not be able to thrive unless it can retain and attract families that need childcare. Piecing things together with nannies (prohibitively expensive for most), family members, and half-day options just doesn't cut it to truly support our youngest residents. My family has considered leaving multiple times and did leave for most of the summer of 2022 in order to get better care hours and keep our jobs. I am privileged to even be able to do that compared to many other families. Childcare is the biggest stressor on our families' wellbeing. On a positive note, Sara Luna and the Brightstart Board of Directors have created an incredible care center with warm loving staff, good communication with parents, and a welcoming, nurturing community for our kids. It deserves our fullest support. The work they do is incredible, and certainly not easy. We should support their work long term with consistent funding. Many of the surrounding communities contribute to childcare via a specific tax or general fund transfer. They are able to pay a living wage to the employees and keep the price affordable for all families. Let's step up and do the same!

Gabby Voeller

1. Megan Vicini

2. Full time resident

3. We currently have a 1 year old and both parents work full time. We feel very lucky that our jobs have been supportive and allowed for flexible hours so we were able to juggle work and childcare on our own for the first 6 months of his life, then we have been able to find babysitters here and there to help us out BUT we have been STRUGGLING trying to keep up with work and childcare and have not been in the best state mentally. We are very blessed that our struggles are not financially related but regardless we have still been unable to secure stable full time childcare. **This issue is not isolated to affordable childcare, it is a lack of ALL childcare, affordable or not.** There have been many days where I would have been willing to pay almost anything to get some help and still, unable to find a reliable option. We are starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel now that our child is over the age of 1 some options have been opening up to us and we now have a couple days a week at Sophie's childcare which has been a life changer. We still don't have a full time option and do not see that in our future for a while since all options are full right now. The childcare challenge has made us not want to expand our family as I feel if we were to have another child one of us would have to stop working for the first year at a minimum since there are no options for any childcare under the age of 1.

4. If we don't fix the childcare in Leadville we are going to lose families in the area and/or families will stop expanding which is not good for the future of Leadville. I am willing to help in any way I can, I am just not sure what I can do to help.

BRIGHT START:

Bright Start has been a tremendous resource for our family over the last six years. We are so grateful! Our oldest, Liam, attended Bright Start from age 1 to age 4.5. Our youngest, Lars, age 4, still attends Bright Start and began at age 1.

My husband and I are blessed to make good livings but still cannot afford private childcare. If Bright Start was not available and offering reasonable tuition, we would not be able to keep working. If we were not able to keep working, we would not be able to financially support our family or contribute to the local economy.

Because we have Bright Start in our community, however, we are able to keep working. More importantly, we are able to do so knowing our children are receiving quality care and having a great time! I strongly encourage funders to support Bright Start so families like ours can continue to benefit from this vital resource for years to come.

Bright Start has dramatically impacted our family's move up to Leadville, which is why we love it here! The warm and friendly teachers have created a safe and comforting environment for Russell. They recognize his individuality and cater to his unique needs, making learning an exciting journey for him every day.

Russell's growth and development at Bright Start have been extraordinary. The breadth of topics he explores daily continues to amaze me. He comes home every day ready to tell us about the solar system, whales, or, lately, cactuses. His knowledge, curiosity, and ability to converse on a variety of subjects is a testament to the education he is receiving. I also love the amount of active playtime built into the day.

We could not have moved to Leadville if Brightstart was not available. The lack of very early childhood care in the area options is extremely limiting for families. I am so impressed with how much Sara has grown the program in the year and a half since it reopened. Please continue to support Brightstart and help this program grow so more families can benefit.

Bright Start has provided stable, joyful care for my daughter Hailey. Before having Hailey at Bright Start, I had frequently had to consider quitting my job because the other childcare options in the county were inconsistent and frequently closed. I cannot stress how helpful it has been to have a dependable, safe and good place to bring my daughter while I work. She has adjusted well to the consistent schedule and enjoys telling me about her days when I pick her up. It means so much to know that she is surrounded by peers and learning and maturing in a safe, good place.

Bright Start has provided wonderful care for our child in a nurturing environment. Juniper wasn't even 2 years old yet when she started at Bright Start. She has really blossomed socially and has

learned SO much from each of her teachers, and continues to daily. It's difficult leaving your child in order to make work possible, but Bright Start has made this easier on us! We have peace of mind knowing that our daughter is safe at school, in competent hands. It's amazing that they provide nutritious snacks twice daily, some foods of which Juni might not eat at home without the influence of other children! This, along with our reasonable tuition, help our family immensely! We love watching her grow and enjoy the friendships she's making with each child at Bright Start! Thank you!

The staff is wonderful and my child being there helps her development so much- as well as giving mom a break!

Bright Start has significantly changed our family life for the better. In 2020 both parents in our household were working and commuting to Summit County, and the kids were in daycare in Summit County as well. With that being our only option for childcare for both kids, we were trapped in a commuter lifestyle because not working was not an option. My husband took a job with Ski Cooper in July of 2021, which left me as the only parent commuting with the kids to Summit County. When Bright Start opened in October of 2021, we were able to enroll both kiddos, and I was able to quit my job in Summit County by December of 2021. I now work for Lake County Government in Public Health and our entire family life is based in Lake County. What I didn't realize as a commuter, is what a rich community we were missing out on in Lake County. Due to Bright Start re-opening and the incredible staff there, my kids have friends in Leadville, we are connected to other families in Leadville, both parents are able to work locally, my kids are safe and are learning daily, and I do not have to commute 1-2 hours a day with both kids in the car. In addition to that, when I was working in Summit, about 80% of my salary was going towards childcare, it almost wasn't worth it to work but I HAD to take the 20% home that wasn't going to childcare. While childcare is still a large budget item for our family, it does not consume most of our budget and allows for us to have a small amount of financial flexibility/stability. The tuition at Bright Start is a huge selling point that makes it possible for parents to stay in the local workforce. I could write a novel about the positive impacts Bright Start has had on our family, it has literally changed the course of our entire family life for the better.

Bright Start came to our rescue. We didn't have childcare for the entire pandemic for our son who was born on 12/12/19. When we got into this amazing program we could finally breath a sigh of relief and stop the manic around the clock juggling. Balancing the work of both parents and a child was not ideal for anyone in our household. Our ability to be better parents and better employees increased greatly after Dante got into Bright Start.

Our son Dante was working with the early intervention program with LCSD when he started at the daycare. Bright Start was more than accommodating to allow those sessions to continue in their classrooms. The therapists were welcomed into the playroom to work with Dante in his peer setting.

Aside from the EIP work, Dante's growth with language and peer engagement took off with the help of the Bright Start employees and the peers he could finally be around.

We have been nothing but impressed with Sara and the Staff at Bright Start. Sara is on top of operations, communication and program news is clear and timely. The staff does a great job work with our son and keeping us up to date in the Bright Wheel app.

We will be using Bright Start Until Dante is 5 or 7 years old. I do not know what we'd do if we lost access to this program. It would be very straining on our family and Dante's progress would be stifled. We are fortunate that we might be able to hire help at home and/or flex our work to accommodate covering child care ourselves if this program were to go away. I know that isn't true of the rest of the Bright Start families. Before Bright Start opened we were on 5 wait lists in 3 counties, and to be honest, our positions haven't moved on those other program waitlist.

I only hope the Bright Start can continue to run and even expand to help cover the needs of our awesome community. Access to excellent childcare could make or break the future of Leadville. Let us keep this program running so that our town has a brighter future.

- Alex and Sierra Willis