



February 2026

## Celebrating Colorado Shines Success!

We are proud to recognize three local preschool programs for earning Colorado Shines quality ratings. **Centennial Preschool** achieved a Level 5, while **Sierra Grand Preschool** and **Haskin Preschool** each earned a Level 4 rating.

These ratings reflect the hard work, dedication, and commitment of staff who support children and families every day. Congratulations to all three teams on this well-earned achievement.



# CONGRATULATIONS SIERRA GRAND PRESCHOOL COLORADO SHINES LEVEL 4



**I WANT TO GIVE A SHOUT OUT TO OUR STAFF WHO ARE DOING A GREAT JOB IN OUR CENTER. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ENTIRE TEAM ON THIS REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT! ON THE HARD WORK AND COLLABORATION HUGE SUCCESS OUR LEVEL 4 ON THE ECERS-3 RATING. WELL DONE TEAM!**

**FOR MORE THAN 29 YEARS IN THIS PROFESSION, I'VE HAD THE JOY OF WATCHING COUNTLESS CHILDREN GROW INTO YOUNG ADULTS. IT IS GRATIFYING TO WITNESS A CHILD GRASP A NEW CONCEPT FOR THE FIRST TIME- WHETHER IT'S SHARING A TOY, RECOGNIZING A LETTER, OR LEARNING TO WRITE THEIR NAME. THE DYNAMIC AND UNPREDICTABLE NATURE OF WORKING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN MEANS THAT NO TWO ARE THE SAME. EACH CHILD HAS THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL, GROWING INTO A WONDERFUL PERSON WHO WILL FLOURISH IN THIS WORLD.**

**AS TEACHERS, OUR STUDENTS LOOK UP TO US AND THEY'RE NOT ONLY ACADEMICS BUT ALSO HOW TO BE GOOD PEOPLE. EVERY MOMENT BECOMES A TEACHING OPPORTUNITY- FROM SHOWING THEM HOW TO THROW AWAY THEIR FOOD PROPERLY TO GUIDING THEM TO SHARING WITH OTHERS. WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF MODELING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF OURSELVES.**

**ONE OF MY FAVORITE MEMORIES IN MY CAREER WAS HAVING THE CHANCE TO TEACH MY YOUNGEST CHILD AND WATCHING HIM LEARN HIS LETTERS AND WRITE HIS NAME. IN OUR SCHOOL, WE GET TO WATCH CHILDREN GROW INTO YOUNG ADULTS AND AS I WALK DOWN THE HALLS, I STILL RECEIVE HUGS FROM THE CHILDREN WHO WERE ONCE IN OUR CLASSROOMS.**

# CONGRATULATIONS HASKIN PRESCHOOL. COLORADO SHINES LEVEL 4

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE CHILD CARE BUSINESS?**

- I HAVE BEEN IN THE CHILD CARE BUSINESS FOR 32 YEARS.

**WHAT'S THE MOST REWARDING PART OF PROVIDING SUCH A VALUABLE SERVICE?**

- THE MOST REWARDING PART IS SEEING THE CHILDREN ENGAGED IN THE ACTIVITIES THE OUR TEACHERS PROVIDE, THE CHILDREN'S CHATTER AND LAUGHTER WHEN ENTERING THE CLASSROOMS.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR CAREER?**

- MY FAVORITE MEMORY IS RAISING THE LEVEL 2 IN COLORADO SHINES TO A LEVEL 4 IN COLORADO SHINES.

**-JANET SANCHEZ**



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## Working ahead on a career after high school

Alamosa High School has launched a new Early Childhood Education Club that gives students a head start on careers working with young children.

Through a partnership with Trinidad State College, students can earn a college certificate while still in high school, opening doors to immediate employment or future teaching credentials.

The program supports Colorado's career readiness goals and helps grow a much-needed local early childhood workforce.

Click [here](#) for the Alamosa Citizen article!

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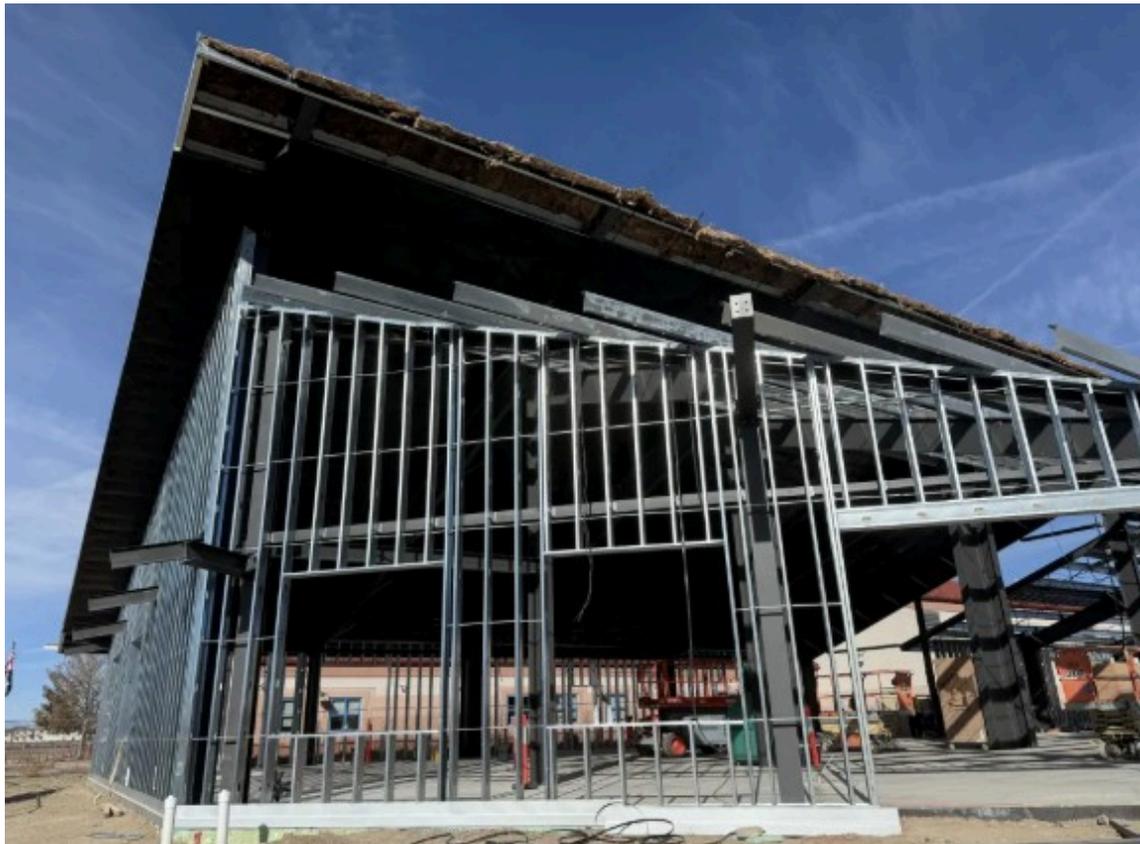
# Nurturing Connections Colorado

## Introducing Nurturing Connections Colorado

Colorado's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program has a new name: Nurturing Connections Colorado. The updated name reflects the program's growth, evidence-based success, and focus on supporting children's mental health from birth. Nurturing Connections Colorado helps caregivers and early childhood professionals build the skills needed to support healthy social and emotional development, with the guiding message that Mental Health Starts Early.

Click [here](#) for more details!

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# The Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley has broken ground on a \$10.8 million childcare facility!

The new center will expand access to licensed, high-quality early learning, support working families, and strengthen the local workforce and economy. Backed by broad community investment, the project highlights how critical childcare is to the Valley's growth, with licensed spots currently available for only a fraction of local children.

Important Note: The Early Childhood Council is **not** in charge of the new facility or the hiring process, but we are keeping an eye out for updates. As the center's director shares information with us, we'll be happy to pass it along to help keep the community informed.

Click [here](#) for the full article from Alamosa Citizen!

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley also hosts tours of the Little Learners Academy building on the first Tuesday of every month from 1:00–2:00 PM. No RSVP is required.

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## Health and Safety

### **\*\*\*Evenflo All4One Car Seat Recall\*\*\***

#### **What Parents Need To Know**

Evenflo has issued a voluntary recall for select All4One 4-in-1 convertible car seats manufactured January 2022–June 2024 in the U.S. and Canada.

#### **Why the recall?**

During rear-facing testing, some seats could shift recline positions, and there's a risk of finger pinching if someone is sitting next to the seat. No injuries reported, and the seat still protects in a crash.

#### **Can you keep using it?**

Yes. It's safe to use. Just avoid placing fingers near the recline mechanism when used rear-facing.

### **Who's affected?**

Only specific model numbers of the All4One (not EveryFit, EveryKid, or All4Stages). Affected families will receive a free replacement car seat.

Next steps for parents:

- Check your model number
- Register your seat if you haven't already
- Await replacement instructions from Evenflo

For full recall details click [here](#)!

## **Winter Coats and Carseats: What's Safe for Babies**

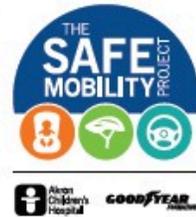
The image below shows the correct and incorrect ways to dress babies in car seats during winter.

On the **correct side**, a baby is secured in a car seat wearing thin, well-fitted clothing, with snug harness straps and the chest clip positioned properly at armpit level. A blanket is placed over the baby after buckling for warmth.

On the **incorrect side**, the baby is shown wearing a thick winter coat under the harness, which can prevent the straps from fitting tightly and increase the risk of injury. The graphic highlights that bulky coats, loose straps, blankets under the harness, added accessories, and improperly placed chest clips are unsafe.

**The key message:** dress babies in thin layers, tighten the harness correctly, and add warmth after buckling to keep them safe in the car.

# Winter Coats and Car Seats



Winter coats help keep kids safe and warm outside, but can endanger them while riding in car or booster seats.

## CORRECT



- ✓ **DO** dress your child in a **well-fitted fleece**.
- ✓ **DO** lay a blanket **over a child's legs** for added warmth, but never near a child's face.
- ✓ **DO** make sure **straps** are **tight** and **chest clip** is **positioned** at the armpit level. **Harness straps** should be **at or above** the child's shoulders for a forward-facing seat and **at or below** the shoulders for a rear-facing seat.
- ✓ **DO** keep children **rear-facing** as long as possible, until they reach the upper height and weight limits of the car seat.
- ✓ **DO** be sure the car seat doesn't **move** more than **one inch** from side to side and front to back.

## INCORRECT



- ✗ **DO NOT** dress your child in a **thick coat**.
- ✗ **DO NOT** put a blanket **under** your child's body or **between** your child's body and the harness straps.
- ✗ **DO NOT** have **loose straps**. You shouldn't be able to pinch together any of the harness strap fabric.
- ✗ **DO NOT** add **attachments** to a car seat. Only use equipment that comes in the original car seat box.
- ✗ **DO NOT** fasten the **chest clip** too high or low on the child's chest.

To make sure your child is correctly fitted in a car seat, visit [www.safemobilityproject.com](http://www.safemobilityproject.com)

## Abrigos de invierno y asientos de seguridad para el auto: ¿qué es seguro para los bebés?

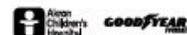
La imagen muestra las formas correctas e incorrectas de vestir a los bebés en los asientos de seguridad del automóvil durante el invierno.

En el lado **correcto**, el bebé está asegurado en el asiento del auto usando ropa delgada y bien ajustada, con las correas del arnés bien apretadas y el broche del pecho colocado correctamente a la altura de las axilas. Para mayor abrigo, se coloca una manta sobre el bebé después de abrochar el arnés.

En el lado **incorrecto**, se muestra al bebé usando un abrigo grueso de invierno debajo del arnés, lo cual puede impedir que las correas queden bien ajustadas y aumentar el riesgo de lesiones. El gráfico destaca que los abrigos voluminosos, las correas sueltas, las mantas colocadas debajo del arnés, los accesorios adicionales y los broches del pecho mal colocados no son seguros.

**El mensaje clave es:** vista a los bebés con capas delgadas, ajuste correctamente el arnés y agregue abrigo después de abrocharlos para mantenerlos seguros en el automóvil.

# Abrigos de Invierno y Asientos para Auto



Los abrigos de invierno protegen a los niños del frío cuando están afuera, pero pueden ser peligrosos mientras viajan en el asiento para auto o asiento elevador.

## CORRECTO



- ✓ **SI** vista a su hijo con ropa de invierno bien entallada.
- ✓ **SI** coloque una cobija sobre las piernas del niño para calentar, pero nunca cerca de la cara del niño.
- ✓ **SI** asegure que las correas estén ajustadas y el broche de pecho se este colocado al nivel de las axilas. Las correas del arnés deben estar más arriba o en los hombros del niño para un asiento mirando hacia adelante y más abajo o en los hombros para un asiento mirando hacia atrás.
- ✓ **SI** mantenga a los niños mirando hacia atrás lo más que se pueda, hasta que alcancen los límites de altura y peso del asiento para auto.
- ✓ **SI** asegure que el asiento para auto no se mueva más de una pulgada de lado a lado y de adelante hacia atrás.

## INCORRECTO



- ✗ **NO** vista a su hijo con un abrigo de invierno grueso.
- ✗ **NO** coloque una cobija debajo del cuerpo de su hijo o entre el cuerpo de su hijo y las correas del arnés.
- ✗ **NO** tenga correas sueltas. Deben estar bien ajustadas para que no se pueda pellizcar ninguna parte de la correa del arnés.
- ✗ **NO** ponga accesorios a un asiento para auto. Utilice únicamente el equipo que viene en la caja original del asiento para auto.
- ✗ **NO** ajuste el broche de pecho demasiado alto o demasiado bajo en el pecho del niño.

Para asegurarse de que su hijo esté correctamente colocado en un asiento de auto, visite [www.safemobilityproject.com](http://www.safemobilityproject.com)



## Coaching

### Interactions

Daily interactions with infants and toddlers are the foundation of quality care. It is within the context of secure, nurturing relationships with parents, family members, and other caring adults that healthy infant and toddler development and learning happen

Infants and toddlers communicate their feelings, interests, and intentions through their behavior. Discovering what their behavior means is an important part of responsive, individualized interactions. Petersen and Wittmer suggested some questions that education staff can use to reflect on what children's behaviors might mean:[\[3\]](#)

- What is the child experiencing? What is the child thinking?
- What is the behavior and when, where, and with whom does it occur?
- What wants or needs is the child communicating? What is the purpose of the child's behavior? What is the meaning of the child's behavior?
- What do her family and I want the child to do, learn, and feel?

Staff can share these questions with families to help deepen their understanding of children. As staff and families answer these questions, they gain insights into how to interact with each child. There are many ways adults can interact with children, such as:

- Verbal language
- Sign language
- Nonverbal communication (e.g., gestures, facial expressions)
- Physical touch
- Gentle or active movement
- Use of space between the adult and child

Interactions that are respectful and responsive to each child's individual needs let children know their feelings, interests, and intentions are recognized and valued.

[2]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start , Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHS NRC), News You Can Use: Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Washington, DC, 2011).

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## EQIT

We would like to give a HUGE Congratulations to the following 18 participants for completing the Fall 2025 48-Hour Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler Care Course and their Trainers and Coaches.

### **Participants:**

- Linda Altamirano
- Nancy Duran
- Amanda Garcia
- Ana Gonzalez
- Luz Heredia
- Darlene Jimenez
- Faith Maestas
- Nicole Mahan
- Erica Maldonado
- Karla Maltos
- Tiffany Quintana
- Jazmin Santillano
- Nicole Silva
- Ursula Nelson
- James (JD) Pazen
- Benita (Alex) Vialpando
- Amanda Vigil

- Kodie Barr

### **Trainers:**

Amy Bolt  
Ramona Silva

### **Coaches:**

Beverlee Keilman  
Tina Esquibel

We would also like to give a HEARTFELT THANK YOU to Erica Maldonado for providing translation services during the course.

This wonderful work could not happen without the support, participation, and collaboration from early childhood program directors and staff.

The impact this course has on anyone choosing to join this Early Childhood Infant and Toddler Initiative is life long and life changing in the ways we see babies.

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## **Immediate Child Care Openings (Toddlers 12–30 Months)**

### **Immediate Child Care Openings in Alamosa!**

Ages: 1–3 years (must be walking)

Early Head Start has FREE childcare spots available now for qualifying families—but spots are limited! Don't wait—secure your child's spot today.

 Call Alex or Erica at 719-937-4010 for more info.

 Apply now by filling out the interest form [Here](#) to complete the interest form.

**Act fast spaces won't last!**

# Early Head Start

Free Quality Child Care Services!

Birth to 3

Expectant Families and Teen Parents

- Child Care 28+ hours per week
  - Year-Round Program
  - Family Services
  - Education Services
  - Health Services
  - Nutrition Services
  - Disabilities Services
  - Community Resources



Families with children with special needs are encouraged to apply  
Military families encouraged to apply  
We do not provide daily transportation to & from the center. However, we may be able to provide transportation in certain circumstances in conjunction with other community agencies.

[Begin Application Here](#)

Contact us Today!  
(719) 937-4010  
401 Santa Fe Ave  
Alamosa, CO 81101



Service Areas:  
Saguache  
Costilla  
Alamosa  
Rio Grande

☀️ **Now Enrolling: Quality Family Child Care Homes** ☀️

**Serving Rio Grande, Alamosa & Conejos Counties.**



## Are you in need of trusted, high-quality childcare?

Our licensed Family Child Care Home Providers are now accepting new enrollments!

- ✓ Small group settings
- ✓ Individualized attention
- ✓ Safe, nurturing environments
- ✓ Flexible availability

We currently have **multiple openings** in:

- **Rio Grande County**
- **Alamosa County**
- **Conejos County**

Let us connect you with a provider who fits your family's needs! Contact Amanda Atencio at [ecresource@ecclsv.org](mailto:ecresource@ecclsv.org)

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## Resource and Referral-New Funding for Rural Child Care Providers

The Child Care Capital & Infrastructure Fund is now available to support child care providers in rural Colorado. Offered by First Southwest Bank with support from Gary Community Ventures, the fund provides low-interest loans to help start, expand, or improve child care programs.

Funds may be used for equipment, building purchase or renovation, refinancing, or expansion. Licensed family child care homes, centers, and FFN providers may be eligible. Loans of up to \$2 million are available.

Learn more and apply click [here](#).

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## Raising Colorado Kids Resources

Raising Colorado Kids is a website full of resources for Colorado families. It is designed as a central hub to help families locate resources, information, and supports related to early childhood, child development, childcare, and family services in Colorado.

What can you find at this website?

- Guidelines and expectations for children's growth (from birth to age 8)
- Help identifying and evaluating childcare options
- Resources for families in need of assistance
- Information and application guidance

What are you waiting for?! Check this website out today!

[Visit our Website](#)

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## Professional Development

### Scholarships Available for Early Childhood Professionals!

Are you currently working in early childhood education or pursuing a career in the field? Great news—scholarship opportunities are available to help you continue your education and professional growth!

These scholarships can support coursework, credential programs, and degree pathways designed to strengthen the early childhood workforce.

Investing in your education not only benefits your career but also enhances the quality of care and learning experiences for young children in our community.

For those interested, please reach out to [Lcoresource@eccslv.org](mailto:Lcoresource@eccslv.org) for local scholarship information.

For those working towards their master's or doctorate in Early Childhood take a look at this scholarship from [The Denver Foundation](#).

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## Family Affordability Tax Credit Reminder

It's tax time! Many residents of Colorado are eligible for thousands of dollars in tax credits, including the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). However, nearly a quarter of those eligible miss out on these benefits. You don't need to earn a high income to qualify for the CTC or EITC,

but it is necessary to file a state of Colorado tax return for this credit. Starting in 2025, Colorado families with children will be able to access the Family Affordability Tax Credit (FATC).

Here's how it works:

- Up to \$3,200 for each eligible child aged 5 years old and younger as of Dec 31, 2025
- Up to \$2,400 for each eligible child ages 6 to 16 as of Dec 31, 2025

**Additionally, parents with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) can qualify for the credit if their children have a Social Security Number (SSN), which can also be up to \$3,200 per young child. To receive this credit, you must file a State of Colorado tax return. File your taxes securely and for free at**

<https://www.getaheadcolorado.org/>

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## **Stay Updated on Local Resources**

This time of year, there are lots of community supports and opportunities popping up and we know it can be hard to keep track of them all.

While our newsletter goes out once a month, we often come across helpful resources online that we share on our Facebook page to keep things streamlined and easy to find.

Follow us here to stay informed!

<https://www.facebook.com/eccslv>

## **Community Bulletin Board**

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# COMMUNITY JOB BOARD!

APPLY NOW! **Open Positions:**

- Saguache County

**Position:** Child Welfare/APS  
Caseworker

**Location:** Alamosa CO.

**(Full details in the link supplied.)**



For more information:  
**SEE DETAILS BELOW WITH  
LINKS FOR EACH JOB VACANCY**

## Saguache County Social Services

### How to Apply and Full Job Description details

Interested candidates should submit their resume, cover letter, and references to the Saguache County Social Services Department at [miracle.gomez@state.co.us](mailto:miracle.gomez@state.co.us) or deliver to Saguache County Department of Social Services, 605 Christy Avenue, Saguache, CO 81149. You may also find the job application online at <https://saguachecounty.colorado.gov/employment-opportunities> Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Saguache County is an equal-opportunity employer. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and experiences.

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Do you have something you would like to share in our newsletter?

If individuals and organizations in the community want to share relevant information through this email list, ECCSLV will do their best to include the information in the next available e-newsletter.

ECCSLV considers requests based on relevance, capacity, and timeliness. We do not guarantee that all information will be shared.

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Stay connected with us!

**Subscribe to our newsletter!**

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**Click on the social media links below to follow us on all platforms!**

We post regularly to our social media accounts regarding events and important last minute information that is usually not included in our bi-weekly newsletters.

**Be sure you are subscribed so you don't miss out!**



Early Childhood Council | 401 Santa Fe Avenue | Alamosa, CO 81101 US

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