State-wide Dashboard for Colorado ECE Workforce Launches

(Denver, CO) The Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab, working in partnership with the Colorado Department of Human Services, announces the launch of the ***Colorado Early Care & Education Workforce Data Dashboard***. This interactive portal provides access to data demonstrating the size, breadth, and expertise of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECE) workforce in Colorado.

The Dashboard compiles the counts and characteristics of the ECE workforce and allows users to customize data briefs by geography of interest. The tool was developed to allow state leadership and early childhood stakeholders in the community to better understand the conditions of the ECE workforce and dissect the information more interactively at the county, early childhood council, and state region levels.

The Dashboard can help identify:

- local educator shortages
- disproportionate shortages by certain professions
- areas with high turnover
- areas that are demonstrating successful growth

The Dashboard was built as part of the Colorado's Early Care and Education Professionals: 2019 Snapshot Report. The report was funded by the Piton Foundation and the Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation to meet the escalating need for actionable information among policy- and decisionmakers who seek to provide for the well-being of our youngest children. Partnerships created through the Linked Information Network of Colorado spurred the sharing of data by multiple state government entities to drives the success of the Dashboard.

"This information will help Colorado design effective strategies to recruit and retain the best-trained ECE workforce," says Susan Steele, President and CEO of the Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation and co-chair of the state's Early Childhood Leadership Commission. "The COVID19 pandemic is putting unprecedented constraints on the state's budget, but a strong ECE workforce is more needed than ever."

"We know that the productivity of Colorado's workforce as a whole is tied to the strength of the ECE workforce," says Keller Anne Ruble of the Piton Foundation. "If ECE professionals aren't trained and available to take care of our youngest children, their parents aren't able to work. This is why the Piton Foundation believed it was so critical to develop this understanding of our ECE workforce and how we can improve it."

The key implications of the **2019 Snapshot report** are:

Colorado needs to examine its commitment to infant and toddler care in order to meet the demands of children and families. There were over 23,000 early care and education professionals in Colorado in 2019, most serving kids ages 3 – 5. Public and private center-based teachers serving 3- to 5-year-olds outnumbered infant and toddler teachers 2 to 1. The desired split should be nearly equal.

Colorado needs effective strategies for ECE professional recruitment, retention, and professional development in order to spend its childhood investments effectively. Leadership role disparities, high turnover, and job stagnation among infant and toddler assistant teachers are significant. Significantly:

- Twice as many white professionals served in director positions as Hispanic professionals, driven in part by the much greater likelihood that white professionals have obtained college degrees.

- More than 1 in 4 ECE professionals changed jobs within the field in 2019 alone, and fifty percent had made job changes within the previous three years.

Stacey Kennedy, Director of Child Care Quality Initiatives with the Colorado Department of Human Services, is already seeing the importance of this project to her work. "Colorado needs to invest in data systems and smart use of these data to be responsive to changing conditions of the ECE professional workforce," says Kennedy. "This report provides an important baseline, but particularly given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to continue and expand research into this important workforce. We intend to refresh the data in 2020 to show changes in the workforce during the spread of the pandemic."

About the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab

With philanthropic support, the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab was established at the University of Denver with a mission to improve the lives of Colorado residents by partnering with state and local governments to strengthen coordinated and efficient person-centered services. https://coloradolab.org