

The History of the Colorado Coaching Consortium (CCC)

In the Spring of 2007, representatives from various early childhood education coaching initiatives in Colorado began meeting monthly with a goal of gaining a better understanding of the scope and nature of early childhood coaching projects around the state. In addition, the group wanted to explore how a common set of principles or standards for coaching and more systematic professional development opportunities for coaches might support our work and promote stronger outcomes for our coaching efforts. The group adopted the name Colorado Coaching Consortium.

A survey of coaching initiatives statewide showed that a significant amount of coaching is being done, with common broad goals but great variability in practice. The Consortium determined that a set of shared standards, in the form of coaching competencies, could be helpful in guiding coaching work around the state.

In December 2007, a group of 34 coaches, program supervisors, and other representatives of diverse coaching initiatives joined with Consortium members to begin crafting a definition of coaching and a set of coaching competencies for the early childhood field in Colorado. Using business and life coaching competencies developed by the International Coach Federation as a springboard, this work group completed an in-depth analysis of the skills and dispositions required for effective coaching with early childhood educators seeking to provide high quality services to children and families. The results of this day's work were synthesized into the Early Childhood Education Coaching Competencies. The Competencies were widely distributed for feedback from the Summer of 2008 through the Winter of 2009, and a final version was published in March 2009, along with a Self-Assessment intended for supporting coach professional development.

Through various surveys and meetings conducted by the Consortium, it became clear that there was a dearth of professional development opportunities for coaches statewide. In January, 2009, the Consortium partnered with Clayton Early Learning to sponsor a two-day training by Laura Lipton of MiraVia on Leading Groups: Effective Strategies for Building Professional Community and Learning-Focused Relationships: Consulting, Collaborating & Coaching for Professional Excellence. This training was very-well received and launched the Consortium in a new direction. In the Spring of 2009, the Consortium organized the first-ever Coaching Track at the CAEYC annual conference.

Recognizing that there were unmet needs and continued opportunities to develop coaching as an early childhood profession in Colorado, in July of 2009 the Consortium hosted a strategic planning meeting with current members and other stakeholders from around the state. The vision that emerged from this meeting was that Early Childhood Coaching in Colorado is recognized, supported, and practiced as an integral strategy for achieving high quality early care and education experiences for children. Five working committees were established to realize this vision: Professional Development, Systems Coordination, Communications, Coaching Network, and Evidence-Based Practices.