



Durango Early Learning Center

STRATEGIC PLAN

Sept. 1, 2024 – Aug. 31, 2027



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DURANGO EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Land Acknowledgement: We respectfully acknowledge that DELC is located in Durango, Colorado, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Ute (Núu-aghá-tǎvǎ-ǰǰ), Diné (Navajo: Naabeehó Bináhásdzo), Hopi (Hopituh Shi-nu-mu) Pueblos, Apache and Zuni (Shiwi'ma) People who have been stewards of this land throughout generations. As early childhood care providers and educators of our future generation, it is our responsibility to acknowledge the impacts of the unkind acts that have led to the unfair and inappropriate treatment of people that traditionally lived here and still live here today.

Vision

DELC's vision is to be a role model in early childhood education in La Plata County, fostering a culture of equity and inclusion among families of diverse economic, social, cultural and racial/ethnic backgrounds, while upholding the highest standards in teaching and staffing practices.

Mission

Nurturing child development in partnership with families of diverse backgrounds.

Values

The principles that guide our organizational strategy and our individual actions:

- We are inclusive
- We are leaders
- We are honest
- We are curious
- We are playful and fun



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR SW COLORADO

Who We Are

Durango Early Learning Center (DELIC) is a non-profit 501(c)3, early childhood center that was founded in 1978. DELIC is a year-round program, serving children ages 18 months to 5 years and licensed for 55 students per day. We value all children as individuals and recognize that each child has something special to bring to our community. We believe that the education of young children is a collaborative process, encompassing the child, their family, the school, and the larger community.

We put these philosophies into action through learning by:

- Implementing a play-based approach to learning, utilizing daily observations on each child's interests and developmental needs to inform individualized learning experiences and adaptations to the classroom environment.
- Preparing children for kindergarten, and more importantly becoming functioning members of our larger community, is at the core of our social-emotional focus.
- Using a respectful and supportive approach to all aspects of behavior, striving to make connections with children to help them navigate the complicated nature of their emotions and interactions with others.
- Engaging families as active participants in their child's first formal educational experience and require annual family hours. Families support the school through participation in classroom activities, purchasing of supplies and helping with facility upkeep.
- We cultivate programs to support diversity among our DELIC community. One example is that we annually invite families to share their culture and traditions with their child's class.

We serve children ages
18 months – 5 years,
55 students
per day

OUR GOALS & STRATEGIES

1

Promote Staff Retention and Satisfaction

Initiatives/Actions:

- Foster a culture of recognition, collaboration, and appreciation for all staff members.
- Maintain competitive teacher compensation.
- Solicit and utilize staff feedback, including satisfaction ratings, suggestions and areas for improvement.
- Encourage and support staff in career progression and opportunities for further education.
- Provide resources for stress management and mental health to foster work-life balance.
- Encourage open lines of communication between staff, management, and the Board of Directors.

Success will be measured by:

- Maintaining a 90% staff retention rate at the beginning of each school year averaged over three years.
- Staff annual surveys show high satisfaction ratings in areas such as policy and procedure competency, benefits packages, and opportunities for professional development.
- Yearly review and enhancement of benefit packages according to preferences and interests of staff.
- 100% staff participation in one professional development activity per year.



2

OUR GOALS & STRATEGIES

Enhance Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility for Families

Initiatives/Actions:

- Ensure broad financial accessibility to families by offering an equitable tiered tuition model.
- Maintain a lottery-based admissions system to promote equity of access for all families.
- Strategically engage underrepresented community members to introduce the lottery and provide accessibility to quality care at DELC.
- Redesign outdoor learning spaces to promote a safe, inclusive environment that encourages exploration, problem solving, and physical activity, all while fostering meaningful social connections through play.

Success will be measured by:

- Financial accessibility to most families by offering an equitable tiered tuition model.
- Maintain 25% of families at Tier 1 to increase to 30% by year three.
- An annual survey will show that families feel supported for their individual needs at the school and feel represented in school communication, special programming, and classroom lessons.
- Outdoor learning space will be completed by the 26.27 school year.



OUR GOALS & STRATEGIES

3

Increase Community Involvement

Initiatives/Actions:

- Increase and promote parent and family involvement within the school.
- Invite the community to be involved in events and help in educating our students.
- Ensure the DELC board and staff are engaged and visible in the community.

Success will be measured by:

- End-of-year surveys will show that 100% of families understand how to participate in classroom activities and family contribution hours.
- DELC's Director will distribute a newsletter each month with school updates and events.
- At least one Board member will participate in a broader local community event one time per year to represent DELC and engage with future stakeholders.

Evaluation:

- The Board of Directors and staff will develop an action plan to carry out the strategies and review the progress of the success measures identified in this strategic plan.
- Conduct an internal annual review by the Board of Directors and staff to evaluate progress and understand what was successful and needs improvement.



DEFINITIONS

DELIC Community

Includes our staff, board, and currently enrolled and alumni families (children and parent/guardians).

Diversity

Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, age, abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, marital status, parental status, physical traits, etc.

Equity

The quality of being fair and impartial; the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically (World Health Organization).

Inclusion

The process whereby every person – irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual preference or nationality – who wishes to, can access and participate fully in all aspects of an activity or service in the same manner as any other member of the community; an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully.

