



# Annual Report

2023

[Firstimpressionsrouttcounty.org](https://www.firstimpressionsrouttcounty.org)

**Dear Friends of First Impressions,**

**As we wrap up a transformative year with an entirely new staff, I want to express my immense pride in all that we've accomplished together. The dedication and hard work of our team have been the driving force behind our successes, from heightened community awareness to the empowerment of our workforce.**

**Looking ahead to 2024, I am excited about the continued momentum. We will strengthen community partnerships through kindergarten transitions, fundraising partnerships, Month of the Young Child celebrations, UPK community registration events, and the onboarding of more home providers. These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to creating a thriving community for every child and family.**

**In the spirit of unity and collaboration, let us approach the new year with optimism and determination. Together, we will build on the foundation we've laid, creating a community where every child thrives, every educator is empowered, and the collective strength of our partnerships propels us towards new heights.**

**Thank you for your dedication, your hard work, and the profound impact you've had on the First Impressions community. Here's to a year of continued growth, collaboration, and success.**

**With gratitude,**

**Meg Franges  
Executive Director**

## WHAT WE DO

First Impressions serves as the hub for all early childhood resources. In strengthening and streamlining all early childhood services, families with young children are connected to the resources they need to ensure all children are valued, healthy, and thriving.

## MISSION

First Impressions of Routt County works to ensure that young children and educators will be provided adequate resources and quality programs to promote healthy development and school readiness.

## VISION

The First Impressions Council strengthens the community's collaborative web of resources where children, families and educators experience dignity and a sense of belonging.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- **Increasing Community Awareness:**

Fostering a targeted campaign to heighten community understanding of the critical role childcare plays in early development, emphasizing its communal significance and encouraging a shared commitment to children's well-being.

- **Capacity and Accessibility:**

Strategically increasing community childcare capacity with a special focus on infants and toddlers, ensuring broader accessibility and availability of quality early childhood services to meet the unique needs of our youngest community members.

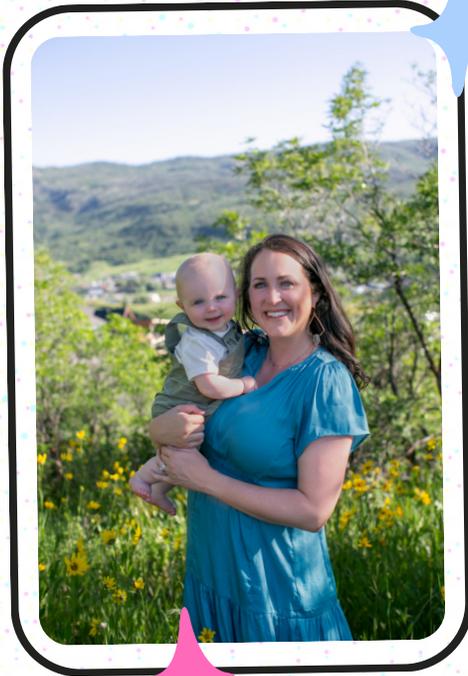
- **Collaborative Community:**

Strengthening bonds within the community by fostering partnerships and engagement, ensuring a collaborative approach towards nurturing the well-being and development of young children.

- **Workforce Empowerment**

Empowering the early childhood workforce by prioritizing initiatives that secure sustainable funding, ensuring equitable wage increases and providing comprehensive support to foster a skilled and dedicated workforce committed to the optimal development of children.

# MEET THE TEAM



## Meg Franges Executive Director

Meg serves as the Executive Director for First Impressions of Routt County. Meg has a bachelors in Elementary Education and MA in Early Childhood Special Education.

She has been involved in Early Childhood for over 10 years as a classroom teacher, early childhood special education teacher, childcare center director and most importantly- Mom. Meg enjoys spending time with her husband camping, biking, skiing and chasing after her two kids. Meg also has a passion for dance and is actively involved in Steamboat Dance Theatre and served on the board of directors as former president.



## Pamela Nebel Program Coordinator

Pamela is originally from Medellin, Colombia. She enjoys traveling, skiing, hiking, mountain biking and camping. Over the years, she has worked with children's and youth in a variety of settings including domestic violence, sexual assault, mentoring and others. As a Social Worker she understands the importance of Early Childhood education.

Pamela provides assistance and support for programs and coaches in navigating the Colorado Shines system, FCCH providers and more. She works closely with staff to support and assist with day-to-day operations of the Council.

# ROUTT COUNTY CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

To identify a plan to address gaps in the system, the Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation (CSFF) and First Impressions of Routt County commissioned this needs assessment in October 2022 to clearly understand the state of early care and education (ECE) in the county.

Between October 2022 and July 2023, researchers from the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver (Butler) collected data to understand the supply of and demand for ECE services of children birth through age 8 in Routt County. The needs assessment used secondary data, interviews and focus groups, and surveys to collect data from ECE providers, families, and systems-level partners.

**CHECK OUT THE FULL  
REPORT HERE!**

# WHAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON!

## UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL UPK

Universal Preschool (UPK) allows families to choose the right setting for their child, whether it is in a licensed community-based, school-based or home-based preschool

Families of children in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten, and qualifying 3-year-olds, can apply for UPK Colorado for the 2023-24 school year.

First Impressions is the Local Coordinator Organization for all things related to UPK

## BY THE NUMBERS

- As of December 2023 we have 12 participating UPK providers
- 157 4 year olds are enrolled with participating providers

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

First Impressions offers assistance to help offset the cost of tuition. Eligible children must be enrolled or eligible for enrollment in a participating, licensed, childcare center, family childcare home or preschool program in Routt

First Impressions Tuition Assistance supports families up to 400% FPL to pay no more than 14% of their monthly income towards child care/preschool

By the numbers

- As of December 2023, our tuition assistance programs have supported 33 working families with \$125,550 across 9 licensed centers.



# WHAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON!

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Quality early learning options require a qualified, fairly compensated early childhood workforce. First Impressions works to ensure safe, nurturing, and engaging early learning environments are a choice for all of Routt County's young children.

During 2023 First Impressions supported 10 Early Childhood teachers with scholarships!



## BPP GRANTS

The First Impressions Best Practice Program stands out by providing crucial financial support to child care providers and early childhood community partners, enabling them to implement and sustain quality improvement initiatives.

The grand 2022 - 2023 total of BPP was: \$202,500

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

First Impressions Executive Committee and Council Members got together to start working on First Impressions strategic plan. A big thanks to Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA) for leading the meeting, we really appreciate the guidance and experience!



## SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEW WEBSITE!

First Impressions is working on a better marketing strategy to be able to connect with more families, providers and community members. We have created social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram. We are also launching our new website in January 2024! Follow us



*Check out the new website*

[firstimpressionsrouttcounty.org](http://firstimpressionsrouttcounty.org)

# WHAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON!

## CANDIDATES FORUM CITY COUNCIL

We were thrilled to host this event, as we came together to address the critical issues and opportunities surrounding early childhood education. We aim to empower the voters, to make informed decisions that will profoundly impact the youngest members of our society. Thank you all for coming!



## PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY

First Impressions celebrated all of the child care providers in town!

Thank you so much for instilling the spirit of love, patience, generosity, and courage in our children. Thank you for your dedication, commitment and compassion.



## COLORADO SHINES

We created this guide that has a variety of important, updated documents centers will need during their quality improvement journey.

Last year alone, the Council processed over \$51,800 in quality improvement!

[Click here to check out the guide!](#)



## FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME RESOURCE GUIDE

First Impressions created a guide for community members that are interested on becoming a childcare home provider. This guide helps understand and accomplish the FCCH Journey

[Click here to check out the guide!](#)



Check out the new website

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## PROCLAMATION

A resolution recognizing April as the month of the young child in Routt County Colorado.

We are excited to honor the Month of the Young Child with a Proclamation by the Board of County Commissioners for Routt County.



## FIESTA DE VERANO

First Impressions hosted a picnic party for latino families with children 0 to 8 years old. The purpose of this gathering was to increase the number of responses to the child care needs assessment study and to provide information about First Impressions. We had over 90 participants and we are looking forward to host another one in 2024!

Big thanks to Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation for the funding to be able to provide this event to the Latino community!

**BIG THANK YOU TO OUR EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE FOR THE SUPPORT  
DURING THIS YEAR!**



**Irene Auitia  
Chair**



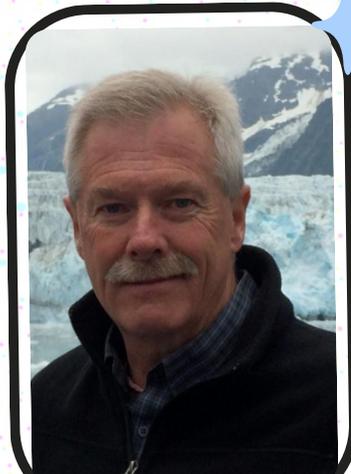
**Zoe Albright  
Vice Chair**



**Alexis Wolf  
Secretary/Treasurer**



**Kim Martin  
Child Care  
Representative**



**Tim Corrigan  
Routt County  
Comissioner**



**Kelly Kissling  
Director of DHS**

# PHOTO ALBUM 2023!



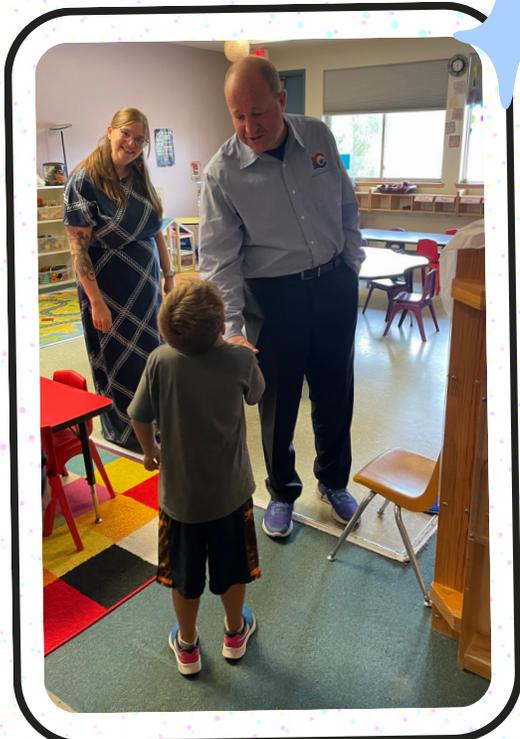
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***A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING APRIL 2023 AS  
THE MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD IN ROUTT COUNTY, COLORADO.***

**Whereas**, Routt County's Early Childhood Council, First Impressions of Routt County, and other local, state, and national organizations are celebrating April 2023 as the Month of the Young Child; and

**Whereas**, the first years of a child's life are the period of the most rapid brain development and lay the foundation for all future learning; and

**Whereas**, high-quality early childhood program provide important benefits to children, families, and local economies; and

**Whereas**, young children need skilled, educated, competent, consistent, and compensated early childhood educators; and

**Whereas**, early childhood educators need ability to earn a family-sustaining wage that is commensurate with required education and skills they bring to the complex and valuable work they do;

**Therefore**, be it resolved that Routt County does hereby proclaim April 2023 as the Month of the Young Child. We encourage all citizens to be a champion for change by prioritizing investments that stabilize, sustain, and support child care and early learning so this essential workforce can continue to support children, families, and our economy through the pandemic crisis, recovery, and beyond.

ADOPTED THIS 18th day of April, A.D., 2023

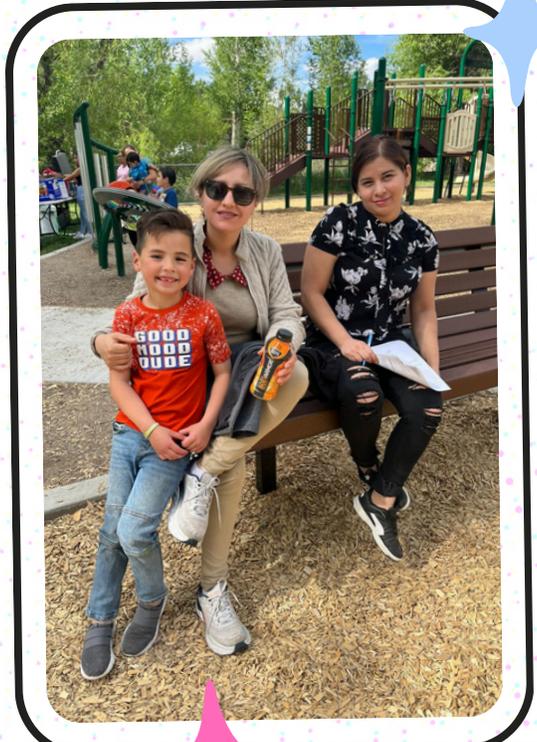
BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR ROUTT COUNTY, COLORADO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Redmond, Chair

Vote:	Tim Redmond	Aye	Nay	Absent
	Timothy V. Corrigan	Aye	Nay	Absent
	Sonja Macys	Aye	Nay	Absent



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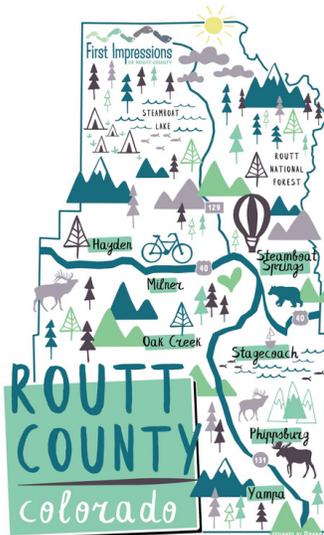


# First Impressions

OF ROUTT COUNTY



THANK YOU!



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