



DURANGO EARLY
LEARNING CENTER

Strategic Plan



Sept. 1, 2020 – Aug. 31, 2023

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-agma-tuvu-pu), 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 2 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 serve
children ages
18 months–
5 years,
55 students
per day

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.



Our Goals & Strategies

1

Strive for inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity among the DELC Community

- Ensure financial accessibility to most families by offering an equitable tiered tuition model.
- Outreach for recruitment of staff, families and board is targeted to include diverse community members.
- Strategically engage underrepresented members of the communities to outreach the waitlist, and provide accessibility to quality care at DELC.

2

We have a collaborative, supportive and positive culture where the DELC community is valued.

- Invest in continuing education and competitive salaries and benefits for staff.
- Develop relationships with families/parents centered around compassion and understanding.
- Make an authentic effort to engage families in a meaningful way during the school year to connect with different perspectives, culture, and values.
- All staff are supported and encouraged to participate in meaningful professional development that's above and beyond required continuing education.

3

DELC offers the highest quality programs/educational practices that integrate social emotional development, emotional intelligence.

- Programs and policies that teach and support our children and families to grow in emotional development and intelligence.
- Cultivate a safe and secure environment for children and families.
- Develop tools and resources for parents to cultivate social emotional development outside of school that is consistent with the school's approach.

Our Goals & Strategies



4

The La Plata County community views early childhood education as important, valuable and essential to a healthy community and recognizes DELC's role as a leader in the field.

- Lead collaborative opportunities that result in the advancement of the Early Childhood community of nonprofits and centers in La Plata County as a whole.
- Educate the community as to why Early Childhood Education is important to the strength of our community as a whole.
- DELC board and staff are engaged and are visible in the community.
- Provide important and credible resources to parents/providers of school-age children.
- Be a voice and advocate of DELC within the local and statewide communities.
- Offer opportunities for the broader community members to share their gifts and talents through curriculum/programs.

5

We are a best in class and resilient education facility and nonprofit with a strong board of directors, sound policies and fiscal strength.

- DELC has a facility that meets the school's needs.
- Cultivate continuity of engagement within the DELC community.
- The Board of Directors will prioritize board governance, strategic planning, fiscal responsibility, and board recruitment according to DELC's goals.



Measures of Success

- The demographics of the DELC community is reflective of La Plata County's income and racial/ethnic demographics.
- Our board of directors is composed of a diversity of current families representing various tuition tiers, alumni parents, former staff and community members.
- Maintain 25% of families at Tier 1 with a goal to increase to 30% by year 3.
- All staff maintain salaries that are above a living wage and competitive with other centers.
- Increase the amount and types of benefits offered by year 3.
- Maintain a staff retention rate of 80% per year.
- In annual surveys, at least 90% of families indicate their willingness to recommend/endorse DELC to others.
- Volunteer hours show that families are engaging with the school in ways that are additional to buying supplies and maintenance activities.
- Maintain a level 4 Colorado Shines Rating.
- Annual building assessments show progress on maintenance needs and movement toward completing all necessary updates of the facility.
- Increase donations and grant income by 10% each year.
- Remain fiscally solvent through the COVID crisis, carrying a balanced budget and maintaining our reserve.
- DELC continuously has a strong waitlist, showing that the school is in high demand.
- Alumni families continue to be engaged after graduation by participating via the Board of Directors or volunteering, attending events and giving annually.



Definitions

DELC 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.

