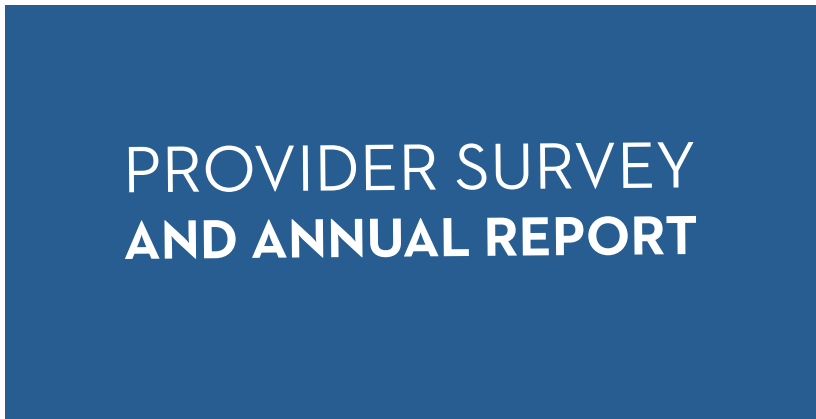




2024



PROVIDER SURVEY AND ANNUAL REPORT





KIDS FIRST
CITY OF ASPEN

2024



MISSION

Promote the availability of quality, affordable early childhood care & education.

Provide access to childcare information and resources.

Increase the quality of early childhood education and care.

GOAL 1

QUALITY

\$44,000+

In Quality Improvement grants and Professional Development grants to childcare providers and teachers.

200 HOURS

of Quality Improvement coaching with credentialed coaches.



Funds Mental Health Consultant providing wellness supports to 15 families in need.



Nurse Consultant for all childcare providers in Pitkin County.

Maintain affordability of programs and provide information regarding the true cost of childcare.

GOAL 2

AFFORDABILITY



\$615,409

In scholarships provided by Kids First in 2024 to families with children attending 12 of the 13 childcare programs in Pitkin County.

This includes emergency financial aid and funding for high needs families in the summer.

Increase and maintain the availability of childcare programs.

GOAL 3

AVAILABILITY

\$281,514

In Infant and Toddler Subsidies provided by Kids First.

\$30,000

Provided in start-up funding for a new program.

Increase public education and awareness about the importance of early childhood education.

GOAL 4

EDUCATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS

TEACHER TRAININGS

PARENT WORKSHOP

MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD

READ WITH ME DAY

CHILDREN'S PARADE

SATURDAY MARKET

COMMUNITY PICNIC

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTING
CHILDCARE AVAILABILITY

Support the recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood education teachers.

GOAL 5

WORK FORCE SUPPORTS



Kids First funds teacher growth and sustainability.

\$467,107

For VIP Staff Incentives to 89 teachers based on professional growth.

Funds: TEACHER WAGE ENHANCEMENT | STAFF STIPENDS | HIRING BONUS | SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Kids First is supported by a dedicated sales tax that provides funding for affordable housing and childcare.

QUALITY

Kids First supports quality childcare staffing.

CHILDCARE STAFF

There are a total of
**128 FULL-TIME
STAFF MEMBERS**

in the Childcare Centers
within Pitkin County.

20 people

are Director Qualified

66 people

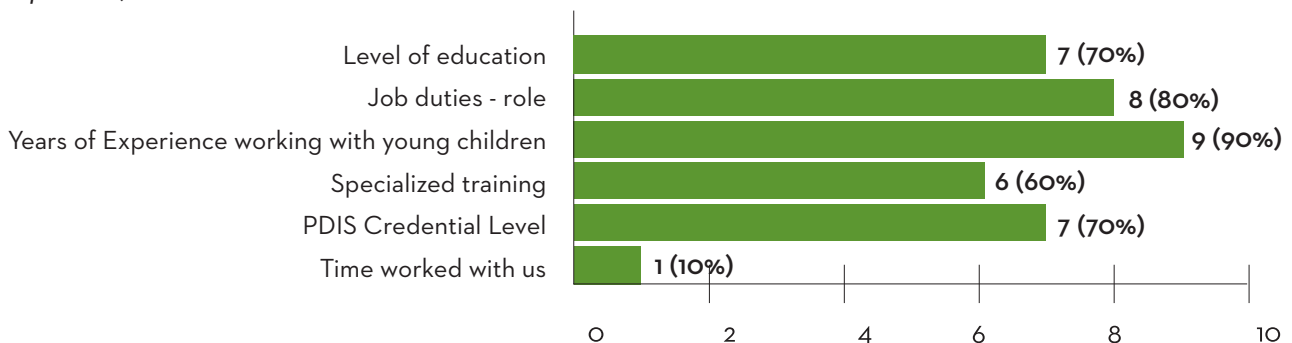
are lead teacher/ECT
Qualified- Level 2 and
up

42 people

are assistant teacher/
Qualified- Level 1

What do you consider on your salary scale when you hire new staff? Check all that apply.

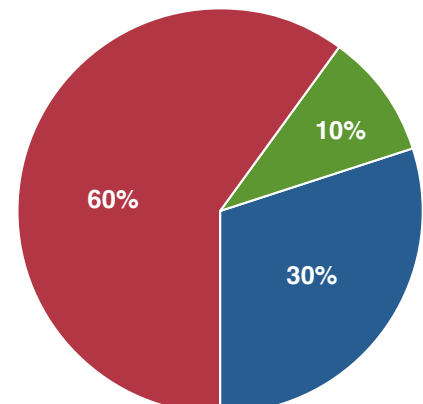
(10 responses)



How often are staff formally evaluated?

(10 responses)

- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Quarterly
- Monthly
- There is not a set schedule for evaluations



AFFORDABILITY



Kids First provides financial supports to childcare programs and families in the community.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

All licensed Pitkin County childcare centers receive financial assistance for families in the community.

12 programs

receive financial aid from Kids First with 50 children currently receiving financial support.

9 programs

have CCCAP fiscal agreements with Pitkin, Eagle and Garfield Counties, 43 children are currently receiving financial support.

10 programs

participate in UPP 4 years with 115 children currently receiving 10-30 hours of funded care.

10 programs

participate in UPP 3 years with 27 children receiving 10-30 hours of funded care.

Infant Toddler Grant

\$281,514.00 Awarded to 6 qualified childcare centers for operational support through the Infant/Toddler grant.



Kids First Financial Aid

Kids First Financial Aid awarded **\$615,409.00** in 2024.

Kids First Childcare Financial Aid supports families that live or work in the Aspen Urban Growth Boundary up to 600% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Kids First Financial Aid begins where CCCAP stops. In Nov 2024 the CCCAP poverty level was raised to 300%. This increase will allow for more families to qualify. Without these programs families would be facing childcare costs that are higher than rent. In some cases, childcare costs are 55% of a family's gross income.



AVAILABILITY

Kids First supports programs to maintain and increase available space for children.

CURRENT NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS AND COST OF CARE



INFANT CARE | Up to 18 months

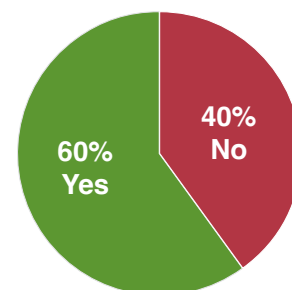
- There are currently 7 infant classrooms
- Staff ratios 1:3 to 1:5
- Licensed capacity is 8-10 children
- Desired Capacity ranges from 8-9 children

COST OF CARE FOR ONE DAY

Range \$82.00 - \$100.00
Average cost \$86.28

Do you have an infant room(s)? Serving children under 18 months

10 responses



TODDLER CARE | 18 to 36 months

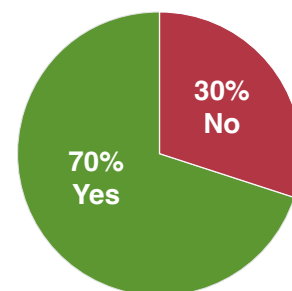
- There are currently 13 toddler classrooms
- Staff ratios 1:4 to 1:6
- Licensed capacity is 10-15 children
- Desired capacity ranges from 8-14 children

COST OF CARE FOR ONE DAY

Range from \$82.00 to \$95.00
Average cost \$86.28

Do you have a toddler room(s)? Serving children 19-36 months

10 responses



PRESCHOOL CARE | 3-5 years

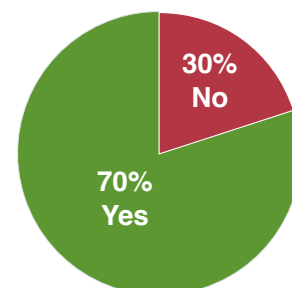
- There are currently 17 preschool classrooms
- Staff ratios 1:6 to 1:10
- Licensed capacity is 8-25 children
- Desired capacity is 8-18 children

COST OF CARE FOR ONE DAY

Range \$76.19 - \$95.00
Average cost \$84.52

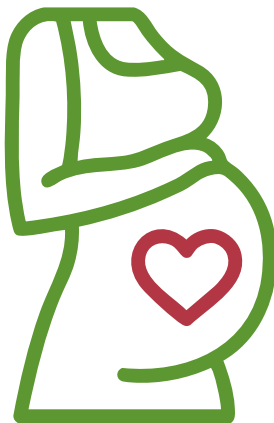
Do you have a preschool room(s)? Serving children 3-5 years

10 responses



11 of 12 programs maintain a waitlist

ON AVERAGE THERE ARE



4.8

unborn children on the waitlist

19.6

children under 18 months on the waitlist



18.1

children 18-36 months on the waitlist



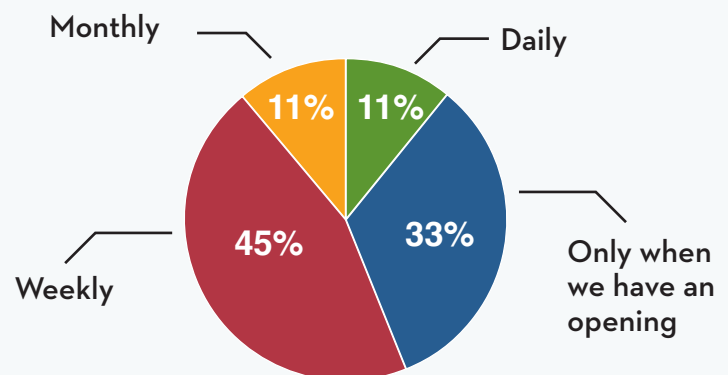
11.8

children between 3-5yrs on the waitlist



Childcare providers continually review and update their waitlists.

This would include things like calling families, removing families, etc. (9 responses)



WORKFORCE SUPPORTS



Kids First increased the focus on workforce issues in 2024.

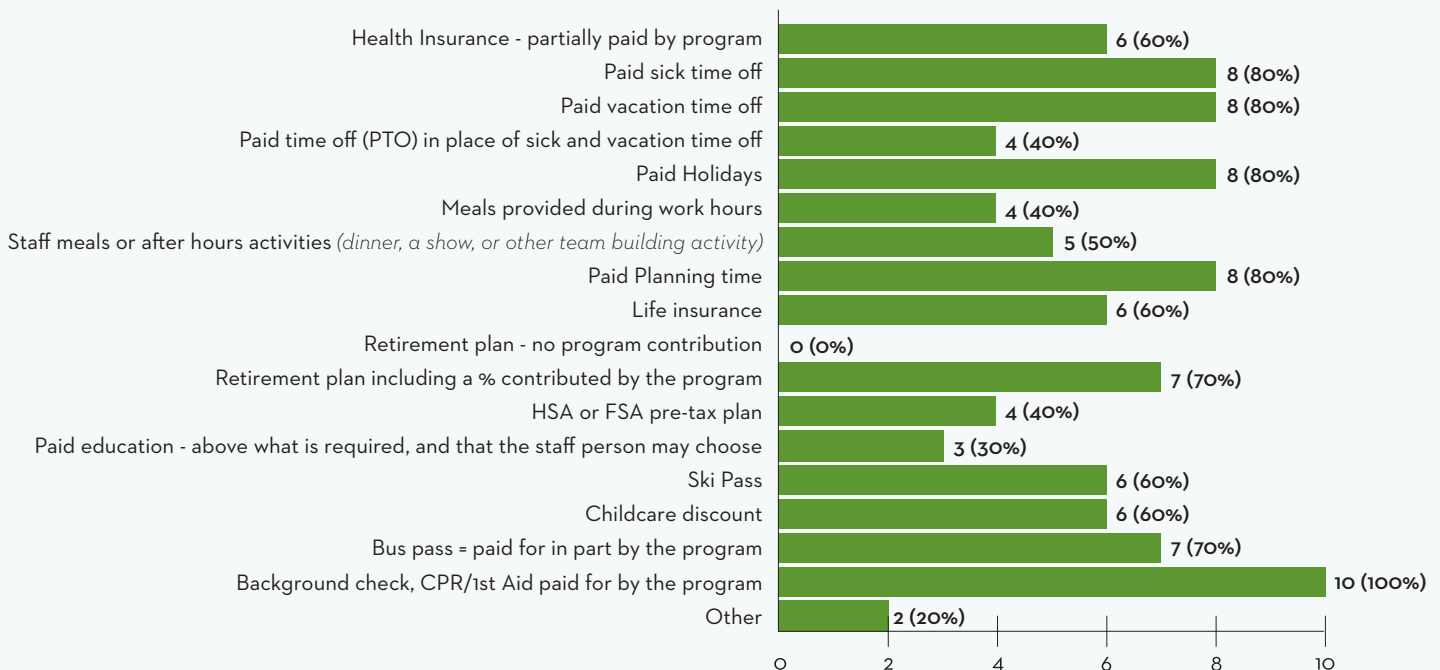
WORKFORCE BENEFITS

Childcare programs reported a large variety of paid benefits including:

- ✓ Paid time off
- ✓ Paid holidays
- ✓ Paid planning time
- ✓ Childcare discounts
- ✓ All or partial health benefits
- ✓ Life Insurance benefits
- ✓ Retirement benefits
- ✓ Background checks
- ✓ CPR/First aid certification
- ✓ Ski pass
- ✓ Bus pass

Which benefits do you offer to all staff at your program? Check all that apply.

(10 responses)

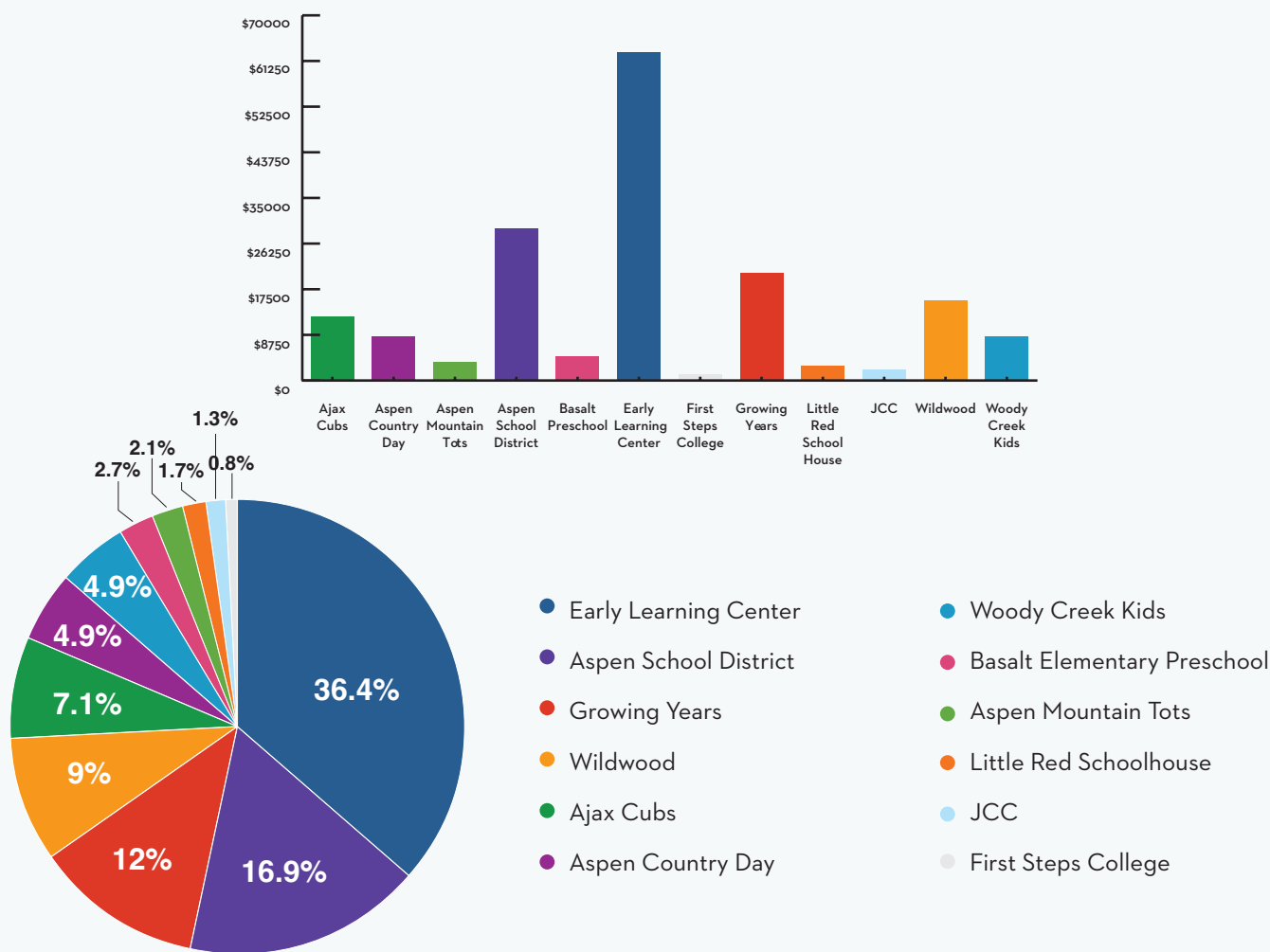


WORKFORCE SUPPORTS

Wage Supplement: Pitkin County and Kids First support individual childcare staff members through a wage supplement program. This program awards full-time and part-time staff with a monthly payment of \$500 or \$400 for full time employees and \$250 or \$200 for part-time staff. Funding varies based on the funding source, either Pitkin County or The City of Aspen. The program has supported 184 teachers for the past two years.

VIP Award: Childcare staff members are awarded for professional development efforts twice a year through the VIP Incentive. This award is designed to support childcare staff in their pursuit to become highly qualified early childhood educators. 89 individual teachers received the award with a total payout of \$162,200.00 in 2024.

Fall 2024 VIP Payout by Program



Hiring Bonus: Individual hiring bonuses are paid to individual teachers once they have worked for 30 days in a program. During 2023, 43 individuals received a hiring bonus with 21 of these receiving the second payment. This means that 21 of the new hired individuals were still employed 6 months after hiring. In 2024 there were 10 new hire bonuses, down from 21, which reflects a decrease in staff turnover.

Conference Stipend: 3 childcare centers received conference stipends in 2024. 12 staff members attended The Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference with total funds of \$5,770.69 awarded.

WORKFORCE QUALITY

Quality Improvement Grants: Childcare providers receive Quality Improvement Grants on a yearly basis. Each program that participates in Colorado Shines can complete the grant application and include requests for materials and supports. A large portion of the grant funding is applied towards materials that are referenced in a childcare center's Colorado Shines Rating. Grant funding is allocated in the six targeted areas: 1. Family Partnership, 2. Leadership, Management and Administration, 3. Learning Environment, 4. Child Health, 5. Other Quality Improvements, 6. Bus Passes. In 2024 grant funding was approved for 7 programs with a total of \$30,437.15.

Professional Development Grants: Professional Development funding is a partnership between Kids First and the Pitkin County childcare centers. Childcare staff members complete a professional development plan for the year. This plan can include college level classes, workshops, trainings and on-line learning. Each staff member's plan is evaluated, and the costs are determined. Childcare programs can be reimbursed for costs associated with staff workplans. In 2024 Kids First awarded \$13,723.00 in professional development grants.

Kids First annual in-service provides childcare professionals in Pitkin County with a day focused on learning and celebrating their hard work and dedication to the early childhood profession. Participants enjoy specialized training led by an experienced childcare expert, along with food and gifts to mark the occasion. This unique event is highly anticipated each year by childcare staff, with 80-100 teachers participating annually.

Health Consultant and Mental Health Consultant: Aligned with the Colorado Strengthening Families Framework, Kids First employs an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant and a Nurse Consultant for childcare centers, staff, and families to access for all necessary wellness supports. These resources are available to childcare centers and families to ensure each program has guidance with licensing regulations, state regulations, mental health and day to day childcare health and wellness.

Resource Teacher: This individual demonstrates best practices while substitute teaching and supporting educators in childcare centers throughout Pitkin County. In 2024, the Kids First resource teacher dedicated over 1,600 hours substitute teaching.

Intern Teacher: This is a temporary, supervised learning role aimed at training and supporting an individual in gaining qualifications to become an early childhood teacher. Once the intern shows readiness, they step in as a substitute teacher, allowing full-time teachers release time. After achieving their qualifications, the intern is encouraged and incentivized to seek employment in a local childcare center.

Quality Improvement Coaching: Kids First employs two Early Childhood coaches who perform certified assessments, offer coaching and training, and organize professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and directors. Furthermore, the coaches help strengthen families by offering workshops for parents and caregivers. In 2024, Kids First provided over 200 coaching hours in 10 childcare programs.

WORKFORCE SALARY

	Low	High	Average
Current Directors Hourly (reported and figured based on 40hr/52weeks)	\$21.63	\$45.00	\$35.87
Current Directors Salary (reported and figured based on 40hrs/52weeks)	\$45,000.00	\$93,600.00	\$74,605.00
Assistant Teacher ECT Level 1	\$20.00	\$27.00	\$22.20
Lead Teacher or ECT Level 2 or higher	\$22.00	\$30.00	\$26.42
Substitute/Float	\$20.00	\$35.00	\$24.90

CHILDCARE STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

HOUSING - Where do you currently live?

63 people | Pitkin County
23 people | Garfield County
27 people | Eagle County

EMPLOYMENT - Why did you take your current job? Pick your top 3 reasons.

27 responded most important reason was, "Better working conditions than my former job."
26 responded most important reason was, "Better schedule."
18 responded most important reason was, "I have my own young child and wanted to work with this age group."
17 responded most important reason was, "I received my degree in early childhood."

STAYING - What are the most important reasons that you stay in your current job? Pick your top 3 reasons.

60 responded most important reason was, "I look forward to coming to work every day, working with young children gives me great satisfaction."
13 responded most important reason was, "I like the hours, it works for me."
12 responded most important reason was, "I've studied brain development and to support that day to day is exciting."
12 responded most important reason was, "I like the people I work with."
12 responded most important reason was, "The wages and benefits are good."

LEAVING - Have you considered leaving your job? What are the biggest reasons you would consider leaving your job? Pick your top 3 reasons.

37 responded most important reason was, "I need to make more money to help support my family."
13 responded most important reason was, "I don't feel listened to when I have a question or concern."
11 responded most important reason was, "It's too far from my home to work, the commute is too hard."

EDUCATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS



Kids First supports professional development and recognizes the importance of increasing the community's awareness of early childhood development.

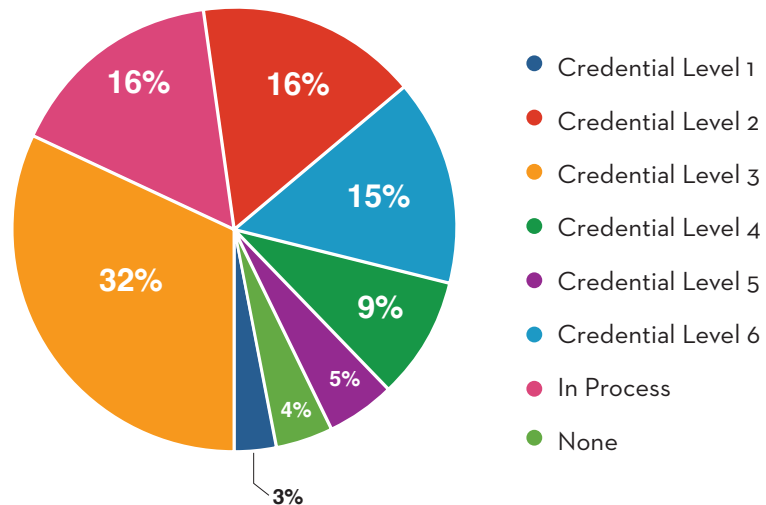
EDUCATION

Kids First supports learning by holding parent workshops and teacher trainings like the annual in-service to increase knowledge and skills to benefit young children and families. The state of Colorado promotes the Colorado Shines Professional Development System and credentials teachers. Our programs help teachers to increase their state credentials. Teachers who have an increased understanding of child development provide a higher quality of care in their classrooms.

Teachers statewide receive credential levels based on experience, formal education and trainings. The statewide average of teachers with a credential level 3 or higher is close to 50% whereas 61% of teachers in Pitkin County have earned a credential level 3 or higher.

What is your current PDIS Credential Level?

(Colorado Professional Development Information systems)



PUBLIC AWARENESS

Kids First actively works to raise public awareness by engaging the community by hosting activities, and initiatives such as Month of the Young Child, events like Read with me Day, Annual Children's Parade, the Community Picnic, and the Saturday Market.



FUTURE

Kids First is committed to providing each childcare center with essential resources and funding. This support positively impacts workforce quality of life, strengthens and sustains high standards in childcare centers, and makes care more affordable through family scholarships.

Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to expand these supports, pursue new funding sources, and introduce additional grants and programs tailored to the needs of families, childcare staff, and centers. We are also conducting a Community Childcare Needs Assessment to evaluate demand for the Burlingame Early Childhood Education Center and exploring housing solutions as part of our early childhood educator housing initiative plan. We welcome your input and look forward to collaborating with the Aspen/Pitkin community for shared success.



Questions or feedback?
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