



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood



**Center for Inclusive Design
and Engineering (CIDE)**

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Colorado Early Learning: Universal Design & Inclusion Project

According to the Colorado Shines Brighter Needs Assessment (2020), increasing inclusivity and access for children with special needs is one of the early childhood system's 12 key needs:

- 1 in 7 Colorado parents identified their child as having a delay, disability, or special need.
- Of those, 34% indicated that their preferred child care provider was unable to accommodate their child.

These statistics were a driving factor behind the launch of the Inclusion & Universal Design Project. Initiated in 2020, this program was designed to increase inclusion and diversity for children with delays and disabilities in licensed family child care homes, child care centers and preschools by supporting and educating providers.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

99% of participants cared for children with disabilities in the last 12 months.

70% of participants care for children who are English Language Learners.

95% of participants reported low income families enrolled in their programs

PROGRAMS SERVED ACROSS COLORADO

Providers shared that on average 24 children in their care were directly impacted by their participation in training.



8281
Children
Served ¹

169
Providers
Participated

2000+
Children
Directly
Impacted ²

¹ total number of children at the center/home of the participating provider in the cohort.

² children directly impacted by the adaptive materials and learned content from participation in the cohort.

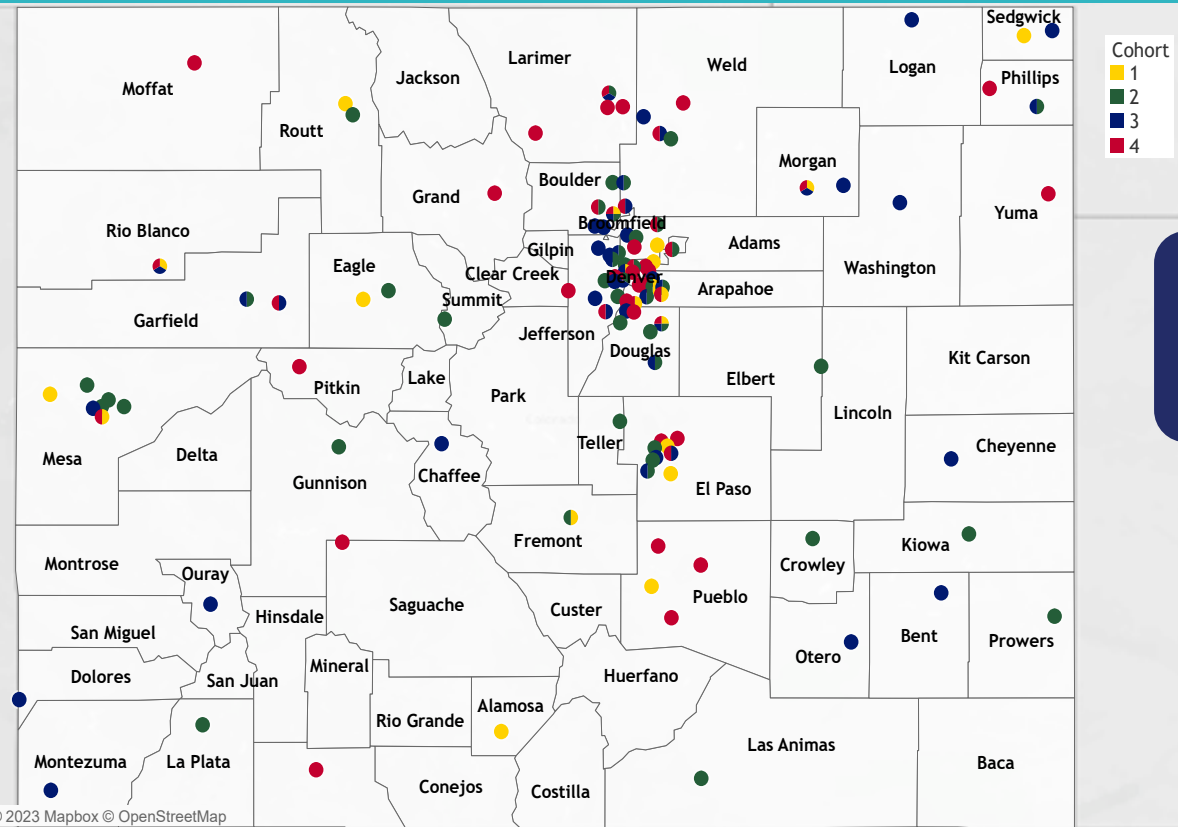
Project Features:

- Up to **9 hours of free training** for staff.
- **Customized coaching** to meet the unique needs of children, staff and the child care program;
- An **Adapted Materials Kit containing low-cost, low-tech adapted materials**, assistive technologies and resources.
- Access to a **loan library of low-tech and adapted tools and equipment** to borrow for use in the child care program.

** All materials available at NO COST to providers.*

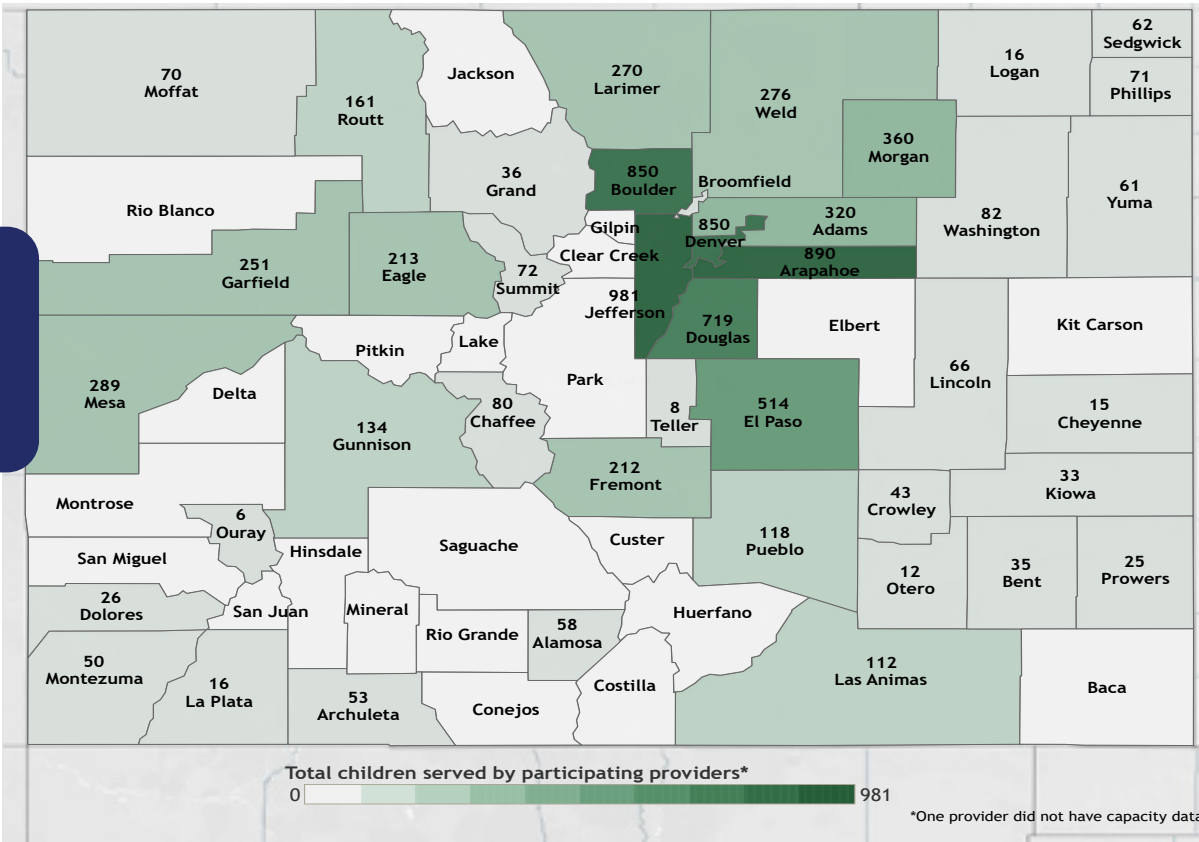


Statewide Representation



Disbursement of participating programs across all four cohorts

Total children served by participating providers across all four cohorts





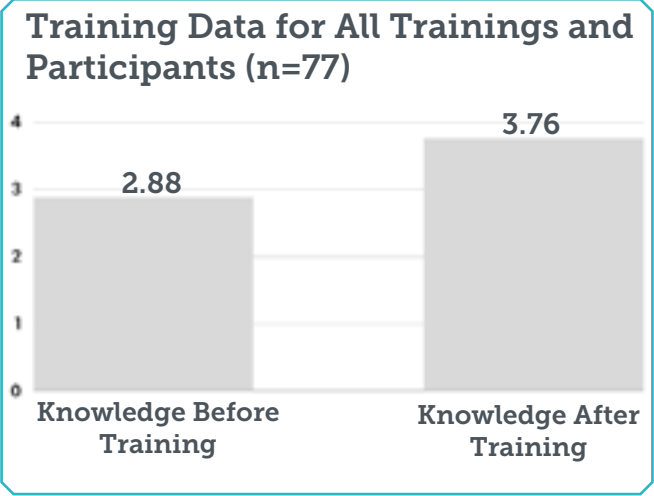
Training Impact

Impact of Trainings on Knowledge

To understand and evaluate changes in providers' knowledge because of their participation in trainings, self-reported ratings from before and after participation were collected and compared using paired samples t-tests.

Statistically significant changes suggest that the training had a meaningful effect on participant knowledge.

The paired samples t-tests showed a **statistically significant** ($p < .01$) increase in participant's ratings of their knowledge after training.



"Learning more about removing barriers and increasing access through implementation of Inclusion & Universal Design should be a requirement for all early childhood educators. **This grant allowed our program to expand our knowledge base, increase the tools in our toolkit, and add more opportunities for equal access and inclusion** within our classroom setting."

- Vrinda McGinnis, Foothill Preschool



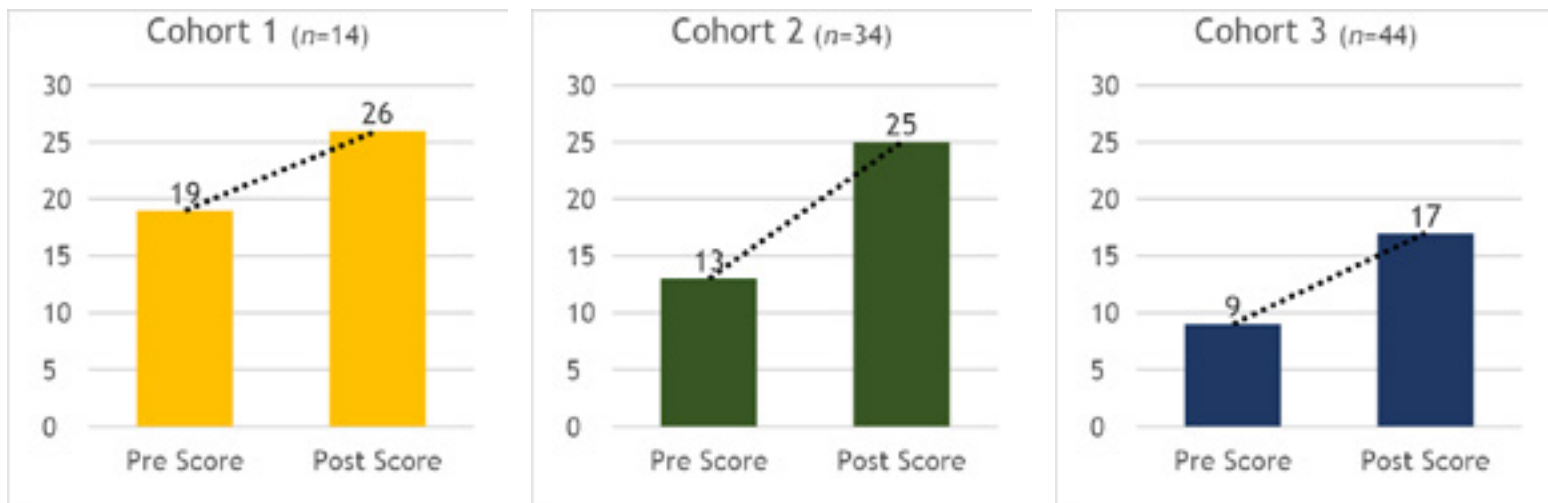
Knowledge to Practice

Transfer of Knowledge to Practice:

To understand changes in practice and implementation of Universal Design concepts, ratings before and after participation were compared to evaluate whether the changes were statistically significant.

Statistically significant changes suggest that participation in the project has a meaningful effect on participant practice and implementation rather than the changes merely occurring by chance.

Again, paired samples t-tests were conducted and found a **statistically significant ($p < .05$) increase in participant's scores for all cohorts.**¹



Overall, cohorts showed an increase in practice and implementation after their participation.

¹ The total possible points for each cohort survey varied slightly as Continuous Quality Improvements were made to the measurement tools over time.



Continued Impact

Follow-Up Impacts

- 98% of participants said they **felt more confident supporting children with delays and disabilities.**
- A follow-up survey asked participants to rate their ability to accommodate various needs of children in their program. Across all areas participants reported a **high level of ability to make accommodations, with an average rating of 3.98 on a scale from 1-5.**

“We had a great experience with the project. **The staff were highly knowledgeable and presented material in a professional and respectful manner.** They offered many practical ideas to put to use immediately in our classrooms, along with quick and easy access to a loan library filled with fun toys and materials for all to share! We learned so much through this program. We hope more schools take the time to learn more about Universal Design and Inclusion!”

- Amy Harman, Wildflower Preschool

“Initially, I was not sure this project was for me because I did not have any children with severe needs; however, I was so wrong. **The changes I made to my program have been beneficial for ALL children, and will make me proactive instead of reactive when it comes to caring for the needs of ALL children.** The changes did not require extensive time, classwork, skill, or money. They just required me to think in a different way about being inclusive of all children. I will be forever thankful I was included in the project.”

- Gloria Bornhoft Bergner, Gloria’s Country Child Care Home