



Quality Improvement Journey Packet

Revised November 2023

This document is subject to change

For documents and videos specific to Colorado Shines visit our website:

<https://rmecc.org/colorado-shines/>

- This webpage is referenced throughout this packet -

For access to other *FREE* resources visit the home page here: [website](#)

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Pro Tip: Anything that is underlined is a hyperlink (CTRL+CLICK)!

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Section 1

Introduction

Welcome! It is our pleasure to continue to be part of everyone's hard work and dedication to providing high quality care for children and their families throughout our four-county region!

To date, with the collaboration of our region's Coaching Agencies and their highly credentialed coaches, we continue to support more than 100 programs on a variety of initiatives. Currently, **82** out of **115** licensed programs in Eagle, Garfield, Lake and Pitkin counties have ratings of Level 2 or higher and **43** of those are Level 3-5 which is considered high quality as defined by the state.

Whether you are brand new or have been participating in Colorado Shines over the past several years, this is a helpful packet that has a variety of important, updated documents you may need during your quality improvement journey. It is meant to be a user's manual to help you accomplish all you need to do in Colorado Shines.

Good luck and let us know how we can continue to support you on your quality improvement journey!

This section includes:

- Who is the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council?

Who is the RMECC?

Vision: All children are supported to thrive and develop to their greatest potential as healthy, resilient, successful members of our community.

Mission: Partner with early educators, childcare programs, and community leaders to implement and strengthen a well-funded, equitable system of high-quality, accessible, affordable early childhood services for families in Eagle, Garfield, Lake, and Pitkin Counties.

We make an “IMPACT”!



The Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council (RMECC) is a coalition of community members and agencies working together to create a high quality, comprehensive early childhood system to benefit all young children, families and providers. We are a 4-county collaborative that covers Eagle, Garfield, Lake and Pitkin counties, and we are continually striving to build strong local partnerships to assure young children and their families have access to high quality health, mental health, early care and learning systems and family supports.

The RMECC receives local, state and federal funding that supports our regional Early Childhood efforts. The Council works closely with coaches, agencies and other professionals in our region who deliver direct services to eligible licensed early childhood programs.

Section 2

Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Information

This section includes:

- CDEC Funding Overview and Eligibility
- Applying for Colorado Shines Funding
- Colorado Shines Overview

*We recommend using **Google Chrome** while working in Colorado Shines

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Funding Overview & Eligibility

Colorado Shines Funding

Coaching



Quality Improvement



Capital Improvement



CSQI Funding Application

CI Application

Requirements:

- Actively participate in coaching w/ your assigned QI coach
- Improve the program's overall quality and Colorado Shines rating
- Implement coaching recommendations to achieve QI goals

Allowable QI Expenses:

- Approved, allowable quality improvement materials
- Professional Development Expenses

Eligibility:

- Licensed to serve children under 30 months
- Approved TSQI MOU
- Active CCAP Fiscal Agreement
- Have an eligible project

Focus:

- Expansion of I/T slots
- Enhancing quality experiences in I/T settings

CSQI FUNDING – COACHING & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ONLY

- Providers who apply and sign an MOU will receive this **one-time** award each year.
- Quality Improvement dollars are split equally between coaching and quality improvement in order to meet grant requirements.
- Your coach will work with you on the best way to support your program and improve quality to meet state grant requirements.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

- If your program meets the eligibility criteria above, you may qualify for capital improvement funding.
- Programs interested in applying should set up a preliminary meeting with Council staff to discuss your project idea and details about the process.
 - Application materials: <https://mecc.org/colorado-shines/>

Applying for Colorado Shines Funding

1: Verify your staff in your [PDIS](#)-Click [HERE](#) for basic video instructions. *Don't have the "My Employees" button?* Reach out to Kristin or the PDIS Help Desk cdhs_coshines@state.co.us.

2: Make sure you can access the Provider Hub- Visit www.coloradoshines.com (click on Provider Hub Login) or click [HERE](#) for a direct link.

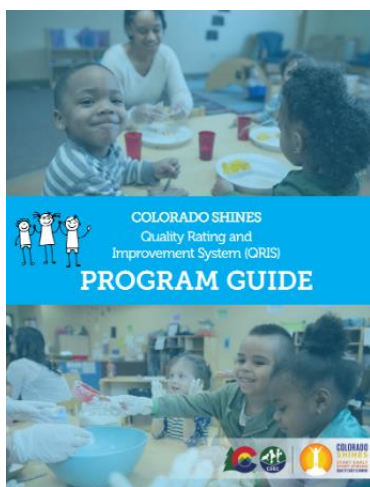
3: Apply for Colorado Shines dollars in QRIS- Click [HERE](#) for *basic* video instructions-This video ends in a strange spot! Make sure to continue to follow the prompts/questions on your screen to FINISH applying (and call Kristin if you're not sure)!

4. When you have successfully applied, you will see a "Congratulations" page at the very end.

Colorado Shines Overview

This Program Guide offers resources to support you on the journey with the Colorado Shines Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS).

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c7xCyiti7zJOE_ORzb3mDAjHf2dKdsJ8/view



Want to learn more about PDIS?

https://www.coloradoshinespdis.com/s/Navigating-the-Colorado-Shines-PDIS?language=en_US#demos

Section 3

Coaching Services

This section includes:

- Coaching & Consultation Services
- Coaching Agency Contacts
- Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)

Coaching & Consultation Services

Studies show change in practice happens when **active** coaching and support is part of the process. Your assigned coach will help support your program and QI goals to maximize spending impacts and act as a local resource to help improve overall quality and your Colorado Shines rating.

Coaching is based on individual program needs. You will work with one of our credentialed coaches from your area! To ensure quality support, the RMECC and your coach work closely together.

This menu is not meant to be exclusive but a way to show the scope of available supports. Other supports/topics are available based on program need. The experienced, credentialed coach will partner with the director to identify program needs and the best way to achieve program goals.

Assessments:

- Conducting Environment Rating Scales (ECERS/ ITERS/FCCERS)
- CLASS Assessments (Infant/Toddler/Pre-K)
- DECA Assessments & follow-up
- Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)
- Business Administration Scale
- Program Administration Scale
- Certified Playground Safety Inspection
- TPOT/TPITOS (Pyramid Plus Assessments)
- Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD Scale)

Colorado Shines:

- Colorado Shines activities including but not limited to:
 - Building Quality Improvement goals and plans based on assessment results
 - Colorado Shines Level 3-5 rating preparation
 - Policy development
 - Post-rating coaching & supports

Professional Development:

- Professional Development planning for professionals
- Professional Development Information System (PDIS) supports
- Reflective Supervision for directors and/or staff
- Staff Development topics based on program/individual staff need
- Practice Based Coaching (observation, informed feedback, goal setting, reflection)
- Expanding Quality Infant & Toddler training and coaching
 - With class enrollment or for participants in the past 2 years
 - LENA Grow
- Training days for individual programs based on topics identified by Directors that will address:
 - Health and safety
 - Quality improvement
 - Social emotional development/teacher-child interaction
 - Trauma informed care
 - Self-care
 - Curriculum and activities

- Child development
- Dual Language
- Other topics based on program need

Program & Family:

- Classroom environment, schedule, transitions, activities, and lesson planning
- Curriculum development & implementation
- Guidance strategies training and individualized behavior supports
- Referral to services
- Family Supports
- Support with licensing issues
- Developmentally Appropriate and Best Practices
- Parent Coaching
- Circle of Security Parenting
- Circle of Security Parenting-Classroom
- Building Your Bounce

Social/Emotional:

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Flip-It training and implementation coaching
- Incredible Years Dinosaur School training and implementation coaching
- Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management training and implementation coaching
- Pyramid Plus Coaching
- Early Intervention Services for children who do not qualify at 33% level
- Second Step curriculum support

Coaching Agency Contacts

Eagle County:
 Liz Costaldo, Director of Operations
 Early Childhood Partners
 970-390-8362
<https://earlychildhoodpartnerscolorado.org/>

Garfield County:
 Kelly Esch, Executive Director
 Early Childhood Network
 970-928-7111
<https://www.earlychildhoodnet.org/>

Lake County:
 Stacy Petty, Director
 Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council
 719-486-7273
spetty@mtnvalley.org

Pitkin County:
 Megan Monaghan, Co-Manager
 Kids First
 970-920-5363
<https://www.aspen.gov/235/Kids-First>

Quality Improvement Plans

How to Create/Update QIP Goals:

1. Log in to your QRIS portal
2. Click on *Quality Improvement* > *Add a Quality Improvement Goal*
3. Under each Domain, select the Category and Criteria that best fits your desired goal.
4. **Status:** Choose "In Progress"
5. **Priority:** Choose "Low, Medium or High"
6. **Complete By:** Choose a date a year from when you are creating the goal
7. Under **Improvement Actions:** Develop a SMARTIE goal using the process below (see example as well).
8. Feel free to mark any previous goals, you are no longer working on, as "Completed".

SMARTIE Goals

Goals are critical to success! To improve diversity, equity and inclusion, we must be intentional in our efforts. Try the SMARTIE goal framework!

SPECIFIC

What is it you want to achieve?

Consider including the 5Ws: what, why, who, where and when.

MEASURABLE

How will you know when you have achieved your goal? To be able to track progress and to measure the result of your goal, consider the questions: how much or how many?

ACTION-ORIENTED

Variations: *achievable, attainable, acceptable*

To keep you motivated toward attaining your goal, **are there identifiable intermediate actions/milestones?**

RELEVANT

Variation: *realistic*

What results can realistically be achieved given your available resources, including people, knowledge, money and time?

TIME-BOUND

What is an appropriate deadline for achieving your goal? How will you track progress?

INCLUSIVE

How will you include traditionally marginalized people into processes, activities, and decision making in a way that shares power?

EQUITABLE

How will you include an element of fairness or justice that seeks to address systemic injustice, inequity, or oppression?

SMARTIE Framework
by the Management Center

Example: *By June of 20___, our program will purchase and begin implementing the Creative Curriculum in our pre-K classrooms. This curriculum will help us improve the quality and consistency of our school because of its alignment with Colorado's ELDGs and will help teachers feel confident in their skills while lesson planning.*

Section 4

Spending QI Dollars in EcConnect

This section includes:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Placing a QI Request with an Approved Vendor
- Approved Vendors
- Reimbursements

Frequently Asked Questions

EcConnect site: <https://home.ecconnectcolorado.org/auth/login>

- **What expenses are allowable with QI dollars?**
 - High quality early childhood learning materials that benefit children **directly** and/or help increase your Colorado Shines rating
 - (approved) Professional Development Expenses
 - Items **not** allowed under QI: *consumables* (ie: paper, paint, etc.), and *Capital Improvement*
- **I'm ready to spend my dollars, where do I start?** Once you have met with your coach to develop your QI goals in QRIS and have chosen materials, pick which [approved vendor](#)(s) you will use and follow the steps on page 15.
- **Do I need approval for the materials I purchase?** Coach and Council approval is required for all QI spending. In some cases, we must secure special approval from the state.
- **What type of furniture is allowed?** The state requires "commercial grade" furniture with a warranty; options are available through our approved vendor list.
- **How long does it take to receive my materials?** Historically, it has taken 12 weeks or less. Please plan accordingly, allowing yourself plenty of time to receive your items. Two-way communication is necessary to ensure a smooth process.
- **What is a PO #?** You will receive an automated confirmation email after your order is approved and it will reference your Purchase Order Number. KEEP THIS EMAIL FOR YOUR RECORDS!
- **Can I go back into ecConnect to see previous orders?** Not currently.



Remember:

- **Your order has NOT been officially placed** with the vendor until the Council approve it and you receive the confirmation email. This may take up to 4 weeks depending on the current number of orders in the queue.
- **Choose your items thoughtfully**, as changing your order once it is placed may not be possible.
- **Always use vendor's ONLINE catalogs for current pricing!**
- **Create only ONE QI Request PER Vendor** (ie: place your order with *Lakeshore*, then go back to the home page, and place a different order with the next vendor).
- **There is a GLITCH in ecConnect**-On some bigger orders (over \$5,000 or 25 items+) where the system duplicates line items. If you run into this glitch, call Kristin.
- **Do NOT enter discounts or shipping costs**, as these are calculated by each individual vendor.
- **Oops! I'm having problems with ecConnect...An item is broken...I received a duplicate order... I need to exchange something...?** Call Kristin Sparkman! **DO NOT CALL THE VENDOR DIRECTLY!**

SEE APPROVED VENDOR SHEET BELOW:

APPROVED VENDOR SHEET - Updated 7-26-23

NOTE: Programs should utilize vendor websites to estimate the most current pricing.

ONLY THE VENDOR OR COUNCIL CAN ENTER DISCOUNTS OR SHIPPING COSTS!!!

Marketplace Vendors-Fancy Punchout (Shopping Cart) System

VENDOR	WEBSITE	DISCOUNT
Lakeshore Learning Materials	lakeshorelearning.com	7% off all non-sale items processed through the ecConnect Punchout (Shopping Cart) Process and free shipping. 5% off in store.
Discount School Supply	discountschoolsupply.com	20% off & Free Shipping on all items processed through the ecConnect Punchout Process
Kaplan Early Learning Company	kaplanco.com	18% on all items purchased through the ecConnect Punchout Process* & free Shipping over \$100* Excluded items include sale, product promotion, coupons, gift certificates, bids, quotes, playground & assessment tools.
School Specialty / Child Craft	schoolspecialty.com	30% on regularly priced supplies. 15% on all regularly priced furniture. Free Shipping on all items processed through the ecConnect Punchout Process

Preferred Vendors

VENDOR	WEBSITE	DISCOUNT
Community Playthings	communityplaythings.com	Free shipping and 10 year warranty
Becker's School Supplies	shopbecker.com	15% off regularly priced items and free shipping on orders over \$99, excluding furniture and equipment items marked with freight truck icons on the website or a red check mark in the printed catalog
Kodo Kids	kodokids.com	Free shipping
Autism Community Store	autismcommunitystore.com	5% discount + Free Shipping
Constructive Playthings	constructiveplaythings.com	*10% off items from catalog or website. Free shipping over \$200 *Exclusions apply
Teaching Strategies	teachingstrategies.com	Free shipping
Bookies Bookstore	thebookies.com	15% up to \$750. Discount increases as total increases. In-store pickup only -Reimbursement only-
The Discovery Source	jfisher@thediscoverysource.com	Contact: jfisher@thediscoverysource.com for more details/quote
Brookes Publishing	brookespublishing.com	10% and free shipping -Reimbursement only-

What are the perks for using Approved Vendors?

- Using the Marketplace Vendors is quick and simple
- Free shipping and discounted prices
- No out-of-pocket costs to you (except in rare circumstances)
- Great warranties (5 years for materials and limited lifetime for furniture)
- Commercial grade materials meant for the childcare industry
- You get the opportunity to buy first-class, high-quality materials that will last
- All materials meet state and federal standards Developmentally appropriate materials.
- The Council processes all paperwork

Placing a QI Request with an Approved Vendor

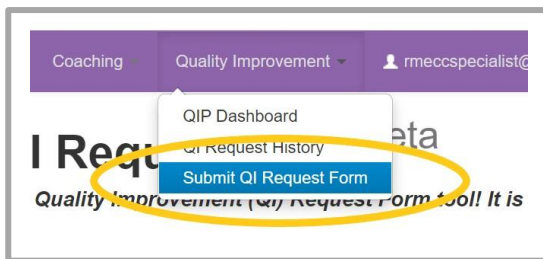
For resources check out our [website](#) under “Colorado Shines Spending”

Pro Tips:

- ✓ **Need help organizing your orders?** Check out the *ecConnect Order Form* located on our [website](#). Using the order form and the vendor’s website will help you to capture the Item Name, Number, Quantity, and Total Price on one document
- ✓ For visual learners, refer to these **video instructions**:
 - Marketplace Vendors (Lakeshore, Kaplan, Discount School Supply & School Specialty) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GapMBI_KtH4
 - Preferred Vendors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPqnOMiGROU>

Spending Directions:

1. Log in or create an account (for new users only) in ecConnect
2. Click on Quality Improvement >Submit QI Request Form



3. Select the correct funding stream and QI requisition
4. Verify your shipping (physical) address is accurate. Click the “Make a correction” button if need be.
5. Here you can select Market Place Vendor or Other Approved Vendor.
6. Select Learning Environment for the QIP Goal Category and Direct to Approved Vendor.
7. You will then type a short explanation of how these materials will help increase quality throughout the program.
8. Type your name and click submit!

Once your QI Request is approved and placed:

- You should receive an email with the order details
- Once the vendor has shipped the order, Kristin will e-mail you a detailed invoice.

LAST STEP! Verify Receipt of Materials:

- ✓ Make sure all your materials are accounted for, verifying the packing slips with the **detailed invoice**.
- ✓ Simply respond to the email verifying receipt of all materials.

Reimbursements:

Reimbursements are a great option if you have already purchased (approved) items. Also, reimbursements are often the last step of spending down *remaining* QI dollars.

Expenditures that are paid through reimbursement:

- ✓ Capital Improvement projects
- ✓ Professional Development expenses
- ✓ Approved materials purchased after final QI Spending Deadline

The process and paperwork needed will vary depending on the specific circumstance. Due to the complexity and individual nature of reimbursements, you will need to work directly with Kristin for deadlines, information needed and next steps.

Watch this quick video before submitting a reimbursement:

<https://www.loom.com/share/1293ab30cd4241df9490b07efb14c43e>



REMEMBER:

- **ALL reimbursements need Coach and Council pre-approval**
- **Kristin will upload your reimbursement into ecConnect for you 😊**
- Reimbursements cannot be processed until **all** documents are received.
- Aim to get your documents to Kristin by **the 5th of the month** to be processed in that month's billing.
- It takes approximately 6-8 weeks to receive a check due to the state billing process.
- **All reimbursement documents should be emailed to:**
Kristin at invoices@mtnvalley.org

Contact Directory

Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council			
Stacy Petty Director		spetty@mtnvalley.org	719-486-7273
Kristin Sparkman Quality Initiatives Coordinator		ksparkman@mtnvalley.org	719-293-2378
Cindy Rivas – Hablo español Universal Preschool Coordinator		crivas@mtnvalley.org	970-404-9896
Lisa Roeder Access & Outreach Coordinator		lroeder@mtnvalley.org	970-319-9804
Coaching Agency Contacts			
Liz Costaldo Early Childhood Partners	Eagle	liz@ecpartners.org https://earlychildhoodpartnerscolorado.org	970-390-8362
Kelly Esch Early Childhood Network	Garfield	Kelly@earlychildhoodnet.org https://www.earlychildhoodnet.org	970-928-7111
Megan Monaghan Kids First	Pitkin	Megan.monaghan@aspen.gov https://www.aspen.gov/235/Kids-First	970-920-5363
Stacy Petty, Director Rocky Mountain ECC	Lake	spetty@mtnvalley.org www.rmecc.org	719-486-7273
Colorado Shines (QRIS) & Professional Development Information System (PDIS)			
QRIS & PDIS Help Desk		cdec_coshines@state.co.us cdec_pdishelp@state.co.us	844-447-4441
Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)			
Samantha Markovitz	Eagle County	sam.markovitz@eaglecounty.us	970-401-0722
Sonia Luna	Lake County	Sonia.Luna@state.co.us	719-293-1504
Misty Young	Garfield County	myoung@garfield-county.com	970-625-5282, X 3105
Ligia Bonilla	Pitkin County	ligia.bonilla@pitkincounty.com	970-319-4211
Child Care Licensing Contacts			
Sandy Jennings	Eagle County	Sandra.jennings@state.co.us	720-660-7136
Felicia Castro	Lake County	fcastro@goodwillcolorado.org	719-828-3438
Andria Hudspeth/Ruthann McCullam	Garfield & Pitkin	andria.hudspeth@state.co.us ruthann.mccullam@state.co.us	
Licensing Hotline	Statewide		303-866-5948