

Building Early Learning Capacity in Clear Creek

10 February 2026



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Community Partners

Operational



Financial

Board of County Commissioners
Comis Foundation

City of Idaho Springs
City of Empire

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System-Wide Capacity

Early learning access depends on three connected components:

- More seats — licensed, qualifying exempt, and unlicensed care
- Affordability — tuition support so families can participate
- Educator & provider quality — workforce pipeline and supports

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Who Does What

EECL — Family access, scholarships, coordination

Triad Bright Futures (TBF) — Regional alignment and funding pathways

CCMRD — Summer pilot operator; prospective Mountain Trails operator

CCSF — Contract administration, workforce supports, BOCC accountability

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2025/26 Strong Start Scholarships

Verified Impact:

- 70 applications
- 30 awards
- 27 active scholarships
- Scholarships support up to 12 months of continuous care
- Income-based awards

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What We Are Learning

- Demand exceeds available awards
- Costs are rising
- Maintaining current care days now requires increased investment

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Cost of Early Learning: Regional Trend

- Child care costs increased 20–30% between 2021 and 2024
- Increases driven by wages, benefits, and regulatory requirements

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2026/27 Operations and Scholarships

- Sustain current care days — requires increased local funding
- Expand care days (~50%) — supported through philanthropy

Local funding provides stability; philanthropy supports growth.

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Mountain Trails and Near-Term Relief

Summer 2026 Pilot — Carlson Elementary

- Toddlers (potty trained) through age 5
- 7 weeks of care, 5 days per week
- Operated by CCMRD

Mountain Trails

- Permitting begins March 2026
- Construction readiness aligned with funding

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What's Next

Key facts, partners, and contacts are summarized in your handout.

We welcome questions and discussion.



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