



Their beginning. Our future.

Voices From the Field

Roberta Rodriguez, Director of Poncha Schoolhouse

My experience as an early childhood educator has been a wonderful journey for me. It started with a love for children that someone else saw in me and guided me into this field. I found that I love watching children overcome big things in their lives, achieve milestones, and grow while walking beside them during their journey, this also includes supporting their families as well.

Watching families and children struggle is hard but walking with them and seeing them overcome and succeed is the best feeling. The families in our community welcomed me into their lives. To this day, they love sending me updates and pictures. I am a single mom of six, with a learning disability. Because of my love for children and their families, I was able to get my associate degree in early childhood, a teacher's as well as a director's qualification.

This past spring the community nominated me for an award for family partnership from the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference. I was so overwhelmed and grateful to have won this award all because of the Chaffee County community. I have worked as a teacher for preschool, for Nurturing parenting through the Department of Human Services, as a home visitor, and taught swimming lessons. I have had the honor to work with many families and children, and I deeply thank them for the Award.

Now, I am a director and early childhood coach at The Schoolhouse in Poncha and want to continue working with children and families but also with teachers. I want teachers to feel supported and valued, and I want to decrease burnout and being overworked and address teacher pay. I want to help and support teachers to have the spark to teach children and support families for a long time.

The vision of The Chaffee County Childhood Initiative is to support the growing community and take care of teachers. This goal hits exactly what I want to do. My hope is to support all teachers in the Chaffee County community and continue working with the children and their families.

If you would like to learn more about how Chaffee County Early Childhood Council supports local early childhood professionals, visit www.ccecc.org.