



Every family deserves a great start.





Celebrating Milestones and Embracing Change

On July 1, 2024, I assumed the role of Executive Director, a position that perfectly aligns with my lifelong passion for early childhood development.

With over 20 years of leadership experience in child care, family support, and early intervention, I have consistently focused on promoting healthy development, with a particular emphasis on infant mental health. After gaining valuable experience nationwide, I was fortunate to return to Colorado, where I spent six rewarding years with Eagle County. During this time, I gained deep insights into the unique strengths and challenges faced by local families.

As I step into this leadership role, I am eager to build on our strong foundation and continue serving the community I call home. My commitment to ensuring that families have the support they need to thrive has only deepened. Looking ahead, our team will expand services, drive innovation, and work to close the opportunity gap, providing personalized, comprehensive care that creates lasting positive change.

I am excited for the future and confident that, through collaboration, we will make a meaningful impact. Our mission remains clear: every child deserves a strong start, and every family deserves the support to make that possible. Together, we will make this vision a reality.



OUR MISSION

To strengthen and empower families, foster the optimum development of children, and prevent child abuse and neglect. At Great Expectations we envision a community in which all those expecting a child or caring for an infant have the capacity and support to achieve their full potential as parents.



Warmly,

Leigh Carlson-Hernandez,
Executive Director



Building Strong Foundations

We support families from pregnancy up to age three through four evidence-based programs – **Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, Circle of Parents, and MotherWise.**

Our evidence-based perinatal home visiting programs improve child and maternal health and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. Using a two-generational approach, each of our registered nurses and family support specialists meet with clients regularly to discuss how to care for their babies and themselves. We help families obtain community resources, provide mental health support, and host parent support groups. Our services are reliable, confidential, and free.



“The support I received from Great Expectations made all the difference for our family.”

Healthy Families America

Healthy Families America (HFA) focuses on enhancing family well-being and providing children with a solid foundation for a healthy future. HFA is a no-cost home visiting program for families with young children who may have gone through various life challenges.

HFA believes that strong and caring relationships in the early years are key to healthy growth and development.

Our bilingual and bicultural staff are able to relate to our diverse families and connect them to essential medical, dental, mental health, and community resources for comprehensive support, while also reducing social isolation through parent groups and encouraging goal setting.



Support in Action: Real Lives, Real Change

“I was with Great Expectations for almost three years, and the support was truly life-changing. As a single mother working in Aspen, I used to commute four days a week while caring for my baby, who had mobility issues and frequent seizures. At the same time, I was paying \$1,500 a month to rent a room in a rundown trailer with a hostile landlord.

With my home visitor’s help, I found a better place in Glenwood and moved into a 1-bedroom apartment. My child became healthier and was enrolled in early childhood care. Because of my child’s special needs, my home visitor created a personalized curriculum, which helped me grow more confident as a caregiver.

I also have a 14-year-old daughter who helps out and is thriving in school. The support I received from Great Expectations made all the difference for our family.”

“I was with Great Expectations for almost three years, and the support was truly life-changing.”



Nurse-Family Partnership

The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is a free home visiting program designed to support first-time parents by connecting them with a registered nurse.

Nurses offer support in key areas such as maternal and infant health, nutrition, mental well-being, and fostering a strong parent-child bond. NFP improves pregnancy outcomes and empowers mothers to make positive life changes, by strengthening families and setting them up for success.



“My nurse is an excellent person. Thanks to her I have been able to enjoy every moment with my baby.”

Inspiring Change: Education as a Path to Empowerment

During the initial visit, a young mother shared with her NFP nurse that she hadn’t finished high school but was eager to change that and pursue her GED. Recognizing her determination, the nurse immediately connected her with GED prep classes at Colorado Mountain College. With her nurse’s encouragement and the right resources, she successfully completed her GED.

Inspired by her achievement, the mom decided to take things further. Today, she’s a college student at Colorado Mountain College, studying to become a Veterinary Technician—a career she’s passionate about. She credits her nurse for helping her take those first steps, saying that the support and connections she received through NFP made all the difference in her success. What began as a simple conversation about her education turned into a life-changing opportunity for her and her family.



Circle of Parents

Great Expectations hosts Circle of Parents groups creating a welcoming space for parents and caregivers to share their experiences about the joys and challenges of raising children.

Guided by trained facilitators, this group fosters connection and empathy among parents, allowing caregivers to discuss parenting challenges and personal issues based on participants' interests.



MotherWise

MotherWise groups support women, children, and families during pregnancy and after the birth of a baby.

These workshops teach essential skills for healthy relationships, like communication and problem-solving, provide reliable information on newborn care and bonding, and offer one-on-one coaching to help parents balance work and family life.

Participants learn how to better manage conflict with their partner and identify safe caregivers for their children, all the while developing the confidence and relevant skills to be an effective parent.

“All of the topics have been helpful for me.”



**United in Purpose:
Together We Make
a Difference**

In partnership with Great Expectations, the Yampa Mountain High School Teen Program offers Circle of Parents, empowering young parents to overcome the challenges of raising children while fostering strong, nurturing relationships that build brighter futures.

“The groups are really helpful in getting the students engaged. Already this year Fernanda has built very important relationships with the teen moms. The groups are an important part of helping the teen moms feel connected and supported in our community.

Thank you so much for the very important work you do to support the teen moms in our community.”

—Sally Kilton YMHS, Director of the Teen Parent Program

“Thank you so much for the very important work you do to support the teen moms in our community.”



Impact That Inspires: Our Year in Review

Number of Families Supported:

- 120 in Healthy Families America
- 130 in Nurse-Family Partnership
- 52 in Parent Support Groups

Family Demographics:

- 61% speak Spanish as primary language
- 81% identify as Hispanic

Families by County:

- 88% in Garfield
- 2% in Pitkin
- 7% in western Eagle



Together, we are building a foundation for thriving families, and we look forward to achieving even greater impact in the coming year.

Results That Make a Difference:

- **Every child in the program was evaluated for growth and development** to ensure they were meeting important milestones and to identify any delays or disabilities.
- **Almost all children (99%) received their vaccinations by the time they turned two**, which is much higher than the state average of 75%.
- **Most children (93%) regularly visited their healthcare providers**, allowing them to get the care and support they needed for healthy growth and to catch any health issues early.
- **Every mother was screened for depression**, ensuring that any mental health needs were identified and addressed.
- **Among the pregnant clients in our program, a significant percentage (81.8%) of newborns were born at a healthy weight**, with only a small portion (18.2%) weighing less than 5 pounds 8 ounces.
- **All children in our home visiting programs experienced no emergency room visits for illness or injuries**, underscoring the success in supporting and educating families on health and safety management at home.
- **Nearly all mothers (98%) started breastfeeding, and 61% continued for at least six months**. This aligns with state averages where about 89% initiate breastfeeding and 61% continue for the same length of time.
- **Ninety percent (90%) of participating children were tested for lead exposure**, allowing for early identification of those at risk and timely intervention to reduce potential long-term health impacts.

A Collective Effort: Our Partnerships and Referrals

We collaborate with a diverse network of community partners to provide comprehensive services to families.

These partnerships offer support for individuals facing a variety of needs including domestic violence, family services, and health and mental health resources. Additionally, our collaborations strengthen home visiting programs and help connect families to essential community resources.

In the past year, we made over 500 referrals to vital community resources, ensuring families had access to essential services. These referrals addressed various needs, including support for developmental delays, food and nutrition assistance, and emergency aid during crises. Families also received help accessing mental health services, lactation support for new mothers, and dental care for children. Through these connections, we empower families to navigate challenges and enhance their overall well-being.



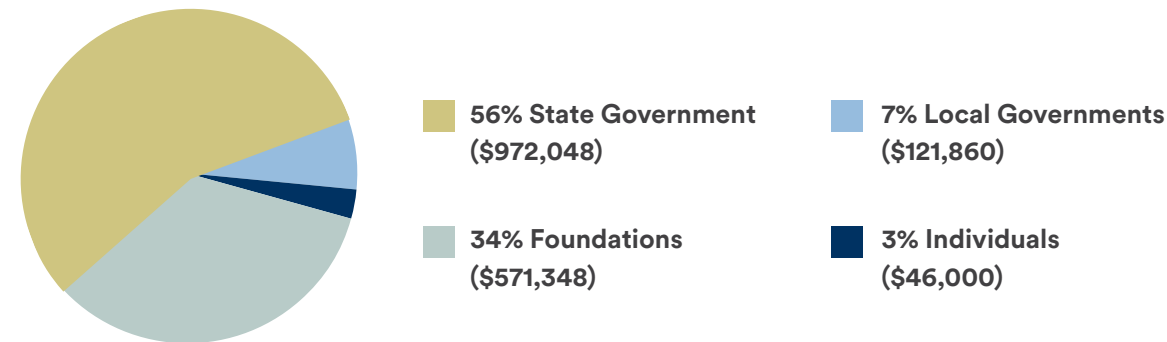
Grants and Funding: Fueling Our Community Impact

Great Expectations secures funding from a diverse array of government and private sources.



Approximately 56% of our annual budget is provided directly by the State of Colorado, to fully support the Nurse-Family Partnership Program.

In contrast, we rely on fundraising efforts to sustain our Healthy Families America and parenting group programs. With a total annual operating budget of \$1,675,000, the cost per family served is \$7,900.



Institutional Funders

Anschutz Family Foundation
Aspen Community Foundation
Aspen Skiing Company
Aspen Thrift Shop
Buell Foundation
Burt Foundation
Caring for Colorado Foundation
Castaways Foundation
City of Aspen
City of Glenwood Springs
Colorado Department of Health and Human Services

Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)
Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative
Defiance Thrift Store
Divide Creek Builders
Garfield County
Giving Network
Grand Valley Kiwanis Club
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Indigo Oak Fund
Intermountain Health
Janckila Construction

Martens Foundation
Pitkin County
Rifle Community Foundation
Rocky Mountain Health Foundation
Sam Bloom Foundation
Town of Basalt
Town of Carbondale
Town of New Castle
Western Colorado Community Foundation
Yampa Valley Community Foundation

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We have made every effort to ensure that this list is complete and accurate. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please contact Jenny Lindsay at jenny@greatexpectations.co with any corrections.

Every Family Deserves a Great Start— Help Us Make It Possible!



Our programs make sure no parent feels alone on this journey, whether they're facing a difficult pregnancy, learning to care for a new baby, or preparing their child for preschool.

Having a baby is one of life's most precious and challenging journeys.

Every step, from pregnancy to preschool, is filled with questions, doubts, and excitement. For families in Garfield, Pitkin, and western Eagle counties, that journey can feel overwhelming, especially when access to resources and support is limited.

That's where you come in. With your support, we provide free, compassionate guidance and support for new and expectant parents, helping them navigate pregnancy, childbirth, and early childhood with confidence and knowledge. Our programs make sure no parent feels alone on this journey, whether they're facing a difficult pregnancy, learning to care for a new baby, or preparing their child for preschool.

Why Your Support is Vital

We've seen firsthand how a little support can transform lives of families who are struggling with the emotional, physical, and financial demands of parenthood, often without a support system in place. When you give to Great Expectations, you're helping new parents better care for their babies by overcoming challenges, building healthy families, and creating a strong foundation for their children's futures.

You can make a donation by:

- **Sending a check** to Great Expectations, PO Box 1845, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
- **Visiting our website:** <https://greatexpectations.co/donate/>
- **Calling us** at 970-945-1234

Thank you for your generous support!

Together, we can ensure that every child and every parent in our community has the support they need to thrive.



Leadership & Staff

- Leigh Carlson-Hernandez**
Executive Director
- Wendy Chenoweth**
Program Manager
- Karen Courtney**
Nurse Visitor
- Erica Funes**
Lead Family Support Specialist
- Jenny Lindsay**
Development Director
- Ana Lopez**
Administrative Assistant
- Luci Martinez**
Program Manager
- Gabriella Martinez**
Family Support Specialist
- Dani Mendoza-Turbin**
Nurse Visitor
- Fernanda Pelen**
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We are committed to advancing equity by fostering inclusive, diverse, and supportive environments, ensuring all individuals have equal access to opportunities, resources, and representation.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE
OR TO DONATE

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

PO Box 1845

Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

When you give to Great Expectations, you're helping new parents better care for their babies by overcoming challenges, building healthy families, and creating a strong foundation for their children's futures.



Your tax-deductible donation will help us reach more families in need.

SCAN OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO DONATE
greatexpectations.co



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