



Greetings!

As the new Executive Director of Wings Early Childhood Center I would like to introduce myself and our school's mission. My name is Ben Fox. I have worked in the Pagosa community for several years, working my way toward a clinical social work license while learning how to best support children and families to achieve their goals. As an avid outdoorsman who found my way to Pagosa Springs because of my love for the mountains, forests, and rivers here, Wings' outdoor-focused, nature-based learning environment was the perfect fit. Along with my love of the outdoors, I bring a decade of leadership experience in child and family-serving organizations, and a deep-rooted passion for building sustainable, community-based resources for children. While I am new to this role, Wings has been a place near to my heart since my son Wesley started here just a few days after his first birthday.

Over the past two years, my wife, Julie, and I have watched our son grow, flourish, and learn through the nurturing kindness shown by his teachers. When Wesley starts singing a new song or teaches me a game his friends have shown him, I am so grateful for the experiences he has each day. Accepting the role as executive director, I believe this is the perfect opportunity to give back and to share my personal and professional experience to help Wings grow and flourish, just as our son has.

If you don't already know Wings, we are an early childhood center serving children 6 weeks to 7 years old. Wings Early Childhood Center utilizes a nature-based curriculum, fostering learning through a play-driven approach. We care for 50 to 70 students daily, providing fresh-made meals, and focusing on social-emotional development. Classroom learning topics often center on the environment and the changing seasons, encouraging children to engage with the world around them. Perhaps most critically - Wings is the only center in Pagosa Springs that offers services for children from 6 weeks to 2 years old!

A Critical Time for Investment

Over the last four years, Wings has built a strong foundation, but we face challenges that are threatening our ability to stay grounded. Changes to childcare funding at the federal and state level, combined with food costs increasing 25% just since last year, and new economic pressures on our families and community, have created a financial gap that strong management alone cannot overcome.

We need to raise at least **\$100,000 in private donations every year** just to cover essential operating costs and keep our doors open.

Our Commitment to Stewardship

Since assuming responsibility for this role, we've focused intensely on prudent management and strategic investment to ensure every dollar is used efficiently. We've conducted staff surveys and are already implementing retention strategies; we've had to raise wages, add teacher aides, and have increased our professional development program. We are doing everything in our power to streamline our operations and be the best possible stewards of the money you entrust to us.

When you contribute to Wings, you're not making a donation; you are making a practical investment in the economic foundation of Pagosa Springs.

- **Your support directly strengthens the local economy:** It keeps more than 50 Pagosa families fully participating in the local workforce, earning what they need, and keeping local businesses running, knowing their children are safely cared for.
- **You preserve an irreplaceable service:** You keep the only licensed childcare for infants and toddlers in Pagosa open and operating.
- **You retain our talented educators:** You help keep our 25 dedicated teachers, who pour their hearts into our students, developing their skills here in our community.

How Your Gift Makes the Difference

While our immediate goal is to secure our stability, if we reach and exceed our \$100,000 target, we can start to invest in lasting quality and growth:

We will expand the nature-based elements of our beautiful, mountain-view playgrounds by adding raised garden beds, a greenhouse, and bird-viewing platforms. We will continue to support our teachers by providing tuition reimbursement for those pursuing college degrees, bringing in experienced trainers and coaches, and investing directly in the highest quality of education for our students.

I am personally asking you to consider a gift today. Your investment ensures that every child continues to have access to a safe, quality, and nature-based learning environment, right here in Pagosa Springs.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our community!

Sincerely,

Ben Fox, MSW
Executive Director
Director@WingsEarlyChildhood.org



How do I donate?

Wings Early Childhood Center & Archuleta County Education Center is a 501(c)(3) Contributions may be tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

In addition to Federal Tax deductions, contributions to Wings ECC qualify as a Child Care Contribution credit for your Colorado State tax return. While the amount of credit varies from year to year, recent years have ranged from 25-50% of your donation being deductible from your state return.

Please provide your name, address, and email address along with your donation. We will send you a tax receipt for both your Colorado and Federal returns.

Digital Donation Platform:



Givebutter.com/WingsECC

Checks can be mailed to:
Wings Early Childhood Center
74 Backswing Ct.
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147