COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN

2012 Legislative Priorities

For more than 25 years, the Colorado Children's Campaign has served as the leading voice for kids at the state Capitol and in communities across the state. As we look toward the 2012 legislative session and the challenges created by a struggling economy, state revenue shortfalls, and upcoming changes in the legislature, we know that our work in support of Colorado kids is more important now than ever. Using the best available data and research on child well-being to guide us, the Children's Campaign will focus on protecting and advocating for the policies and investments we know will provide the greatest benefits to kids. Specifically, our focus will include:

- Establishing a governance structure for early childhood services and programs within the Department of Human Services through a new office focused on improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families. By moving programs that serve our youngest children to a consolidated office, programmatic and departmental silos will be eliminated, resulting in better access for families to comprehensive services;
- Protecting funding for the Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+), which provides Colorado's lowest income children and pregnant women with health and prenatal care;
- Ensuring successful implementation of the educator effectiveness legislation passed in 2010 by moving forward the rules package crafted over the last year by the Department of Education, Educator Effectiveness Council, and education and child advocates;
- Working to ensure that every child has the supports they need to read by the third grade by emphasizing kindergarten readiness and early assessments paired with preventative interventions so that children's challenges and needs are identified and addressed early;
- Protecting funding for the free school breakfast and lunch expansions the Children's Campaign helped secure in 2007 and defend in 2011, which provide reliable meals that are critical for low-income children;
- Developing a framework for the way we fund our schools that is thoughtfully tied to student outcomes and helps further the objectives our state has prioritized around education, including reducing achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates across our state;
- Protecting funding that ensures Colorado's youngest and most at-risk children receive safe and stable child care while their parents are at work by ensuring equitable and consistent access to child care assistance for low-income families;
- Studying the role and importance of technology in the classroom and education options for all students, recognizing that education can look different based on students' needs and locations;
- Allowing state employees who meet eligibility requirements for the Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) to access the high-quality preventative care the program provides for their children, helping to reduce the number of uninsured children, while saving the state money;
- Protecting the state-funded Colorado Preschool Program, which serves high-risk children with an emphasis on school readiness;
- Fighting for all children, regardless of citizenship status, to have access to affordable, high-quality post-secondary education options in Colorado;
- Protecting funding for full-day kindergarten, which currently serves more than 34,000 of Colorado's most vulnerable students, helping them develop the fundamental skills they need to become school ready;
- Protecting the School Counselor Corps grant program that supports additional counselors in school districts with high dropout rates, which is proven to help re-engage students at risk of dropping out and increase student engagement;
- Defending thoughtful cost sharing measures for the Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) that help ensure families are contributing to their children's care, while incentivizing preventative care and bringing additional revenue into the state; and
- Mitigating cuts to effective grant programs, including the Tony Grampsas Youth Services program, which work to eliminate youth violence and crime throughout the state.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Colorado Children's Campaign's Lunch and Learn Series

Wednesday, January 25, 2012
Early Childhood Development and Learning

Wednesday, February 8, 2012
Child Health

Wednesday, February 22, 2012
K-12 Education

Wednesday, March 14, 2012
KIDS COUNT in Colorado! Briefing

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
A Guide to the *Colorado Children's Budget 2011*

All Lunch and Learn events will be held from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Colorado Children's Campaign offices.

Staff are welcome to join legislators, or come in their absence. R.S.V.P. to Hanna Nichols, Policy Analyst, at 303.620.4573 or hanna@coloradokids.org.

Speak Up for Kids' Health at the Capitol - February 9, 2012

Parents and child advocates from across the state will be joining the Colorado Children's Campaign and Children's Hospital Colorado at the Capitol on February 9, 2012 to speak up for the health and well-being of Colorado kids. Children should be able to get the care they need, when they need it. By working together and speaking out, we can move Colorado towards that common-sense goal.

For more information, contact Jacy Montoya Price, Community Groups Coordinator, at 303.620.4547 or jacy@coloradokids.org, or visit coloradokids.org/events/kidshealthday.html.

ABOUT US

The Colorado Children's Campaign is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization committed for over 25 years to creating hope and opportunity for all of Colorado's more than 1.2 million kids. Using the most accurate, compelling data and research on child well-being and backed by an extensive, statewide network of dedicated child advocates, the Children's Campaign champions policies and programs that improve child health, early childhood learning and development, and K-12 education, help lift children out of poverty, and provide all of Colorado's children the opportunity to reach their full potential.

IT'S ABOUT KIDS

It's About Kids (IAK) is the Colorado Children's Campaign's statewide, grassroots advocacy network. It is comprised of over 2,600 health, early childhood and K-12 education professionals, community and business leaders, policymakers, parents and other engaged citizens joined together by their concern for the well-being of Colorado's children. IAK members advocate for Colorado children by staying informed about children's issues through the Children's Campaign's weekly electronic newsletter, KidsFlash, sending emails and making phone calls to their legislators during important public policy decisions impacting kids, participating in public events and rallies and sharing information about Colorado kids with their peers.

The It's About Kids network is led by a dedicated group of volunteer community leaders who donate their time and skills to give children a voice at the Capitol and in their individual communities. These IAK community leaders engage in the Children's Campaign work in substantial ways including:

It's About Kids!
Bringing Colorado Communities Together

- Representing the unique needs and characteristics of the children in their communities
- Engaging in regular dialogue and information exchange with Children's Campaign policy staff to help shape and support our legislative agenda
- Establishing and maintaining relationships with policymakers and the media in their communities

To learn more about It's About Kids community leadership opportunities contact Liz Houston, It's About Kids Network Coordinator, at 303.620.4532 or liz@coloradokids.org.

STAY INFORMED

To stay up to date on the latest news impacting kids, sign-up to receive KidsFlash, our weekly e-newsletter, at coloradokids.org. Or, visit us on Facebook!

For more information on the Children's Campaign's legislative work, please contact Mark Neuman-Lee, Government Affairs Director, at 303.620.4569 or mark@coloradokids.org.

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