COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN

LEGISLATIVE IMPACTS 2017

The Colorado Children's Campaign is the leading voice for kids at the Colorado State Capitol and in communities across the state. Since 1985 we've worked with policymakers from every corner of the state and every political perspective to improve the well-being of Colorado kids. We are pleased to see bipartisan support this year in many areas impacting children's lives.

NEW PROGRESS FOR KIDS

- **Charter School Funding Equity:** HB 17-1375 (Pettersen & Sias/Williams & Hill) requires school districts to either create a plan outlining how they will spend local tax revenues equitably or to share 95 percent of tax revenues with all schools in the district, regardless of school governance type.
- **Early Learning Strategies in Education Accountability:** SB 17-103 (Merrifield/Pettersen) adds a focus on early learning and preschool through third grade strategies for schools and districts that are struggling to ensure all children are on track for success.
- **Child Care Expenses Tax Credit:** HB 17-1002 (Pettersen & Exum/Kefalas & Martinez Humenik) reauthorizes Colorado's expiring refundable tax credit for child care expenses for working families for another three years. This successful credit helps more than 35,000 Coloradans offset their child care expenses by more than $6 million each year so they can work.
- **Behavioral Health Support for Young Students:** SB 17-068 (Todd/Singer) expands eligibility for the School Behavioral Health Professionals and Counselor Corps grant programs to include elementary schools.
- **The Early Childhood Leadership Commission:** HB 17-1106 (Pettersen & Wilson/Martinez Humenik & Todd) continues the ECLC, our statewide coordinating body for early childhood initiatives, for another six years.
- **Alternative Educator Licensure for Early Childhood Educators:** HB 17-1332 (Bridges & Wilson/Fenberg & Smallwood) removes a statutory barrier that had precluded early childhood educators working in community-based early learning settings from enrolling in alternative teacher licensure programs.
- **Language Choice in Early Literacy Assessments:** HB 17-1160 (Hamner & Wilson/Fields & Priola) creates additional flexibility for English Language Learners in kindergarten through third grade so that they can take reading assessments in their native language while still developing proficiency in English.
- **Addressing Teacher Shortages:** HB 17-1003 (McLachlan/Coram) requires the creation of a strategic plan to address teacher shortages, including early childhood educators.
- **School Finance Planning:** HB 17-1340 (Lundeen & Garnett/Moreno & Hill) establishes an interim legislative committee on school finance and creates opportunities to improve equity and adequacy in how the state funds students in preschool through 12th grade.
- **Professional Development to Address Early Childhood Suspension & Expulsion:** HB 17-1211 (Coleman/Priola) establishes a grant program that, if funded, will allow schools to implement professional development strategies to promote alternatives to early childhood suspension and expulsion from preschool through third grade.
- **Seal of Biliteracy:** SB 17-123 (Priola & Zenzinger/Hamner & Wilson) establishes requirements by which high school students may earn a diploma endorsement in biliteracy if they demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one foreign language.

Charter Schools Funding bill signing

- **Access to Contraception:** HB 17-1186 (Pettersen & Landgraf/Coram) provides access to a 12-month supply of prescription contraceptives, which reduces unintended pregnancies.
- **Modern Technology Education In Public Schools:** HB 17-1184 (Duran/Grantham) directs the State Board of Education to incorporate skills relating to information and communications technologies into the 10 content areas during the upcoming state academic standards review.

Budget Wins:

- An increase of $9.7 million for the Department of Education to expand access to school-based behavioral health professionals.
- An increase of $2.5 million for the Department of Human Services to expand access to quality child care via the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program.
- An increase of $572,000 to serve 1,300 families with children birth to age 3 in the evidence-based Healthy Steps for Young Children home visitation program.
- An increase of $45,000 to expand access to pregnancy-related depression screening during pediatric well-child check-ups.
- Maintaining $775,000 in funding for the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, an anonymous and voluntary survey administered to students in grades 6-12 that produces the state's most reliable source of information on student health behavior.
- An increase of $261.8 million in K-12 financing, which means that the "negative factor" (renamed the "budget stabilization factor" in statute) will be held constant at $828.3 million next year.
- Maintaining funding for the Colorado Family Planning Program, including access to long-acting reversible contraceptives.

PROTECTING PROGRESS

- **Student Exemption from Immunization Requirements:** SB17-250 (Neville & Marble/Neville & Lebsock) was successfully defeated. It would have loosened the process for medical and non-medical exemptions from immunization requirements for children enrolling in school or child care.
- **Maintaining Innovations in Education:** SB17-067 (Merrifield), if it had passed, would have eliminated the use of objective student achievement data in our educator evaluation system. HB 17-1062, HB 17-1117, and SB 17-101 would have eliminated or made optional key statewide assessments that provide student growth information.
- **Maintaining the Colorado Health Insurance Marketplace:** SB17-003 (Smallwood/Neville) was defeated, but would have repealed the bipartisan state law that established Connect for Health Colorado, our state-run insurance Marketplace, limiting Colorado's flexibility to innovate and design our own state solution for customers to shop for health plans and receive tax credits and subsidies to help them afford those plans.
- **Maintaining Financial Protections in Medicaid:** SB17-004 (Tate/Wist), if passed, would have allowed medical providers who are not enrolled in the Medicaid program to charge Medicaid clients for services that would otherwise be paid for by Medicaid, creating financial strain and stress for families that is bad for kids' healthy development.
- **Medicaid Delivery & Payment Initiatives:** HB 17-1353 (Young/Lundberg) codifies the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC), the primary Medicaid delivery system in Colorado, and Department of Health Care Policy and Financing's work to continue to integrate physical and behavioral health care and provide access to a medical home through the ACC.

***2017 KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* release**

Speak Up For Kids Day at the Capitol

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

- **Addressing Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion:** HB 17-1210 (Lontine & Buckner/Priola & Fields) would have established more developmentally appropriate standards for out-of-school suspension and expulsion of young children in public school settings.
- **Funding for Full-Day Kindergarten:** HB 17-1042 (Wilson) would have increased funding for children enrolled in full-day kindergarten programs who are currently only funded for a little more than a half-day.
- **A Vision for Education in Colorado:** HB 17-1287 (Hamner & Rankin/Priola & Kerr) would have laid out a process for establishing a coherent vision for Colorado's P-12 public education system.
- **Mother-Baby Unit:** The final state budget failed to include funding for a mother-baby unit within the Department of Corrections that would have allowed infants and toddlers to bond with new mothers facing incarceration.
- **Two Generation Pilot Program:** The final state budget did not include a proposed "Two Generations Reaching Opportunity" pilot program to combine evidence-based home visiting outreach with comprehensive services for adults that lead to economic self-sufficiency.
- **School Finance and Taxpayer Equality:** Joint Budget Committee staff presented recommendations to legislators that would have addressed Colorado's uneven property tax system and improved the adequacy of K-12 funding by referring a statewide measure to voters to require a more consistent level of local investment in education through local property taxes.

Get the Facts!

To download or request a copy of the 2017 *KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* report visit www.coloradokids.org/kidscount2017.

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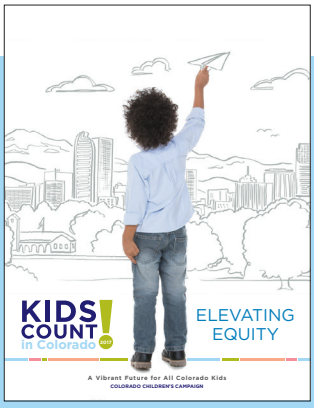

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www.coloradokids.org/action