COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN

Every chance for every child

2022 LEGISLATIVE *IMPACTS*

The Colorado Children's Campaign serves as the leading voice for kids at the state Capitol and in communities across Colorado. In our over 35-year history, we have worked with policymakers from every corner of the state and every political perspective to improve the well-being of Colorado kids. Children's issues aren't partisan, and our successes have proven that we can develop innovative solutions when we work together.

In the 2022 legislative session, legislators and advocates worked to advance policy solutions and restructure systems that the pandemic has further exposed as inequitable and inaccessible. As Colorado families navigate this recovery, many of our priority bills have focused on best facilitating that recovery to their benefit – with bipartisan support along the way. In the midst of these successes, we continue to recognize the work that still remains in realizing every chance for every child in Colorado. Below are some of the bills we championed and supported in the 2022 legislative session.

IMPROVING HEALTH COVERAGE, BEHAVIORAL, AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING FOR COLORADO KIDS AND FAMILIES

- **Cover All Coloradans:**
  HB22-1289 (Gonzales-Gutierrez & McCluskie/Moreno & Fields) provides comprehensive public health insurance coverage to children, pregnant and postpartum undocumented Coloradans, and makes several other critical investments in perinatal care in Colorado. The bill makes a number of improvements to the Colorado health care system by strengthening the coverage available through the Health Insurance Affordability Enterprise, codifying CDPHE's Health eMoms survey, eliminating CHP+ premiums, and making breast pumps a covered benefit for people using Medicaid and CHP+.

- **Behavioral Health Care Services for Children:**
  SB22-147 (Kolker & Sonnenberg/Young & Pelton) provides funding for schools to increase the number of health professionals, allowing more schools and districts to provide behavioral health services for all students.

- **Protecting Quality in Medicaid Perinatal Programs:**
  HB22-1329 (McCluskie/Hansen) protects the quality prenatal and postpartum care in Colorado's Medicaid program and provides funding for stakeholder engagement, including through the Maternity Advisory Council. In order to help drive Medicaid policy changes, this council is made up of individuals who have received perinatal services through Medicaid.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND WORKING TOWARDS EQUITABLE & STUDENT-CENTERED FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS

- **Supportive Schools for K-12 Students:**
  HB22-1376 (Herod & Young/Priola & Winter) updates Colorado's policies, practices and data frameworks to make data about students' experiences at school more transparent and accessible, end discipline practices that have been shown to harm students, and ensure that every student learns in an environment that is positive, safe and inclusive.

- **School Finance Student Poverty Measure:**
  HB22-1202 (Herod & McCluskie/Zenzinger & Coleman) establishes a process for creating a new measure to identify students at risk of poor academic outcomes due to economic disadvantage. This will shift Colorado away from relying on the submission of free and reduced-price lunch eligibility forms as the state's only proxy for poverty, and allow the state's school funding formula to more accurately and adequately allocate resources to serve students.

- **State Match for Mill Levy Override Statute:**
  SB22-202 (Zenzinger & Rankin/McCluskie) makes a targeted state investment in low-wealth school districts that constantly struggle for adequate funding to meet student needs. The bill creates a Mill Levy Override Match Fund, which will recognize local, voter-approved property tax investments and meet that effort with a state match on a sliding scale.

UNIFYING OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM, REALIZING UNIVERSAL PRE-K IMPLEMENTATION, AND BUILDING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

- **Department of Early Childhood and Universal Preschool:** HB22-1295 (Sirota & Garnett/Buckner & Fenberg) establishes the functions of the Department of Early Childhood and the leadership of the department in administering early childhood, child health, and family support programs. It also creates the **Colorado universal preschool program,** which will provide at least 10 hours per week of free preschool services for children in the year before kindergarten, beginning with the 2023 school year.

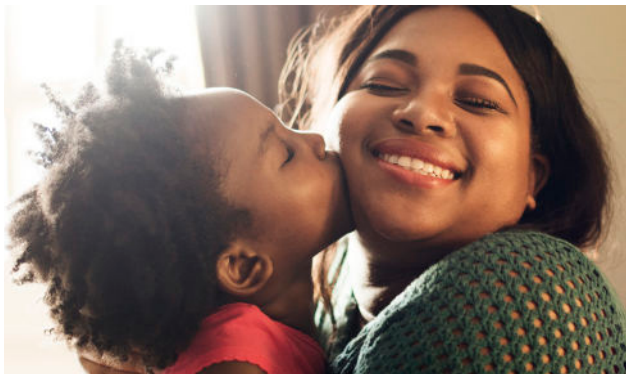
- **Early Childhood Educator Income Tax Credit:** HB22-1010 (Sirota & Van Beber/Buckner & Kirkmeyer) creates a refundable income tax credit for early childhood educators tied to their credentialing level. This is a proven strategy to support recruitment, retention, compensation, and professional advancement among our vital early childhood educators.

- **Support for Early Childhood Programs:** SB22-213 (Fields & Sonnenberg/Valdez A. & Tipper) allocates funding to a number of early childhood programs, including workforce support, expansion grants, employer-based child care programs, home visiting, and family, friend, and neighbor support to sustain and expand programs that are making a meaningful impact in child care and early learning.

INCREASING INVESTMENTS TO KEEP FAMILIES HOUSED AND IMPROVING SUPPORT DURING TIMES OF FINANCIAL INSTABILITY

- **Modifications to Colorado Works Program:** HB22-1259 (Duran & Jodeh/Moreno) updates and improves the TANF program, known here as Colorado Works, so that families can fully benefit from its support. The bill increases basic cash assistance (BCA) and implements an annual cost of living adjustment to ensure that BCA keeps up with inflation and the rising cost of living.

- **Eviction Legal Defense Funding:** HB22-1329 (McCluskie/Hansen) secures $500 thousand in the "Long Bill," or the FY 2022-23 state budget, to provide additional legal assistance for Colorado families going through the eviction process.



GET THE FACTS!

Looking for data on Colorado kids and families? Visit the KIDS COUNT Data Center for the most up-to-date sources of information on demographics, outcomes and more.

Visit **datacenter.kidscount.org/CO**

KIDS COUNT! in Colorado 2022

STAY INFORMED!

Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter, KidsFlash, and get the updates and information you need to advocate for kids!

Visit our Capitol Update Center to learn more about past and future policy efforts.

www.coloradokids.org/action

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