

**Testimony as Prepared for Delivery in support of SB23-269: Universal Preschool Provider Participation Bonuses by Lauren Corboy, Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children’s Campaign**

**Senate Education Committee**

**April 12, 2023**

- Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Lauren Corboy and I am a Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children’s Campaign.
- The Colorado Children’s Campaign is a non-profit, non-partisan, policy, research, and advocacy organization, committed to securing every chance for every child in Colorado since our founding in 1985. That includes advocating for public policies and investments that remove barriers for Colorado’s most impacted children and families and improve well-being for every child and family in our state.
- I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 23-269, Universal Preschool Provider Participation Bonuses.
- The Children’s Campaign supports this bill because it will directly help the early childhood professionals who support Colorado’s young children and families every day and are participating in the first year of Colorado’s Universal Preschool Program. We know that our providers are absolutely critical to the success of universal preschool and our birth-5 child care system as a whole.
- This bill will give participating providers in universal preschool a much-needed financial boost, enabling them to invest in resources and materials, coaching, bonuses, or other necessary services. The bonus structure in Senate Bill 269 is thoughtful and targeted to make the most impact possible with a fixed amount of funding.
- For example, these bonuses will encourage providers who participate in UPK to also maintain or expand their infant-toddler child care slots. Financial and staffing strains often force providers to decrease or eliminate infant-toddler slots altogether as they expand to provide preschool. We have learned from other states who have adopted universal preschool that this widening gap in infant-toddler care needs to be directly addressed, in order to ensure that parents of our youngest children in Colorado can find care and continue to contribute to Colorado’s growing economy.
- Senate Bill 269 bonuses will also support providers in “low capacity preschool areas,” areas of the state that are not able to meet the demand for universal preschool due to an insufficient number of participating providers. Expanding access to preschool in these areas is absolutely critical for families and local economies - providing this financial support is an important first step.
- While early childhood providers continue to face many structural challenges that we must continue to collectively address, I want to acknowledge and thank the Department of Early Childhood for recognizing these obstacles to universal preschool implementation, understanding and valuing infant and toddler care, and continuing to meaningfully engage with members of the early childhood community as department staff develops legislation.
- Senate Bill 23-269 is a significant first step in ensuring that early childhood providers are supported and better able to do their jobs which are so vital for our communities.
- I urge your support of this bill and am happy to take any questions at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.