



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Three Bills Aim to Strengthen Colorado's Child Care System Amid Federal Uncertainty

The Colorado Children's Campaign supports legislation to improve affordability, streamline access, and ensure quality care

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Media contact: Dr. Mathangi Subramanian, Director of Early Childhood Policy, is available to discuss these bills and their implications and to connect reporters with early childhood providers who can discuss their potential impact.

DENVER – Three bills introduced in Colorado's General Assembly this week will make the state's early childhood education and care system more affordable, efficient, and accessible for families at a moment when federal support for early childhood remains uncertain.

Colorado families face significant challenges accessing care for their children, with nearly 13,000 children on waitlists for child care subsidies or affected by enrollment freezes. The state was recently ranked the fifth most expensive in the country for child care. Recent federal funding freezes have intensified concerns about the future of the state's most vulnerable families.

"The first years of a child's life are critical for their development," said Dr. Mathangi Subramanian, Director of Early Childhood Policy at the Colorado Children's Campaign. "This year, our lawmakers have the opportunity to cement Colorado's status as a national leader in early childhood by cutting red tape and investing in systems that ensure every child has access to safe and nurturing care."

Three Bills to Bolster Early Childhood

Continuation of Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (HB26-1004): This bill renews the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit to attract private investment and sustain child care providers. This proven tool expands child care access for families and strengthens local economies, delivering long-term benefits for children and the workforce alike.

Early Childhood Local System Consolidation (SB26-019): This bill streamlines the early childhood system by combining administrative structures, making it easier for families to navigate available programs, ensuring funding is used efficiently and wisely, and raising provider quality and accessibility.

Child Care Provider Licensing & Quality (SB26-020): This bill makes child care licensing processes more accessible and efficient while maintaining a high level of quality. It also

convenes a task force of childhood experts to evaluate our current quality ranking system and suggest improvements.

Together, these bills will maintain a key avenue for revenue; maximize existing resources while simplifying navigation for families; and support provider quality and sustainability.

Strengthening the Early Childhood System

Colorado has taken important steps to support early childhood in recent years. The Colorado Department of Early Childhood was established in July 2022, and the Universal Preschool program has served tens of thousands of children across the state since it launched in 2023.

These bills build on that foundation to ensure the system works effectively and equitably for all families.

"Investing in early childhood at the state level is more necessary than ever before," Subramanian said. "With our federal funding at risk, we need bills like these to address both immediate needs and long-term sustainability. Together, this legislation reinforces Colorado's continuing commitment to our children and families, now and in the future."

Learn More: [The Colorado Children's Campaign 2026 policy priorities](#)

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About the Colorado Children's Campaign

At the Colorado Children's Campaign, we use data and research to identify what kids across our state need most, then advocate for policies that strengthen their well-being and help them thrive. Our focus is the whole child, working across Early Childhood, K-12 Education, Health, and Economic Security for the greatest long-term impact.

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