

2026 Mid-Session Policy Priorities

Community Briefing
March 19, 2026



COLORADO CHILDREN'S
• CAMPAIGN •

Every day. For every kid.

Welcome

Heather Tritten, President & CEO



The Campaign



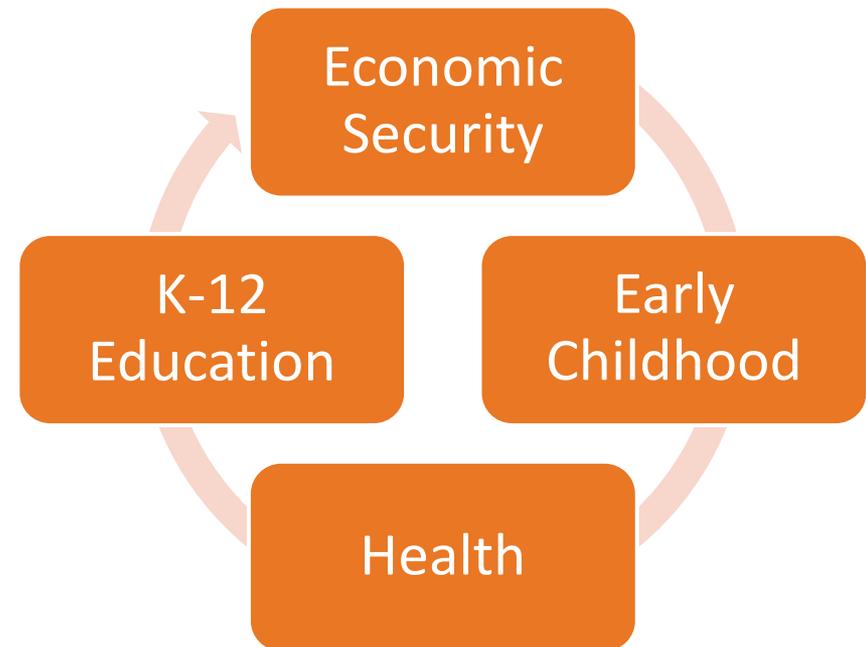
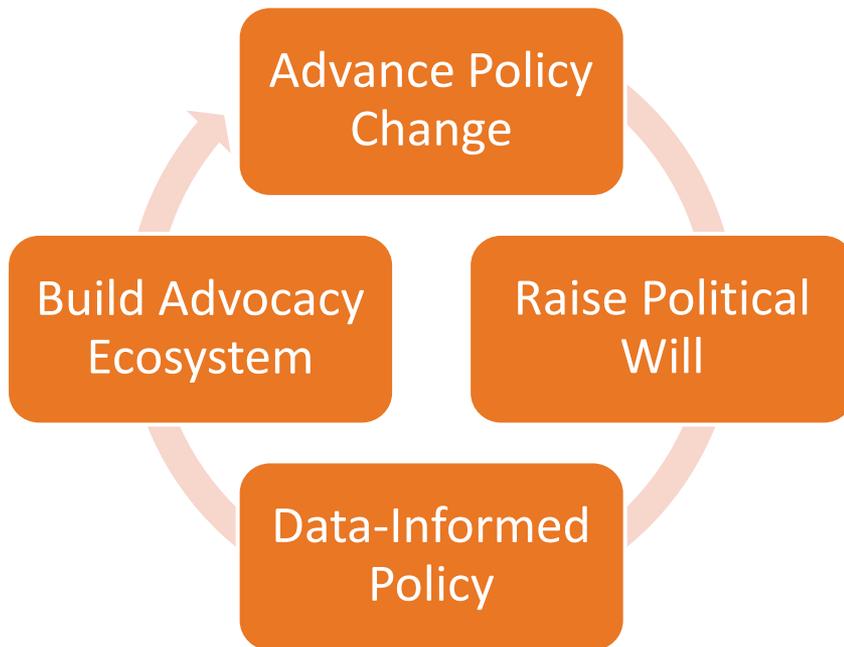
Vision

A Colorado where all children thrive.

Mission

We create opportunity for every child in Colorado by catalyzing innovative policy, research, and advocacy solutions.

The Campaign



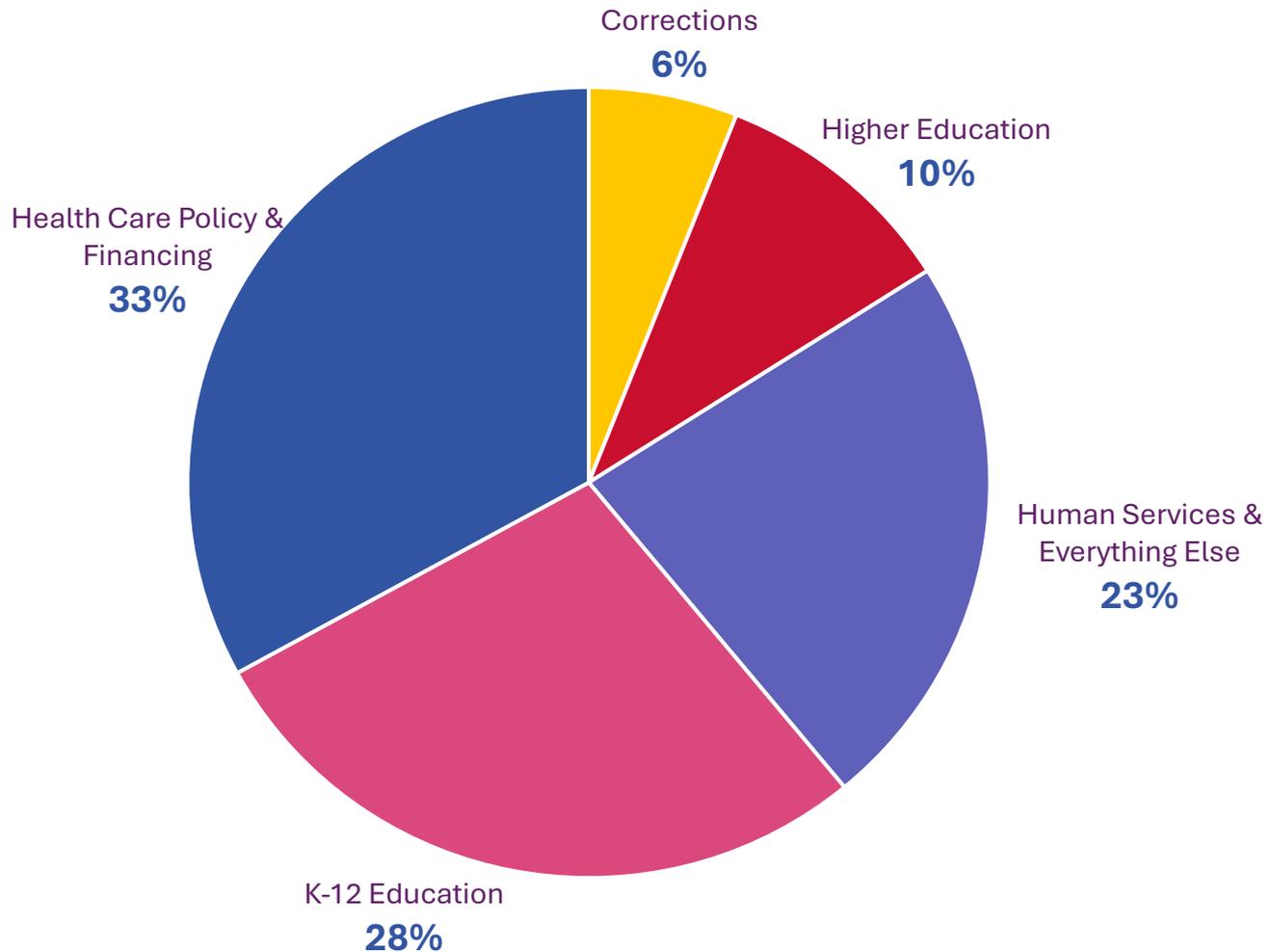
Where Are We in the Legislative Session?

- Last Friday, March 13th marked the half-way point of the 120-day session.
- 500+ bills & resolutions introduced
- Severe budget cuts, with the JBC finishing the Long Bill in next couple weeks.



Budget Realities

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Spending



Negative Federal Impacts



- Federal instability is putting Colorado kids and families at risk
- HR1 is increasing pressure on Colorado's state budget
- Recent federal freeze on child care, TANF, and child welfare funding created disruption
- Pattern of federal actions undermining family stability and child well being

What's The Campaign Doing?



Every day. For every kid.

- Guaranteeing affordable, high-quality health care for every child and family.
- Modernizing safety net programs to secure children's financial stability.
- Making early childhood care affordable, accessible, and effective.
- Fully funding schools and protect students with disabilities.

"When we think about the programs like civil rights in education, or even in Medicaid or TANF or education, we're seeing that the money and partnership we could always rely on just isn't there. And that means we need something here that can take up that space."

~Heather Tritten, President & CEO, Denver Post March 8, 2026

Health

Strengthen Affordability & Protect Access



Toni Sarge, Director of Health Policy

Make Health Coverage Affordable for All Families



- Upcoming legislation to sustain Colorado's Health Care Affordability Enterprise
- Protecting OmniSalud
- Ensuring affordable, consistent coverage

Protect Coverage for Undocumented Children

- 20,000 children enrolled in Cover All Coloradans
- Coverage gains far exceeding estimates
- Governor's proposed budget includes changes to the program to maintain enrollment
- Recent attacks fended off at the JBC



Expand Vaccine Access to Keep Kids Healthy



“Vaccines are one of the greatest gifts we give one another.”

TESTIMONY



by Dr. Edwin Asturias
Board Member

- **SB26-032: Headed to the Governor’s desk!**
 - Sens. Daugherty & Mullica
 - Reps. Brown & Feret
- **Clarifies vaccine guidance**
- **Maintains alignment with the American Academy of Pediatrics**
- **Protects child health and public health**

Economic Security

Modernize Family Supports & Reduce Child Poverty



Sarah Barnes, VP of Policy

Redesign the Safety Net

- Upcoming legislation to create a more effective and efficient public benefits system
- Short-term solutions to address error rates and federal uncertainty
- Long-term system redesign for a future, family-centered system



Strengthen TANF for Families



- Stabilize TANF & Basic Cash Assistance
- Prioritize families with the deepest need
- Invest in evidence-based strategies
- Increase TANF's effectiveness for the long term

Protect Family Tax Credits

Package of bills to preserve tax credits that support families and reduce child poverty.

Passed their first committee!

- **HB26-1221 - Tax Expenditure Adjustments**
 - Reps. Sirota & Zokaie
 - Sen. Amabile
- **HB26-1222 - Modify Tax Expenditures**
 - Reps. Garcia & McCormick
 - Sen. Kipp
- **HB26-1223 - Modifying Certain Tax Expenditures**
 - Reps. Boesenecker & Woodrow
 - Rep. Brown & Feret



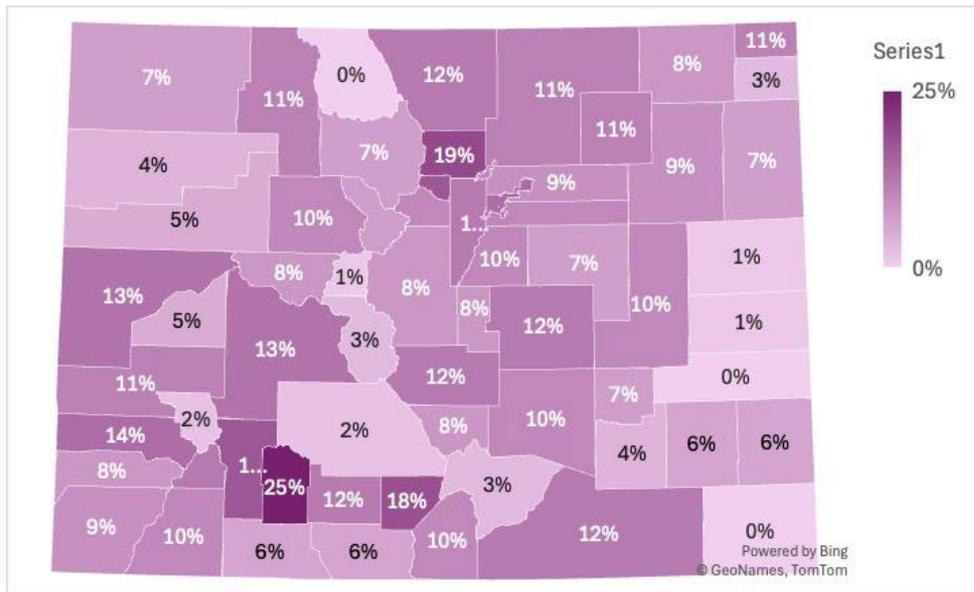
Early Childhood

Build an Affordable, Streamlined System



**Dr. Mathangi Subramanian, Director of
Early Childhood Policy**

Address CCCAP Freezes



Percent of eligible children served by CCCAP,
FY 2023-24

- CCCAP waitlists impacting 13,000+ children
- Improve equitable access to child care assistance
- Upcoming legislation
 - Sens. Bright & Marchman
 - Rep. Garcia & Taggart

Strengthen Child Care Access Locally

- Align local early childhood governance structures
- Reduce red tape for small child care providers
- Eliminate duplicative contracts and statutory barriers
- SB26-019 has passed the Senate!
- SB26-020 has passed Senate Education!
 - Sens. Ball & Bright
 - Rep. Sirota & Gonzalez



Renew the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit



- Renew a proven tool to attract private investment
- Sustain and expand child care provider ecosystem
- Increase access to affordable child care
- Strengthen local economies and workforce stability
- **HB26-1004 Passed House Finance Committee!**
 - Speaker McCluskie & ML Caldwell
 - President Coleman & ML Simpson

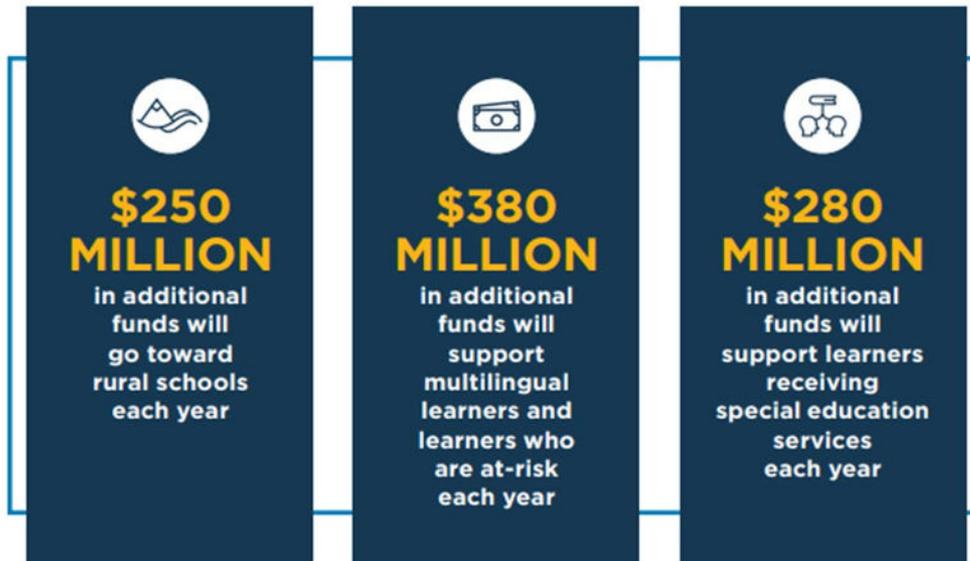
K-12 Education

Deliver on Equity & Opportunity



**Madi Ashour, Director of K-12 Education
Policy**

Fully Implement the New School Finance Formula



- Fully fund the student-centered finance formula
- Target resources to high-need student populations
- Support rural districts, English learners, and students with disabilities
- Close opportunity gaps and maximize taxpayer impact

Defending High-Quality Learning

HB26-1292

- Would have moved the state to a three-year teacher evaluation cycle
- Decoupled student-growth from evaluations
- Not supported by data, research, or best practice.
- Failed in House Education

SB26-068

- Amended to create a redundant task force to look at statewide testing
- Duplicative of existing work already happening
- Original bill not supported by data, research, or best practice

Strengthen Disability Rights & Special Education Protections

- SB26-125 Passed Senate Education!
 - Sens. Kolker & Marchman
 - Reps. Bacon & Phillips
- Codifies Section 504 protections into Colorado law.
- Does not create new mandates or additional burdens for schools.

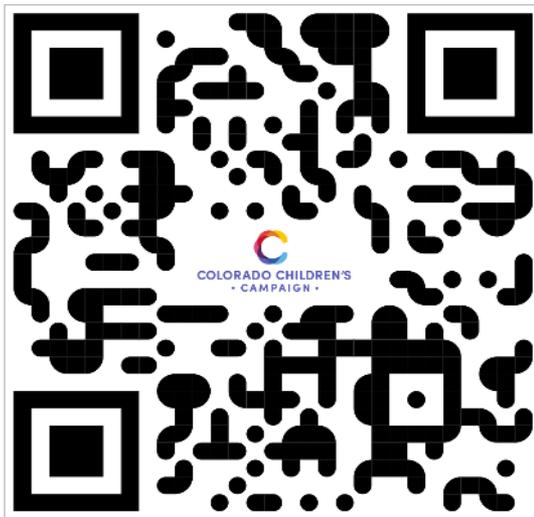


Questions?



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Submit an Action Alert



Join Our Upcoming Lobby Day!

Speak Up for Kids Day: Wednesday, April 8



Learn more
here!



Join Our Next Webinars & Events!

SAVE THE DATES

- **Thursday, May 14 – 10:00 AM (virtual)**
 - End-of-Session Webinar
- **Wednesday, June 10 – 9:00 AM (hybrid)**
 - 2026 *KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* Data Book Release



Thank you!

