

# 2026 End-of-Session Policy Impacts

Community Briefing  
May 14, 2026



**COLORADO CHILDREN'S**  
• CAMPAIGN •

Every day. For every kid.

**Welcome**

**Heather Tritten, President & CEO**



# The Campaign



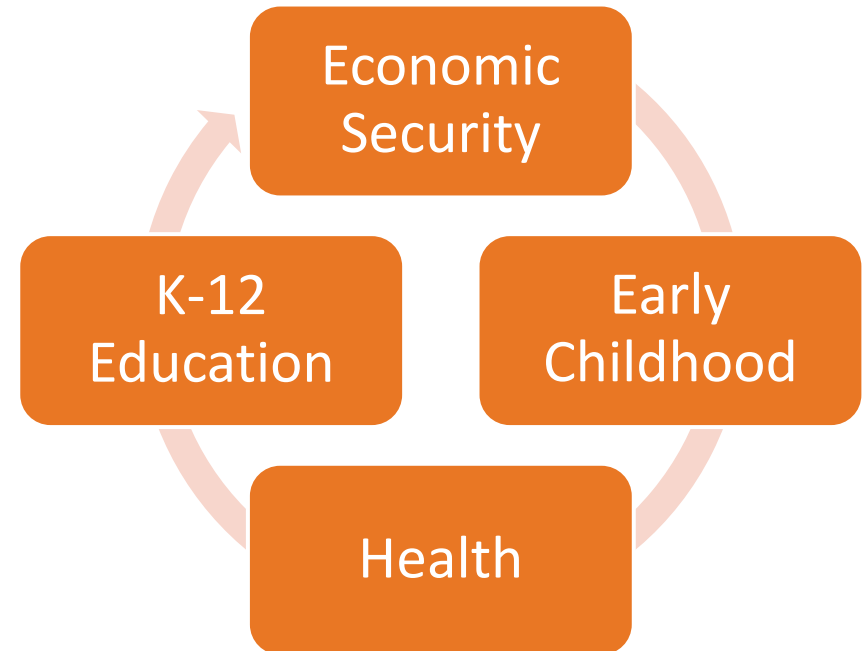
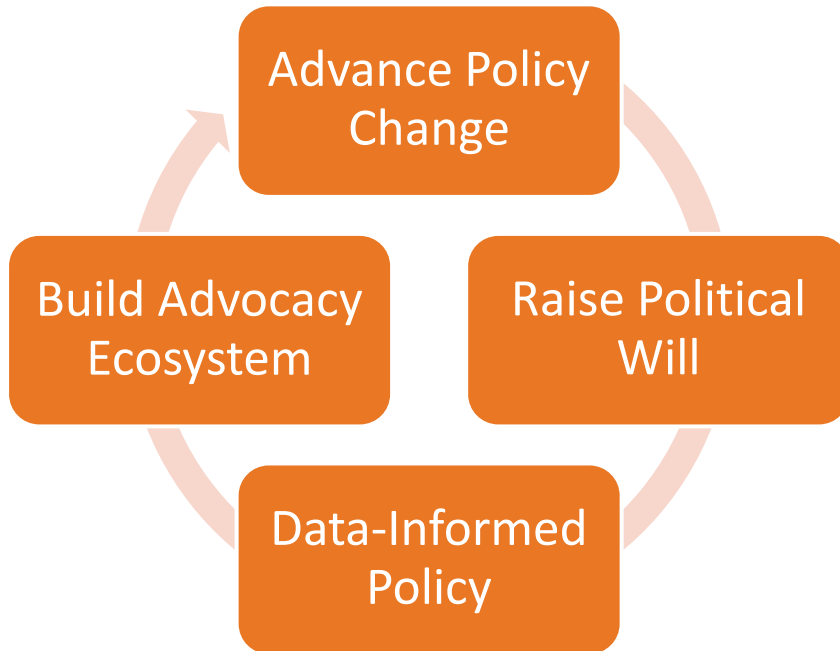
## **Vision**

*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



# The Legislature has Adjourned!

- Yesterday, May 13<sup>th</sup> was the final day of the 120-day session.
- 713 bills & resolutions introduced
  - Governor has until June 5<sup>th</sup> to act on bills
- ~\$1 billion in budget cuts

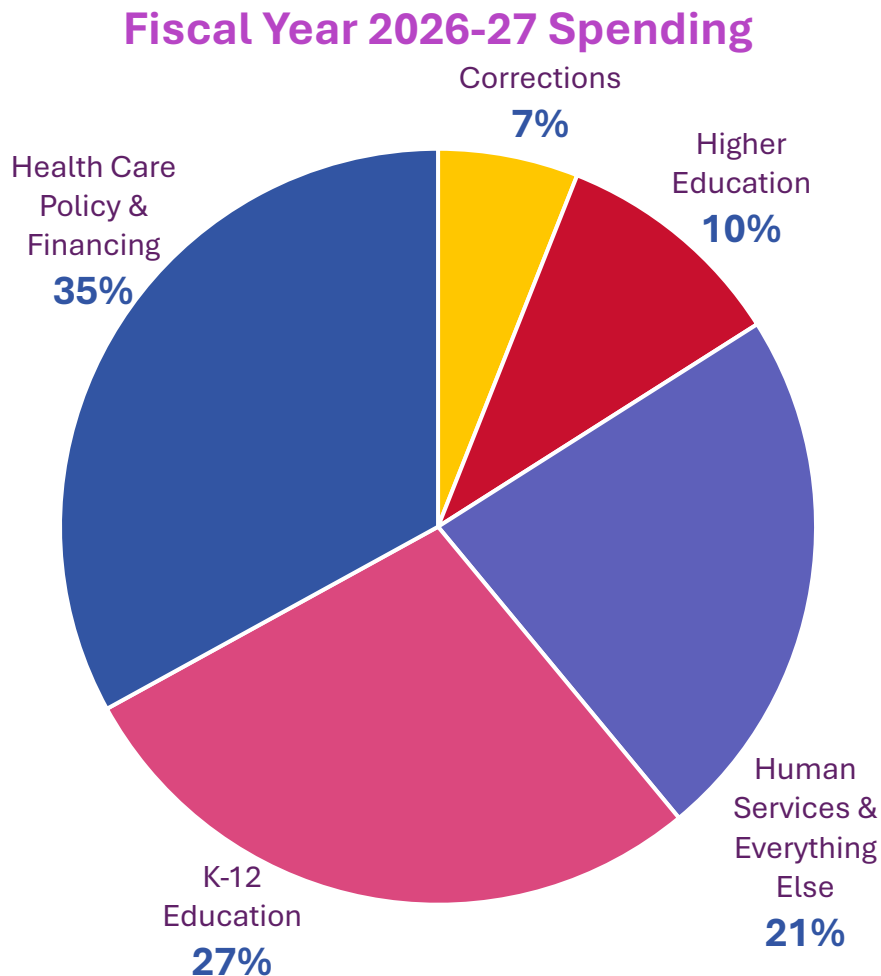


# Negative Federal Backdrop



- Federal funding freezes and constant barrage of changes
- H.R. 1 cuts threaten SNAP and Medicaid
- Colorado acted while Washington created chaos
- Kids' programs shouldn't be political casualties

# More Than Tough Budget Year



- ~\$1B shortfall required cuts across nearly every sector
- K-12 and Medicaid account for most of the state budget
- Relationships with legislators mattered
- Kids programs largely protected

# What Did Colorado Do About It?



**Every day. For every kid.**

- Protected affordable health insurance
- Modernized public assistance programs
- Made child care more accessible
- Funded and protected students

*“Colorado’s future depends on our ability to face hard decisions with humanity rather than fear as much as it depends on balanced budgets and passed bills.”*

*~Heather Tritten, President & CEO, The Campaigner April 2026*

# Health

Strengthen Affordability & Protect Access



**Toni Sarge, Director of Health Policy**

# Making Health Coverage More Affordable



- Ensures consistent health insurance coverage for at least one more year for:
  - Reinsurance
  - Colorado Premium Assistance
  - OmniSalud
- **SB26-178: Passed!** 
  - Sens. Jodeh & Mullica
  - Reps. Brown & Gilchrist

# Protecting Coverage for Undocumented Children

**20,100 children enrolled in Cover All Coloradans!**


- **Budget Defense**
- Temporary enrollment cap
- Cap on dental services



# Expanding Vaccine Access to Keep Kids Healthy



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

- Clarifies vaccine guidance
- Protects child health and public health
- **SB26-032: Passed!** 
  - Sens. Daugherty & Mullica
  - Reps. Brown & Feret

**TESTIMONY**



by Dr. Edwin Asturias  
Board Member

# **Economic Security**

**Modernize Family Supports & Reduce Child Poverty**



**Sarah Barnes, VP of Policy**

# Redesigning the Safety Net

- Stabilize programs like Medicaid and SNAP now
- New public benefits delivery model launches July 2028
- Collaborative effort between advocates, counties, and state agencies
- **HB26-1429: Passed!**
  - Reps. Sirota & Brown
  - Sens. Kirkmeyer & Bridges




# Strengthening TANF



- **Budget Defense**
- Stabilize TANF
- Maximize spending on direct supports for families
- Greater program transparency

# Reducing Child Poverty



- Refundable tax credits significantly reduce child poverty
- Loss of FATC threatens recent progress
- One bill passed, but broader solutions stalled
- **HB26-1223: Passed!** 
  - Reps. Boesenecker & Woodrow
  - Reps. Brown & Feret

# Early Childhood


Build an Affordable, Streamlined System



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

# Renewing the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit



- Sustains and expands child care
- Increases access to affordable child care
- Strengthens local economies and workforce stability
- **HB26-1004: Passed!** 
  - Speaker McCluskie & ML Caldwell
  - President Coleman & ML Simpson

# Addressing Child Care Affordability



- Child care in Colorado is unavailable and unaffordable
- Attempt to create first-ever child care fund
- **SB26-180: Failed**
  - Sens. Bright & Marchman
  - Reps. Garcia & Taggart

# Easing CCCAP Waitlists & Freezes




- New CCCAP rules address overspending, waitlists and freezes
- Upcoming vote to pass these rules
- Express your support by submitting testimony to the RAC:  
[CDEC\\_Rulemaking@state.co.us](mailto:CDEC_Rulemaking@state.co.us)

# Strengthening Child Care Access Locally

- Aligns local early childhood governance structures
- Improves local access for parents and providers
- Establishes locally controlled scope of work
- **SB26-019: Passed!** 
  - Sens. Ball & Bright
  - Rep. Sirota & Gonzalez



# Reducing Red Tape for Child Care Licensing

- Reduces red tape for small child care providers
- Eliminates duplicative contracts and statutory barriers
- Establishes a task force for examining licensing requirements
- **SB26-020: Passed!** 
  - Sens. Ball & Bright
  - Rep. Sirota & Gonzalez



# **K-12 Education**

## **Deliver on Equity & Opportunity**



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

# Better Funding for K-12

- Continues the new school funding formula rollout
- Increases per-pupil funding
- Protects districts with hold harmless
- **SB26-023: Passed!** 
  - Sens. Kolker & Kirkmeyer
  - Reps. Lukens & Sirota



# Strengthening Disability Rights in Schools

- Codifies Section 504 protections into Colorado law
- Gives CDE the tools\* to protect disability rights amid federal shifts
- **SB26-125: Passed!**
  - Sens. Kolker & Marchman
  - Reps. Bacon & Phillips




# Creating Sustainable Funding for Youth Programs



- Funds youth mental health, civil rights, and after-school programs
- Paid for by fees on gaming microtransactions
- **HB26-1418: Passed!**
  - Reps. Zokaie & Camacho
  - Sens. Amabile & Roberts



# Scaling What Works in Education

- Addresses opportunity gaps tied to systemic inequities
- Learns from high-performing Colorado schools
- Expands proven practices to improve outcomes for more students
- **SB26-170: Passed!** 
  - President Coleman & Sen. Bright
  - Reps. Bacon & Martinez



# Defending High-Quality Learning



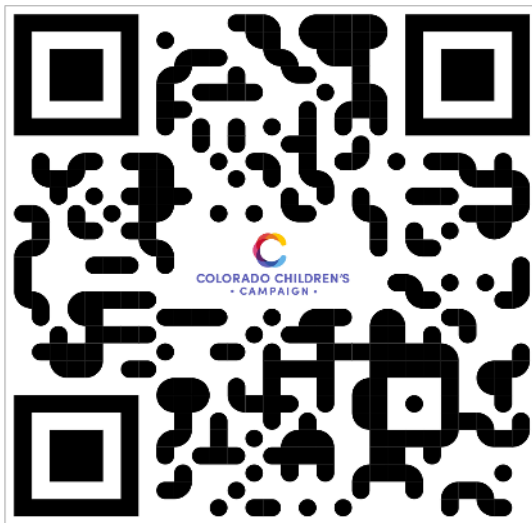
- Defended statewide accountability and education quality systems
- Focused on balancing teacher workload with student outcomes
- Supported annual educator feedback and data transparency
- Data is an essential tool for educational equity

# Questions?



# Stay Connected!

## Join our newsletter



## Follow us on social



## Submit an Action Alert



# Join Our Next Webinars & Events!

## SAVE THE DATES

- **Wednesday, June 10 – 9:00 AM (hybrid)**
  - 2026 KIDS COUNT in Colorado! Data Book Release
- **Thursday, Sept. 17 – 4:00 PM (in-person)**
  - Annual Connection Reception (Grand Hyatt Denver)



**Thank you!**

The image features a solid purple background. In the center, the text "Thank you!" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there are three overlapping, semi-transparent circles in shades of orange, red, and purple, creating a decorative graphic element.