



Support HB 14-1317: Colorado Child Care Assistance Program Changes

(Rep. Duran/Sens. Nicholson and Kefalas)

Passed the House Public Health Care and Human Services Committee with Bipartisan Support on March 18th

Affordable child care should support—not inhibit—working parents' efforts to find and to keep good jobs, to move forward in their careers, education, and achieve financial stability. Unfortunately, the low supply and high cost of child care in Colorado denies many working families access to this vital need. Colorado ranks among the most expensive states nationwide for the cost of child care. One of our best tools to help families afford child care is the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program. But red tape and administrative inconsistencies make it unworkable for many working parents and child care providers.

The innovative changes proposed for CCCAP would help keep our economy moving by supporting working parents and ensuring more Colorado kids have access to stimulating experiences that let them discover, explore and grow.

SUPPORT HB-1317: INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES AND DECREASE RED TAPE FOR WORKING PARENTS & SMALL BUSINESS CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

INCREASE THE AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

- Reduce co-payment requirements for the most impoverished families and tiered co-pays increase as income does.
 - Only three states have a higher co-payment rate for families living in poverty.
- Increase access to care, especially in rural and impoverished areas, by allowing contracting for CCCAP slots.
- Allow job seekers and those enrolled in postsecondary education or workforce training to be eligible for CCCAP so that child care concerns do not interfere with efforts to achieve a better livelihood.
- Remove barriers to access for hard-working families by allowing presumptive eligibility, using existing public assistance databases to determine eligibility, allowing providers to accept applications from parents, aligning income verification requirements with other programs' expectations and removing other unnecessarily heavy burdens.
- Set up wait lists in each county so families know when they may be served and so Colorado can assess the unmet need.

EASE BURDENS FOR WORKING PARENTS

- Structure income eligibility criteria so that working families can afford child care despite minor increases in wages, thus easing the "cliff effect" that discourages families from earning a living salary.
- Set a statewide floor income level for eligibility so Coloradans can move to bigger and better opportunities without unexpected losses in CCCAP support.
- Allow children to receive consistent, regular care by allowing care for the child outside of a parent's exact hours of work.
- Promote transparency for families so they can better navigate the CCCAP process.

CUT RED TAPE FOR SMALL BUSINESS CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

- Set provider reimbursement rates and holiday and absence policies in a way to encourage greater participation by child care providers, promote parental choice, and ensure that small businesses do not operate at a loss by offering quality early learning to CCCAP-subsidized families.
- Institute tiered reimbursement so that providers can afford the costs of providing higher quality care and have incentives to enroll the most children in the best learning environments.

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