

## COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN



**April 11, 2008**

You may read KidsFlash in its entirety by scrolling through the text.

### **CCC in the News:**

#### **Innovative School Bill Gets Initial House OK**

<http://tinyurl.com/6joara>

#### **Local Students Lobby at the Capitol**

<http://tinyurl.com/2sdzku>

#### **Growth Spurt for Kids Health Plan**

[http://www.denverpost.com/search/ci\\_8219277](http://www.denverpost.com/search/ci_8219277)

### **Upcoming Events and Opportunities:**

#### **Colorado Shops for Kids Books on Sale Now!**

*You decide what's on sale! **Colorado Shops for Kids** is a book of savings vouchers for Denver's best retailers in its most renowned shopping districts, including *Cherry Creek North, Larimer Square, Washington Park, Lowry, Old South Pearl Street*, the Village Shops at Landmark, and more. Save BIG at stores such as *Tattered Cover, Daisy Sports, Enstrom Candies, Flower Power, Lawrence Covell, Max, and HW Home*, to name just a few. Buy graduation gifts. Select something special for Mother's Day. Buy Father's Day Gifts. Get the latest spring fashions. Colorado Shops for Kids discount vouchers coincide with all your spring shopping needs! Books are on sale now for savings between May 1 and May 14, 2008. And best of all: each \$50 book benefits the Children's Campaign's work on behalf of kids! For a complete list of stores and to buy your book, visit our website at <http://tinyurl.com/6ksxse>.*

#### **Early Childhood Caucus Meeting on April 17th:**

The Children's Campaign is excited to announce the formation of the Early Childhood Caucus. The Caucus is being convened by the Children's Campaign in partnership with the Marsico Foundation, Senator Brandon Shaffer and Representative Amy Stephens. The group met for the first time on March 20th, with 12 legislators attending in addition to a State Board of Education member and multiple early childhood stakeholders. The

purpose of the Caucus is to work with legislators committed to furthering the well-being of Colorado's young children, providing a resource for them to further develop an understanding of research-based practices that support physical, cognitive, and social emotional development during these critical early years. This understanding will, in turn, help inform policy decisions to support current and future generations of Colorado's children. **The next Caucus meeting will be Thursday, April 17th from 12:00-1:15 in the Senate Committee Room 352.**

#### **IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE:**

Over a year ago a group of educators and advocates participated in the Immigrant Integration in Schools Summit at the Colorado Trust. Contributions made that day led to the development of the "Immigrant Integration Educator Resource Guide," a document to help schools and school districts promote immigrant integration comprehensively. This guide is available by visiting the Colorado Trust website at <http://www.coloradotrust.org/>.

Additionally, the Colorado Department of Education and The Colorado Trust will be piloting the guide's use in nine different locations throughout the state.

#### **Take Action for Kids:**

**Please call your Colorado Senators and urge them to vote YES on SB 160 & 161.**

To find your Colorado State Senator, visit [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org).

Tell them:

- Please support SB 160 & 161 when they come up on the Senate floor.
- There are over 159,000 uninsured children in Colorado, an issue which is very important to your constituents.
- Nearly three-fourths of Colorado voters believe that all kids should have access to health care coverage, and should be covered by government-supported programs when their parents can't afford private coverage.
- Together, these bills increase access and decrease barriers for low-income families in Colorado to public health care programs such as Medicaid and CHP+.
- By supporting these two bills, you're helping to ensure that Colorado kids not only have access to much-needed care, but that they live healthier lives.

Background Information on SB 160 & 161:

- SB160 will expand CHP+ eligibility from 205 percent to 225 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, which is just \$46,000 per year for a family of four. These are families who simply cannot afford private insurance, the average cost of which is \$12,000 for a family of four. SB160 will also improve mental health benefits in CHP+ to be equivalent to benefits in the Medicaid program.
- SB 161 reduces barriers for families applying for Medicaid and CHP+ by allowing access to available information through the Department of Labor and Employment to verify income. This will also benefit families at the time of reenrollment by avoiding interruptions in health insurance coverage. Finally, SB 161 gives an

existing advisory committee the ability to examine the possibility of combining Medicaid and CHP+ into a single program.

## 2008 Legislative Summary:

(Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the CCC supports all of the following pieces of legislation. In some cases the CCC is the initiator of the legislation and is allocating resources to ensure passage and signing.)

### Health:

SB 08-022	Senator Sandoval Representative Ferrandino	Was sent to the Governor for his signature.
Concerning Over expenditures in the Children's Basic Health Plan.		
With the governor's approval, allows expenditures of the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to exceed their appropriation for the Children's Basic Health Plan.		
SB 08-123	Senator Sandoval Representative Madden	Passed out of Appropriations. Will be heard on 2nd Reading.
Concerning a Program to Provide Additional Funding for School Lunch Programs, and Making an Appropriation Therefore.		
Would eliminate the reduced price paid by children in kindergarten through second grade who are eligible for reduced-cost lunches, the students would then receive free lunch.		
SB 08-129	Senator Gibbs Representative Riesberg	Passed out of the House and the Senate concurred with the House amendments. Will go to the Governor for his signature.
Concerning Nutrition in Schools.		
Creates a minimum nutritional requirements for beverages sold in schools. With the amendments, directs the State Board of Education to set the minimum standards.		
SB 08-160	Senator Hagedorn Representative McGihon	Passed out of Appropriations. Will go to the floor for 2nd Reading.
Concerning Improvements to Health Care for Children.		
Increases CHP+ eligibility from 205 percent of the federal poverty level to 225 percent. Enhances the CHP mental health benefit to equal the Medicaid mental health benefit.		
SB 08-161	Senators Boyd and Spence Representative Merrifield	Passed out of Appropriations with a unanimous vote. Will go to the floor for 2nd Reading.
Concerning Eligibility for Public Medical Benefits, and Making an Appropriation Therefore.		
Allows the department to verify income eligibility for Medicaid and CHP+ through Department of Labor and Employment records. Automatically re-enrolls kids on Medicaid and CHP+ if they are still eligible based on administrative verification of income. Charges the SB 07-211 advisory		

committee to look at the feasibility of combining Medicaid and CHP+.		
SB HB-1224	Representative Benefield Senator Tupa	Will go back to the House for concurrence with Senate amendments.
Concerning Wellness Education in Public Schools.		
Expands the Colorado Comprehensive Health Education Act to include local student wellness programs. Allows school districts to apply for grant monies for areas addressing student wellness.		

**Education:**

SB 08-130	Senators Groff and Spence Representatives Witwer and T. Carroll	Passed out of House Education on a 9-4 vote. Will be scheduled in Appropriations.
Concerning Authorization of School District Boards of Education to Implement Policy Innovations in Public Schools, and, in Connection therewith, Enacting the "Innovation Schools Act of 2008."		
Allows a school or group of schools within a school district to apply to the district board of education for approval of an innovative plan that would give schools the flexibility within the decision making process to implement changes in delivery of educational services, personnel administration and budgeting.		
SB 08-173	Senator Williams Representative Todd	Was postponed indefinitely by the bill sponsor. Due to fiscal restraints it was not possible to move this bill forward this year.
Concerning Promoting the Physical Health of Students in Schools, and, in Connection therewith, Creating the Healthy Schools Grant Program and making an Appropriation therefore.		
Creates the healthy schools grant program. Schools may apply for grants from the Department of Education if they meet a series of minimum standards related to school nutrition and physical education. With the amendments, all standards regarding nutrition and physical education and activity will be set by the State Board of Education.		
HB 08-1019	Representative Casso Senator Sandoval	Was sent to the Governor for his signature.
Concerning the Provision of Educational Services for Children in Out-of-Home Placements.		
Requires school districts to appoint an educational liaison for the district. Specifies the number of days that a school district or county program has to transfer the student's educational records. Requires that a school district make certain exceptions in order for a school district to enroll a student as quickly as possible, taking into consideration the safety of other students and staff. Requires certification of the student's coursework. Waives fees that would prohibit a student from participating in activities.		
HB 08-1335	Speaker Romanoff,	Passed out of

	President Groff and Senator Schwartz	Appropriations. Will be heard on 2nd Reading in the Senate.
Concerning State Financial Assistance to Finance Public School Facility Capital Construction.		
Requires a state wide assessment of all public school facilities and creates a mechanism for schools to then apply for financial assistance to repair or replace schools that have the direst health and safety needs across the state.		
HB 08-1336	Representative T. Carroll Senator Spence	Was sent to the Governor for his signature.
Concerning Truant Students in the Kindergarten through the Twelfth Grade Public Education System, and, in Connection therewith, Standardizing Truancy Reporting and Expanding the Resources Available for Support Students to Truant Students.		
Requires the State Board of Education to standardize the calculation of unexcused absences. Requires that school districts annually report the number of habitually truant students and that the information be posted. Also allows certain groups to apply for grants from the expelled and at-risk student services grant program.		
HB 08-1370	Representative Middleton Senator Bacon	Passed out of Appropriations and also 2nd Reading on 4.11.08.
Concerning Increasing the Level of Services Provided by School Counselors to Students in Public Secondary Schools, and, in Connection therewith, Creating the Counselor Corps Grant Program and Making an Appropriation.		
Creates the Counselor Corps Grant Program which would provide grant money to school districts, BOCES programs and charter schools to increase the number of high school counselors and the level of services provided.		

### Early Childhood:

SB08-210	Senator Shaffer Representative Scanlan	Passed out of Senate Appropriations. Will be heard on 2nd Reading.
Concerning Colorado Child Care Assistance Program Provider Reimbursement Rates.		
Sets a floor for Child Care Assistance Program provider reimbursement rates on a county by county basis. Gives the counties flexibility as to how address cost. Will not impact all counties. Its intent is to provide more access to child care for low income, at-risk children whose parents must work. This was amended to give counties five years to phase in the change.		
HB 08-1049	Representative Benefield Senator Groff	Passed out of the House. Will be scheduled for Senate Finance sometime next week.
Concerning the Extension of the Years for which a Taxpayer May Claim the Income Tax Credit for Child Care Facilities.		
Reauthorizes the current child care contribution tax credit through January 2020, allowing a taxpayer to claim a credit for monetary contributions to promote child care.		
HB 08-1265	Representative Todd	Was sent to the Governor for

	Senator Shaffer	his signature.
Concerning Alignment of the Maximum Eligibility Guidelines for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program County Option with the Federal Maximum Eligibility Guideline.		
Aligns the eligibility guidelines for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to align the state eligibility income requirements with the federal economic guidelines. Families whose income does not exceed 85% of the state median income will be eligible for CCAP.		
HB 08-1229	Representative Weissmann Senator Boyd	Was signed by the Governor on 4.10.08.
Concerning Persons Who Provide Temporary Care in a Licensed Family Child Care Home.		
Defines the term "substitute child care provider" to include people who provide temporary care in a family child care home during the absence of the licensed provider and establishes rules for appropriate certifications and background checks. Allows substitute providers to substitute for more than one licensed child care home.		

### Youth:

HB 08-1157	Representative Roberts Senator Windels	Was introduced in the Senate and will be scheduled in the Education committee next week.
Concerning the Creation of a Youth Advisory Council.		
Establishes a youth advisory council to advise and make recommendations to elected officials regarding issues facing youth in Colorado.		

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