



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **CHILDREN FARE WELL IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

### **Colorado Children's Campaign Says Policymakers Prioritized Kids; Access to Quality Health Care and Education Increased for those Most at Risk**

Children in Colorado will have increased access to quality health care, education and early childhood experiences as a result of decisions made during the 2008 legislative session, according to the Colorado Children's Campaign. The Children's Campaign advocates for policies to improve the lives of Colorado's more than one million children and was actively involved in more than 35 bills this session that impacted children's lives.

"State leaders are putting kids first," said Megan Ferland, Colorado Children's Campaign President. "As a result, children who were previously ineligible will see a doctor when they're sick and start kindergarten ready to learn. More children will go to school in buildings that are safe and will have better access to healthy foods at school. We will know how many students are regularly skipping school and are therefore in danger of dropping out."

Among the legislative policies cited as victories for kids by the Children's Campaign are:

- Expansion of full-day kindergarten by about 22,000 more children in the upcoming school year and an increase in capital funding for full-day kindergarten classrooms;
- Passage of the BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) measure that will provide funding and support for communities that are not able to meet the most basic health and safety standards in their public school facilities;
- Expansion of eligibility in the Child Health Plan Plus to 225 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) and removal of barriers to enrollment in the program, which will provide access to and improved care for thousands more children;
- Empowerment of schools and districts to be innovative in their approaches to educating children and implement plans that meet the specific needs of each student;
- Improved health and nutrition for kids through measures that require school districts to set a minimum nutritional standard for beverages sold outside of already-regulated meal programs, including in vending machines, and expanding the use of state grants to improve school nutrition and wellness;
- Reauthorization of the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, set to expire next year, which provides incentives to taxpayers to support early childhood programs and essential resources for continuing these critical services;

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- Improvements in how school districts report habitually truant students to the Colorado Department of Education, information that is critical to predicting students who are most at risk for dropping out;
- Improvements to the Child Care Assistance Program, including allowing children to participate in the program for at least six months if a county lowers eligibility rates, (which makes some families ineligible), and determining Colorado will implement an increase in CCAP provider reimbursement rates, which will increase access to quality care for kids; and
- Significant progress toward aligning P-20 education through the passage of CAP4K.

“These are more than just policies, these are commitments to our children and, ultimately, to our state’s future,” said Ferland. “We look forward to working with the Governor, lawmakers, and future leaders to ensure these policies are implemented the way they were intended and to furthering the momentum around education and health care reform.”

For more information about policy on children’s issues and the Colorado Children’s Campaign, please visit [www.coloradokids.org](http://www.coloradokids.org) or call (303) 839-1580.

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**The Colorado Children’s Campaign works to create hope and opportunity in Colorado – more than one million children at a time. The Campaign is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focusing on expanding access to quality health care, P-20 education and early childhood experiences. For more information, please visit [www.coloradokids.org](http://www.coloradokids.org).**