

# 2015 Legislative Impacts



**COLORADO  
CHILDREN'S  
CAMPAIGN**  
*Every Chance for Every Child*

The Colorado Children's Campaign is the leading voice for kids at the Colorado State Capitol and in communities across the state. For 30 years we've worked with policymakers from every corner of the state and every political perspective to improve the well-being of Colorado kids. We are pleased to see bipartisan support this year in many areas impacting children's lives.

## NEW PROGRESS FOR KIDS



**Budget Wins:** The 2015-16 Budget (SB 15-234, Lambert/Hamner) includes:

- Increased investment in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) to continue implementation of reforms passed last year and an additional \$1.3 million for a 1.7 percent CCCAP provider rate increase.
- \$588,000 for grant and loan programs to improve the safety and quality of family, friend and neighbor care and increased access to licensed child care.
- \$750,000 to improve family support services, including those offered through Family Resource Centers.
- \$306 million in additional K-12 spending, including \$25 million toward the negative factor and an additional \$5 million for at-risk students. A separate bill, HB 15-1321, increases one-time funding for Colorado's 105 small rural districts by \$10 million.
- \$900,000 for support improving teacher effectiveness under SB 10-191.
- \$1.2 million for enhancements and improvements to the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).
- Changes to the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS) to allow the use of annualized income to determine eligibility for Medicaid for families with fluctuating income.



**Pay for Success:** HB 15-1317 (Garnett & Rankin/Johnston & Martinez Humenik) will allow the state to enter into Pay for Success (PFS) contracts to increase access to evidence-based prevention programs and reduce long-term costs to the public. This bill opens the door to new investments in early childhood and prevention-oriented health services for vulnerable children and families.

## PROTECTING PROGRESS



**Making Reasonable Student Assessments Reductions:** HB 15-1323 (Buckner & Wilson/Holbert & Kerr) is a bipartisan solution to student assessment challenges that closely follows the spirit of the HB 14-1202 Standards and Assessments Task Force recommendations. It includes making reasonable reductions in state testing requirements while preserving the important information parents and educators receive from these assessments. In addition to reducing the frequency and number of K-12 assessments, the bill allows schools to request a pencil and paper test format. It also clarifies and extends the full implementation of accountability systems for educators, schools, and districts during the state assessment transition, and allows districts to pilot innovative approaches to assessment.



**Maintaining High Academic Standards and Quality Assessments:** Several bills were defeated that threatened recent innovations in education, such as weakening our state's academic standards and aligned assessments or rolling back key provisions of our educator evaluation and accountability systems. These unsuccessful bills included SB 15-003, SB 15-073, SB 15-233, HB 15-1123, HB 15-1125 and HB 15-1208.



**Ensuring a Transparent, Reliable and Equitable Assessment System:** SB 15-223 (Holbert & Todd/Lebsack & Ransom) was defeated. It would have eliminated penalties for students, educators, schools and districts when parents opt their children out of assessments. The proposal threatened \$350 million in federal support and jeopardized the validity and comparability of student outcomes on assessments.



**Protecting School Breakfast After the Bell:** HB 15-1080 (Joshi/Hill) was defeated. It would have limited full implementation of the successful Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program (passed with bipartisan support in 2013), and reduced the number of students who have access to a free, healthy breakfast after the school day begins.



**Maintaining Safe and High-Quality Child Care:** SB 15-070 (Lundberg/Joshi) was defeated with broad, bipartisan opposition. It would have limited state child care regulation to programs with 10 or more children, eliminating licensing requirements for nearly all family child care homes in Colorado, including criminal background checks, training requirements, sex offender registry and child abuse and neglect record checks, jeopardizing the safety of young children.



2015 KIDS COUNT in Colorado! release and press conference



Speak Up For Kids Day at the Capitol



KIDS COUNT Doll Day 2015

## MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

**Access to Effective Contraception:** HB 15-1194 (Becker & Coram/Hodge) was defeated. It would have continued the highly successful Colorado Family Planning Initiative that provided long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) to low-income women and teens. Between 2009 and 2013, when the Colorado Family Planning Initiative was successful in making LARCs more widely available, the birth rate among all women in Colorado ages 15 to 19 dropped 40 percent. Reducing the rate of unintended pregnancies supports the health and well-being of women and children and empowers women to attain their education, helping create financially secure and self-sufficient families.

**Scholarships for Early Childhood Educators:** HB 15-1001 (Pettersen & Garnett/Todd) was defeated. It would have helped early childhood educators access scholarship opportunities to earn new credentials and strengthen the early childhood workforce.

**Expanded Access to Early Learning:** HB 15-1020 (Wilson) and SB 15-033 (Kerr) would have increased funding for full-day kindergarten and HB 15-1024 (Pettersen & McCann/Kefalas & Todd) would have added 3,000 slots to the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP), one of our state's most effective, proven solutions to providing quality early experiences, but all three efforts failed.

**Teen Pregnancy and Dropout Prevention:** HB 15-1079 (Coram & Danielson/Roberts) was defeated. It would have expanded a successful pilot program for teen pregnancy and dropout prevention. The program provides counseling programs to assist Medicaid eligible at-risk teens in making responsible, reproductive health choices, while preventing unintended pregnancies.

**Maternal Mortality:** HB 15-1111 (McCann/Crowder) was defeated. It would have created the Colorado maternal mortality review committee to review cases where Colorado women die during pregnancy or in the year following birth, to identify the causes of death and to develop recommendations to prevent further maternal mortalities. Preventing maternal mortality is essential to supporting young and vulnerable children.

**Highly Effective Teachers in Low Performing Schools:** HB 15-1200 (Priola/Hill) was defeated. It would have provided highly effective teachers to work in elementary, middle or junior high schools with priority improvement or turnaround plans.

**Innovative Measures of Student Growth:** HB 15-1324 (Young & Danielson/Kerr & Scott) was defeated. It would have created a consortium through which local education providers could meet and exchange information, expertise and best practices for designing and implementing student learning objectives. The objectives are educator-created goals for student learning that are a feasible alternative to standardized assessment for measuring student academic growth.

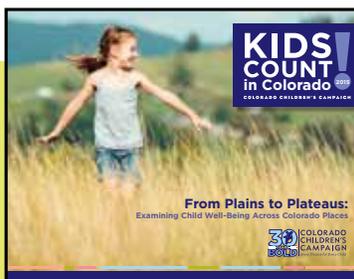
**School Finance Reform:** HB 15-1334 (Hamner & Rankin/Kerr & Hill) was defeated. It would have created an interim legislative oversight committee to review our outdated school finance formula and made recommendations for the components of a new school finance system in Colorado.

**State Budget Flexibility:** HB 15-1389 (Hullingshorst & Court/Steadman) was defeated. It would have transferred the Hospital Provider Fee to a state-owned enterprise within the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, to create flexibility in the budget for key priorities including K-12 education, higher education and transportation.

**High Quality School Options:** SB 15-216 (Hill/Fields) was defeated. It would have allowed the state Charter School Institute (CSI) to open new schools within a district that has been on the state's priority improvement or turnaround "clock" for three or more consecutive school years, creating the opportunity for high quality school options for students in all districts.

### Get the Facts!

To download or purchase a copy of the 2015 KIDS COUNT in Colorado! report visit [www.coloradokids.org/data](http://www.coloradokids.org/data).



### Stay Informed!

Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter, KidsFlash, and get the updates and information you need to advocate for kids!

Visit our Election Center this summer for district-specific fact sheets you can use to inform elected officials about Colorado kids.

[www.coloradokids.org/action](http://www.coloradokids.org/action)

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