



# HB 16-1227: Colorado Child Care Assistance Program

## Eligibility Criteria for Teen Parents and Domestic Violence Survivors

Reps. Kagan & DelGrosso/Sens. Hill & Crowder

### THE ISSUE

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**The number one barrier preventing teen mothers from completing high school is access to child care.** In 2014, 3,387 babies were born to teen mothers in Colorado. The dropout rate nationwide for teen mothers is over 62%. A lack of child care inevitably forces young moms to drop out, continuing the cycle of poverty and need for continued government assistance for herself and her children. A similar dynamic prevents domestic violence survivors of all ages from affording child care so they can achieve economic self-sufficiency and independence.

### THE CHALLENGE

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) provides low-income families with access to child care so they can get into the workforce, off government assistance, and on the path to self-sufficiency. CCCAP helps two generations break the cycle of poverty by giving parents the opportunity to get the education and training they need to find employment while also providing access to an early childhood education for their children, setting them up for success in Kindergarten. **However, CCCAP is often inaccessible to those who need it most — specifically teen mothers and domestic violence survivors.** In nearly every county in Colorado, a teen mother or a domestic violence survivor must first take the baby's biological father to court or obtain administrative action for child support before they can access CCCAP assistance. This is an insurmountable barrier for many of these young people and domestic violence survivors, many of whom often live in unstable situations and lack the skills and self-confidence necessary to comply with this requirement.

### THE SOLUTION

**Exempt teen moms and domestic violence survivors from the child support engagement requirement as a condition of receiving CCCAP.** This well-intended requirement has made the program often inaccessible to parents and their children at a sensitive time in their lives. An exemption only for teen parents and domestic violence survivors of all ages would maintain the requirement for the vast majority of participants in the program while permitting those at one of the most sensitive periods in their lives still have a path to self-sufficiency.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CCCAP funds are made available only for specific purposes including education, training or other activities that facilitate participation or re-entry into the workforce. The program is administered through county departments of human services under the direction of the Colorado Department of Human Services. Counties set eligibility requirements for families. With this legislation in place, policymakers can direct counties to align their eligibility requirements. The legislation *does not require counties to serve more people*; it simply changes the eligibility requirement for new applicants trying to access child care assistance. Funding sources for CCCAP include a mixture of federal, state, and county dollars, as well as parent fees which are set by the state on a sliding scale.

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# Breaking the Cycle of Poverty for TWO Generations

Florence Crittenton Services is a Colorado non-profit that educates, prepares and empowers teen mothers and their children to become productive members of the community. Our comprehensive, two-generation approach provides academic, social-emotional and health support for pregnant and parenting girls, along with Early Childhood Education for children ages six weeks through Pre-K.



## Teen Mom Graduation Rates

38%

National Average

94%

Florence Crittenton Services

## 2015 Results

**94%** of eligible seniors graduated from high school

**93%** of children reached or surpassed their development milestones for kindergarten-readiness

**96%** of graduates had post-secondary plans

**95%** of children up-to-date on well-child checks

**100%** of children were up to date on immunizations.

## Florence Crittenton Services' Model for Success



## SUPPORTERS

- Florence Crittenton Services
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Mile High United Way
- Women's Foundation of Colorado
- Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Aurora Public Schools
- Denver Public Schools
- Adams County
- Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry (CACI)
- National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB)
- Denver Women's Collaborative
- New Legacy Charter School
- Colorado League of Charter Schools
- Charter School Institute
- Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Denver
- Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Pueblo
- Colorado Catholic Conference
- American Association of University Women, Col. Spgs.
- Colorado Parent & Child Foundation
- Aspen Community Foundation
- SafeHouse Denver
- Junior League of Denver
- Women's Collaborative for Colorado
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Colorado Head Start Association
- Clayton Early Learning
- Qualistar Colorado
- Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado
- CWEE
- 9to5 Colorado
- Colorado Center on Law and Policy
- All Families Deserve A Chance Coalition
- Stand for Children Colorado
- Bell Policy Center
- Hope House of Colorado
- Democrats for Education Reform-CO
- Mile High Montessori Early Learning Centers
- Lutheran Family Services, Rocky Mountains
- The Kempe Foundation
- Mt. Sopris Montessori School
- Valley Settlement Project
- Colorado Succeeds
- Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children
- Bright By Three
- Aspen to Parachute's Cradle to Career Initiative
- Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health
- The Gathering Place
- Early Learning Ventures
- Mountain BOCES
- Yampah Mountain High School
- Opportunity Coalition
- Colorado Parent Teacher Association
- Early Childhood Summit