The 2018 election will be pivotal for Colorado kids. We’re electing a new governor and lieutenant governor. Dozens of new and returning legislators will be sent to Denver and Washington, D.C. to represent Colorado communities. And, as always, there will be several ballot measures for voters to consider.

We’ve compiled a guide to this election to help Coloradans understand what is at stake for our children. We hope you use the Campaign for Kids 2018 Election Guide to help you understand the issues, learn how you can talk to candidates for elected office about them, and how you can encourage candidates who want to represent you to learn about these issues and champion solutions as they take office in 2019.

The first part of the guide is an overview of Colorado child well-being to help you and your candidates understand the trends and issues affecting kids. This is a shortened version of our comprehensive 2018 KIDS COUNT in Colorado! report, which you can find in full on our website.

The second part of the guide is a series of fact sheets on key issues. From child care to equity, and health insurance to school finance, we’ve compiled these cheat sheets to give you the most relevant information on the issues. On the back of each sheet is a series of suggested questions for you to ask candidates to learn more about their positions on kids issues—and which you can also use to educate them.
WHAT’S AT STAKE IN THE 2018 ELECTIONS

All elections are important. In some years, however, we have a chance to make a bigger impact on kids’ lives when we have state-wide elections. Here are some of the offices that will be up for election on Nov. 8, 2018, and what impact that position has on Colorado kids.

Governor: This will be the biggest race of the election because it is an open seat. The two major party candidates will have a lot of support across the state and nationally, and because Colorado is a swing state, it could go to either major party candidate. The governor of Colorado is the chief executive of all the state’s departments and services. In addition to running departments like human services and health, the governor executes the laws and budgets that the legislature enacts. He or she has the power to veto legislation approved by the state legislature. Candidates for the lieutenant governor of Colorado will be named by the gubernatorial candidates after the primary election, and they run together for the seats as a team.

Other state-wide offices in this election: Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, State Board of Education, State Board of Regents. Many of these seats are open and will have competitive races.

State Senators: Seventeen of the 35 districts of the Colorado State Senate will be up for election in 2018. Some will have an incumbent returning to the office, but many will have a new person sitting in the seat who needs to hear about issues facing kids. State senators work with state representatives to set the state budget priorities that greatly affect education, health, safety and development of our children. They also craft new laws or amend existing laws that impact every Colorado child and their families.

State Representatives: All of the 65 seats in the Colorado House of Representatives will be up for election. Like the Senate, many will see the return of an incumbent but many more will see a fresh face due to term limits. Like state senators, representatives have a lot of influence on policy and spending affecting kids. You may be more likely to be able to take directly with candidates for these seats in your community since the districts are smaller.

U.S. House of Representatives: All seven of the seats that Colorado holds in the U.S. House of Representatives will be up for election in 2018. All but one or two districts will have an incumbent with a very high chance of being re-elected. That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t reach out to him or her, as well as the challengers, and share your priorities for kids as they continue their time representing you in Washington, D.C. Our U.S. Representatives have significant influence on policies and spending that impact kids, including setting budgets for federal services and programs that impact all Colorado kids and families.

Ballot Measures: We won’t know for sure which ballot measures will appear on the November 2018 ballot until late summer. Signature-gathering, court hearings, and fundraising all have a big impact on which measures make it through. The Colorado Children’s Campaign will endorse or oppose some of the measures impacting Colorado kids and we’ll publish those positions on our website as the measures are added to the ballot. Visit www.coloradokids.org to learn more.

HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS:

Inform yourself: We all benefit when voters know the facts and research about issues facing kids—and the solutions available to address them.

Inform your candidate: Keep these resources at hand so you can ask candidates about these issues when they come to your door, or when you see them in the community.

Inform your community: Share what you’ve learned with friends and family members and let them know these issues are important to you—and ask them to join you in making sure candidates learn about them, too. The more voices we have speaking up for kids, the more likely candidates will listen.

Want copies of this toolkit or the 2018 Election Guide to distribute in your community? Visit www.cokidsvote.org.
Can my organization endorse candidates? If you are a 401(k) organization the answer is no. And you should be careful about releasing any information that might imply that if a candidate agrees with your organization’s priorities that a voter should support that candidate.

Can I engage with candidates if I’m a non-profit or public employee? Yes! Individuals are not held to the same regulations as the nonprofits they may be affiliated with, and have the freedom and opportunity to interact directly with candidates. However, as employees or board members of a nonprofit, there are still considerations you should keep in mind as you engage in electoral advocacy. When acting as an individual, the simplest way to avoid 501(c)(3) violations is to ask yourself: Could anyone potentially mistake this post as a position of my organization rather than my own personal beliefs?

Should I still reach out even if my elected representative is returning to office? Definitely. Incumbents represent you just as much as a new representative. Share information about child well-being with him or her to make kids a priority for every elected official.

What are some examples of how I can engage with my candidates? There is a huge range of activities we suggest. From least intensive to most intensive, here are some ideas:

- Call your candidate
- Engage with your candidates on social media platforms, sign up for action alerts at www.coloradokids.org and take action when we send alerts
- Stay up-to-date on issues facing kids
- Send letters or emails to your candidates asking about their positions on child well-being
- Attend a town hall or campaign event with your candidates and ask questions
- Write a letter to the editor or submit a guest column to your local newspaper
- Host a house party or special event to share information about child well-being with your friends and family
HELPFUL RESOURCES

We all play a role in ensuring voters have accurate information about our elections and voting systems. Here are resources we recommend for Colorado voters, and we encourage you to help spread the word.

• How to vote in Colorado: [www.justvotecolorado.org](http://www.justvotecolorado.org)
• How to register to vote: [www.govotecolorado.com](http://www.govotecolorado.com)
• Election dates and results: [www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/](http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/)