NEW PROGRESS FOR KIDS

✓ **Full-day kindergarten:** HB19-1262 (Wilson & McLachlan/Bridges & Fields) provides funding for full-day kindergarten for any Colorado family that chooses it.

✓ **Preschool expansion:** HB19-1262 also increases access to the Colorado Preschool Program by more than 5,200 slots, the single largest year-over-year expansion of preschool in the history of the state.

✓ **2020 Census outreach grants:** HB19-1239 (Tipper & Caraveo/Winter & Priola) creates the Census Outreach Grant Program to support an accurate count of all Coloradans in the 2020 Census.

✓ **Early childhood educator tax credit:** HB19-1005 (Buckner & Wilson/Todd & Priola) establishes a new tax credit, tied to credential level, for early childhood educators working at qualified home and center-based programs.

✓ **CHP+ dental benefits for pregnant individuals:** HB19-1038 (Duran & Lontine/Ginal & Story) will provide dental insurance for the 900 pregnant Coloradans who use Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) for their health insurance each year.

✓ **Eliminate co-pay for high school lunches:** HB19-1171 (Michaelson Jenet/Fields & Priola) eliminates the lunch co-pay for high school students eligible for reduced-price lunch. With this change Colorado no longer charges reduced-price lunch copays in public schools.

✓ **Family and infant child care action plan:** SB19-063 (Priola & Story/Buentello & A. Valdez) requires state leaders to develop a plan to address declining availability of infant care and family child care homes in Colorado.

✓ **Maternal Mortality Review Committee:** HB19-1122 (Buckner & Landgraf/Fields & Gardner) funds, authorizes, diversifies and bolsters the panel of experts who examine maternal deaths in Colorado and provides recommendations to the legislature on how to prevent maternal deaths and other adverse maternal outcomes.

✓ **Early childhood school removal:** HB19-1194 (Lontine & Larson/Fields & Priola) reduces unnecessary out-of-school suspension and expulsion of young children from school.

✓ **Local School District Accountability:** SB19-204 (Story & Arndt/Bird) creates grants to support innovative local accountability systems that supplement and inform the state accountability system.

✓ **Substance use disorder prevention:** SB19-228 (Winter & Moreno/Buentello & Singer) creates pilot programs to prevent and treat substance use disorders and mental health conditions among pregnant and postpartum individuals.

✓ **Early childhood development special districts:** HB19-1052 (McCluskie & Rich/Bridges & Rankin) will allow local communities to collaborate to establish special districts to provide early childhood education, health, and family support services.

✓ **Educator loan forgiveness:** SB19-003 (Zenzinger & Coram/McLachlan & Wilson) expands and funds a loan forgiveness program for teachers serving in hard-to-fill positions due to geography or content area.

**Budget Wins:**

✓ An increase of $182.9 million to fund full-day kindergarten.

✓ $25 million in one-time funding to support districts’ implementation of full-day kindergarten and preschool expansion.

✓ An increase of $10.5 million for Colorado Department of Human Services to continue to provide quality child care via the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program.

✓ New flexibility for family planning program spending so that the state can explore all options to maintain access to family planning services as new federal rules roll out over the next year.

✓ More than $1 million increase to protect and expand access to family planning programs.

✓ Nearly $1 million for a child support employment pilot program that provides employment support services to noncustodial parents who owe child support.

✓ An increase of $325.7 million in K-12 financing, including a $100 million reduction in the “budget stabilization factor.”

✓ One-time investments of $20 million for rural schools and $22 million for special education students with severe needs (Tier B).

✓ An infusion of $7 million into the Mill Levy Equalization Fund to improve funding equality for schools authorized by the Charter School Institute.

✓ A $4.4 million investment in maternity services in the Medicaid program to ensure access to critical maternity care, and improve quality.
PROTECTING PROGRESS

Teacher evaluations: SB19-247 (Story/Arndt & Bird), if not defeated, would have reduced the percentage of educator evaluations associated with objective student achievement data from 50 percent to 30 percent without a clear rationale for the change.

Health and safety standards for school-based child care: SB19-104 (Holbert & Foote/Baisley & Gray), if not amended, would have undermined standards for health and safety for children receiving care at school-based sites.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Taxpayer equality: Members of the Joint Budget Committee discussed proposals to fix Colorado’s uneven property tax system and improve the adequacy of K-12 funding. This included equalizing property tax rates for education by creating a level system of taxation, and equalizing school districts’ ability to raise funds through mill levy overrides. Unfortunately, the proposals were not introduced this year, although the JBC directed committee staff to explore the ideas further before the next session.

Gallagher solution: Legislators did not advance any bills to repeal and replace the Gallagher Amendment despite the recommendations of an interim legislative committee. Gallagher is a constitutional trigger that has led to automatic property tax cuts that have limited the revenue for K-12 education and other priorities.

Child Tax Credit: HB19-1164 (Singer/Zenzinger & Priola) would have funded our state Child Tax Credit targeted to families with children under the age of 6 and struggling to make ends meet.

Immunizations: HB19-1312 (Mullica/Gonzales & Priola) would have preserved both personal belief and religious exemptions while requiring parents taking non-medical exemptions to submit these forms to a public health agency.

Nicotine & tobacco tax referred measure: HB19-1333 (Caraveo/Fields) would have asked voters to increase taxes for tobacco and nicotine (including vaping) to fund health care access and affordability, behavioral health, out-of-school learning, and preschool.

GET THE FACTS

Looking for data on Colorado kids and families? Visit the KIDS COUNT Data Center for the most up-to-date sources of information on demographics, outcomes and more. Visit datacenter.kidscount.org/CO

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