Career & Education Pathways for the Early Childhood Education Workforce

**HB 20-1053**

Early Childhood & School Readiness Legislative Commission Bill A
Reps. Sirota & Wilson/Sen. Story

**What is the problem?**

- Colorado’s working parents can’t get to work without early childhood educators.
- Demand for early childhood educators is expected to **increase by nearly 20% in the next 10 years**. That is faster than the anticipated growth for K-12 educators.
- Colorado has not adequately supported the development of qualified early childhood educators—and faces a significant shortage.
- 70% of child care center directors report finding qualified staff as a top challenge, with an average of 2.5 months to fill vacant positions. This leaves classrooms empty and working parents without options.
- The challenges of child care access, affordability, and quality can only be addressed by building a system of support and development for early care and education teachers.

**HB 20-1053 Improves Career & Education Pathways**

1. Catapults qualified, aspiring early childhood educators into classrooms by streamlining teacher licensing systems and easing administrative paperwork burdens and requirements.
2. Establishes a scholarship and grant program to recruit and retain early childhood educators.
3. Builds an apprenticeship program for early childhood educators.

**Limited Child Care Capacity in Colorado**

Colorado only has licensed early care and education capacity for roughly 60% of the 247,000 children under 6 years old with all parents in the workforce. Providers identify the **unavailability of qualified teachers as the most influential factor in limiting capacity.**

**Impacts on Families**

More than 12% of Colorado children under 6 had a parent who reported that they or another family member had to quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change their job because of problems with child care.

**Impact on Businesses**

With the unemployment rate as low as 2 percent in some communities, finding candidates to fill open positions is already a challenge. If child care supply can’t meet demand in these areas, employers will struggle even more to attract and retain a qualified workforce.

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How will HB 20-1053 address these problems?

Streamlined pathways to the classroom for aspiring educators

- Allows programs to be licensed while educators complete a credential.
- Incorporates prior experience and demonstrated skills in credentialing.
- Supports concurrent enrollment, career pathways, and alternative routes for aspiring educators.

Early education recruitment and retention scholarships and grants

- Enables local strategies to recruit and retain qualified educators.
- Funds an array of individuals, non-profits, licensed programs, and institutes of higher education to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Covers higher education costs, credentials, training and mentorship, and “grow-your-own” programs.
- Evaluates program by tracking outcomes achieved by grant recipients.

Early educator apprenticeship program

- Creates work-based learning opportunities to promote on-the-job training, classroom instruction, and financial rewards for skill gains, credentials and degrees.
- Supports an array of entities in growing or creating apprenticeships so people can learn while they earn.

Supporters of HB 20-1053

Colorado Children’s Campaign
The Women’s Foundation of Colorado
Bell Policy Center
Clayton Early Learning
Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children (COAEYC)
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Colorado Head Start Association
Colorado Jewish ECE Initiative
Community Partnership for Child Development (CPCD)
Council for A Strong America
Denver’s Early Childhood Council
Eagle County Government
Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA)
Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County
Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)
Florence Crittenton Services
Healthy Child Care Colorado
Mental Health Colorado
Mile High Early Learning
Mile High United Way
National Skills Coalition
Parent Possible
Project Self-Sufficiency
Raise Colorado Coalition
Skills2Compete—Colorado
Spring Institute
Teen Parent Collaborative
WorkLife Partnership

Who Will Benefit?

Children

Quality early experiences lay the foundation for a lifetime of success. A child’s brain undergoes a remarkable period of growth from birth to three years—producing more than 1 million new neural connections every second. This brain development is influenced by a child’s relationships, experiences and environment and the better supported the EC workforce is, the better children’s experiences will be.

Families

Most young children have all parents in the workforce, making early care and education a reality in today’s economy. Access to quality early care and education is severely limited by low numbers of qualified early educators. Creating multiple pathways to the classroom that can work in Colorado’s diverse communities can ease the child care and pre-school burden by expanding the supply of early care and education options for families.

Colorado’s Economy

Early care and education has tremendous spillover benefits for Colorado’s economic development; for each new child care job created in our state, more than 1.5 additional jobs are created in the larger state economy.

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