

HB 20-1011 – Helping Others Manage Early Childhood Act
Testimony to the House Education Committee
February 4, 2020

Thank you Madame Chair and thank you to Representatives Wilson and Buckner for introducing this important bill. My name is Bill Jaeger and I am the Vice President of Early Childhood and Policy Initiatives at the Colorado Children’s Campaign. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 20-1011 to

Accessing some form of formal or informal care is a need that families rely on today:

- Early care and education is a reality for Colorado families: 3 out of 5 Colorado children under 6 have all parents in the workforce.
- Almost two-thirds of mothers with children under 6 are working outside the home, compared with fewer than one in 10 in 1940—a sevenfold increase.
- Nearly three in 10 mothers now return to work within two months of their baby’s birth, and almost 40% with an infant under a year old are employed full time.

This means that working families today, and increasingly so, rely on various forms of care to support their children’s healthy development so that they can work. We also know that this time period is one of critical development.

- The early childhood period (birth to age 5) is a time of rapid brain development, with one million new connections forming every second. Early experiences play a large role in determining how brain connections are formed and in the “wiring” that becomes the foundation upon which all later learning is built.ⁱ
- The learning gap between advantaged and at-risk children exists as early as 9 months of age. At-risk children can start kindergarten as much as 18 months behind their peers. Many of these children never catch up, and are at an increased risk of dropping out of high school.ⁱⁱ
- Despite the body of evidence supporting the brain science of the early years and the demonstrated impact of various early learning interventions, many children enter the schoolhouse doors at 5 or 6 years old unprepared for success. And those who arrive behind tend to stay behind.ⁱⁱⁱ

This bill recognizes that supporting whatever setting a child’s family chooses – whether it be a family member, friend, neighbor, or licensed program – can access support to understand strategies to support children’s school readiness. This bill is about supporting a mixed delivery system that provides transparency to families’ choices and ensuring that all parents who need care for their children, regardless of the setting they choose, are placing their children on a path to school readiness.

We thank the sponsor for bringing this bill forward and encourage your support of this bill and are happy to answer any questions you might have.

ⁱ Center on the Developing Child Harvard University (n.d.). Brain architecture <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>

ⁱⁱ Barnett, W.S., Tarr, J.E., Lamy, C., & Frede, E.C. 2001. Fragile lives, shattered dreams: A report on implementation of preschool education in New Jersey’s Abbott Districts. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nickmorrison/2016/11/30/by-the-time-they-start-school-for-some-children-its-already-too-late/#55a70864a21e>