



The Colorado Children's Campaign serves as the leading voice for kids and families at the state capitol and in communities across the state. For almost four decades, we've worked with policymakers across various political perspectives to ensure every chance for every child. Children's issues aren't partisan, and our work proves we are all capable of systemic solutions when we work together.

## OUR PRIORITY POLICIES

### **Health: Family & Child Health Coverage Improvements**

Health insurance coverage during pregnancy and childhood can help reduce maternal and infant mortality and improve long-term educational outcomes. Expanding health insurance coverage is a growing priority for immigrant communities across the state. Colorado has an opportunity to expand comprehensive health insurance coverage to undocumented pregnant and postpartum people and children and to protect undocumented Coloradans from high-cost sharing in private plans. Doing so would draw down millions in federal funds and allow us to improve the health care system for all Colorado families.

### **Health: Behavioral & Social-Emotional Well-Being**

The School Health Professional Grant Program provides funding for schools to increase the number of health professionals and support the behavioral health of all students. However, every year, the Colorado Department of Education receives more requests for funding than it can fulfill. Increased funding would allow CDE to approve additional applications, allowing more schools and districts to provide behavioral health supports for students. Additionally, the state should support comprehensive suicide prevention strategies for students.

### **K-12 Education: Equitable & Student-Centered Funding for Schools**

Modernizing and improving how our schools and students are resourced is the first and most fundamental step to removing structural barriers to opportunity and improving student outcomes. Colorado has an opportunity to update the way we define and provide adequate resources to students experiencing economic disadvantage. In addition, the state can play a role in supporting low property wealth districts that struggle to raise revenue via mill levy overrides – a growing source of funding inequity between districts.

### **K-12 Education: Supportive School Climates**

Schools are centers for academic development and well-being. Research indicates that students are better able to learn when they feel safe and supported by peers and adults. The term "school climate" encompasses essential indicators of student and staff health, safety, and achievement that can be better defined and measured. Additionally, policies and devoted resources can ensure that every student learns in a positive, safe, and inclusive environment.



### **Early Childhood: Unified Early Childhood System & Universal Pre-K Implementation**

Building on the successes of Proposition EE and House Bill 21-1304 which called for a robust, community-informed transition process to establish a new state agency focused on early childhood, Colorado is ready to consolidate its various early childhood programs currently scattered across state agencies into the new Colorado Department of Early Childhood. In addition, Colorado will establish a single, voluntary universal preschool program that will ease the burdens currently placed on both parents and providers, and uplift parent choice of provider through a robust mixed-delivery system.

### **Early Childhood: Educator Tax Credit for Recruitment, Retention, & Compensation**

Colorado's recovery from the pandemic and economic downturn hinges on ensuring parents can return to work. Access to child care is a necessary work support and child development investment, but disruptions in care arrangements harm workforce participation, especially among women and people of color. Many providers are struggling to keep their doors open and, sadly, many have closed their doors permanently at a time when access to child care is more important than ever. Funding Colorado's Early Childhood Educator Tax Credit encourages early childhood professionals to improve their skills as educators, improves compensation of the early childhood workforce, and increases access to child care for families.

## Family Economic Security: Improvements to Colorado's TANF Program

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), known here as Colorado Works, provides critical support to Colorado children and families experiencing extreme poverty. TANF basic cash assistance (BCA) helps families pay for necessities like diapers, food, clothing, and rent. The cost of these necessities increases every year, but BCA payments in Colorado do not. In addition, improvements to TANF are needed to make sure the program is serving families as best as it can.



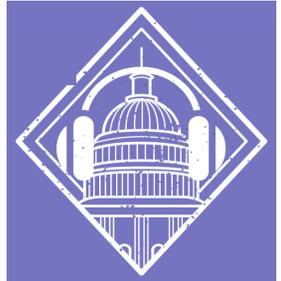
## Housing: Eviction Legal Defense Funding

Unstable housing has severe negative impacts on the health and well-being of kids and families, and families with children face eviction at significantly higher rates. Renters who have access to legal counsel during an eviction proceeding are significantly more likely to remain in their homes. Additional funding for eviction legal defense is needed to provide legal representation to families facing eviction across the state so that every Colorado family has a safe place to call home.



**SPEAK UP FOR KIDS AT THE CAPITOL** Our annual advocacy day will be March 17, 2022, in partnership with Clayton Early Learning and Children's Hospital Colorado. This virtual event will provide training and coaching to help advocates speak up about the issues they care about. For more information, contact Jacy Montoya Price at 303-620-4547 or [jacy@coloradokids.org](mailto:jacy@coloradokids.org).

**STAY INFORMED** The West Steps is our podcast that digs into the policies affecting kids, with insights and analysis from our staff, partners, and advocates in the field. Look for The West Steps every week during the legislative session on Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen.



**CONNECT WITH US** The It's About Kids Network is the Colorado Children's Campaign's statewide advocacy network. More than 70 volunteer community leaders provide guidance and direction to thousands of child advocates by hosting presentations in their communities and activating Coloradans to speak up on behalf of kids. To learn more, contact Katie Creedon at 303-620-4532 or [katie@coloradokids.org](mailto:katie@coloradokids.org).



**SIGN UP FOR KIDSFLASH** Our weekly e-newsletter features the latest on child well-being in Colorado. During the legislative session, our staff analyze hundreds of bills affecting kids and families and provide free updates and analysis in our weekly Capitol Updates. Sign up at [coloradokids.org](http://coloradokids.org). You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn.

