

Pivots from Tough Questions



You might get questions from lawmakers about the legislation and priorities that you are talking about today. The most important thing to remember is to answer truthfully and succinctly. Quickly answer the question and pivot back to your talking points to stay on topic. Here are a few of the questions you might encounter and some quick pivot statements. If there is anything you do not know or feel prepared to answer, tell your legislator you will look into it and get back to him or her.

Department of Early Childhood

Q: Why do we need a new government agency to oversee early childhood? Doesn't this just create more government bureaucracy?

A: Right now, the early childhood system is fragmented and difficult to navigate. With universal pre-k implementation beginning in Colorado, it is critical to streamline and unite early childhood programs across the state so that services can be delivered in an efficient and effective manner.

Q: Haven't we put enough money into early childhood lately?

A: For every dollar spent in the Colorado early care and education sector, \$2.25 is contributed to the state's economy. For every job created in the Colorado early care and education sector, 1.5 jobs are created in the state's economy.

Cover all Coloradans

Q: Isn't it expensive for taxpayers to cover the cost of insurance for Coloradans who are undocumented?

A: Without health insurance, many families are one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Insurance coverage improves socioeconomic security, health status, mental health, and access to health care. It also decreases infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Kids with health insurance coverage are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to graduate from college, and have higher incomes as adults. The ongoing pandemic has exposed the disparities that communities of color face when they are routinely and systemically denied access to the care they need. Expanding access to all children and pregnant and postpartum people, regardless of immigration status, is fundamental to achieving health equity in Colorado. Communities of color in Colorado experience some of the biggest disparities in health care.

Child and Youth Mental Health

Q: Recently, national groups have released state rankings for Colorado illustrating that adult mental health is far worse than it is for kids in the state, so it's only fair that adult mental health funding is prioritized.

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A: Some of the national rankings are using pre-pandemic data that does not align with what families and providers are reporting in terms of mental health trends pertaining to acuity and demand for services. Yet, we agree that the entire system needs significant investments. Given the lifelong value of prevention and early intervention, children and young adults should ideally get extra investments in their early years. By allocating one-third, or \$150 million, of the funds to this population, you can help ensure that young people receive proportional funding, especially given that those under age 24 make up 31% of the Colorado population.