KIDS COUNT in Colorado!

Highlights from the 2022 Edition
August 17, 2022

COLORADO CHILDREN’S CAMPAIGN
Every Chance for Every Child
About KIDS COUNT in Colorado!

• Part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s national KIDS COUNT project
• Tracks child well-being at the state and county levels
• Provides decision makers and child advocates with quality, non-biased information about the status of children and families
The 2022 edition of KIDS COUNT in Colorado! is made possible through the support of our generous funders:
The more visible signs of the pandemic may have faded, but kids and families are still feeling its impact.

Photo Credit: Daniel Kim/Sacramento Bee/ZUMA Wire.
The more visible signs of the pandemic may have faded, but kids and families are still feeling its impact.
The more visible signs of the pandemic may have faded, but kids and families are still feeling its impact.

Photo Credit: Jeffrey Basinger/Newsday via Getty Images.
As of March 2022, COVID-19’s direct impacts on kids and families were staggering.

**COVID-19 SNAPSHOT**

- **1.3 million** confirmed COVID-19 cases among Coloradans
- **13,300** COVID-19 deaths among Coloradans
- **265,000** COVID-19 cases among Colorado kids
- **2,200** Colorado kids hospitalized with COVID-19
- **31** child deaths in Colorado due to COVID-19

Sources: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the American Academy of Pediatrics.
Together, we must ensure our leaders keep the ongoing needs of kids and families at the forefront.
Notes on the 2022 report:

• Experimental estimates from the ACS, resulting lack of comparability

• Challenges for advocates in the years ahead
Prior to the pandemic, Colorado’s child poverty rate had fallen to its lowest level since 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.
Major disruptions to data collection in 2020 limit our ability to understand how Colorado’s child poverty rate changed during the pandemic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 ACS Experimental Estimates.

*2020 estimates are not comparable to previous years of data.
Other indicators point to ongoing economic hardship for Colorado families with children.

Unemployment rate in Colorado, seasonally adjusted, select months

- February 2020: 2.8%
- April 2020: 12.1%
- December 2021: 4.8%

Other indicators point to ongoing economic hardship for Colorado families with children.

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Among Colorado households with children:

- About 1/2 reported a loss of household income since the start of the pandemic.
- As of early 2022, about 1/3 reported difficulty paying for usual household expenses, including medical care or food.


16% increase in the number of people in families with children in Colorado shelters between 2020 and 2021.

Policy choices made during the pandemic kept millions of U.S. children out of poverty and helped Colorado families meet basic needs for food, housing and school supplies.

Common uses of Advance Child Tax Credit payments among Colorado households who reported receiving them, select time periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Use</th>
<th>August 4 - August 30, 2021</th>
<th>December 1 - December 13, 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School books and supplies</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and telecommunications</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle payments</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying down debt</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings or investments</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Strategies for Supporting Family Economic Security

Make meaningful public investments in income supports for families.
• TANF basic cash assistance
• Child Tax Credit
• Direct cash assistance

Include a focus on families with children in housing policy solutions.
• Prevent evictions
• Provide proximity to community benefits
• Ensure avenues to home ownership
Colorado’s important progress with reducing the child uninsured rate had stalled in the years before the pandemic.
Comparability issues in 2020 make it difficult to understand where we are now.

Children under 19 who are uninsured, 2020*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2020 estimates are not comparable to previous years.
Children and families accessed care at lower rates amid the disruptions of COVID-19.

- **8%**
  - Drop in routine, non-COVID vaccine doses for CO children during the pandemic.
  - Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

- **27%**
  - Percent of parents reporting their child had missed a well-child or well-baby visit since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Source: University of Oregon, RAPID-EC Survey.

- **93%** vs **85%**
  - Drop in Colorado parents reporting their child had seen a healthcare professional in the last 12 months.
  - Source: Colorado Health Institute, Colorado Health Access Survey.

- **46%**
  - Percent of Colorado birthing parents with children ages 0 to 3 who reported their mental health had gotten worse since the onset of the pandemic.
  - Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Health eMoms Survey.

8 percentage point drop in Colorado parents reporting their child had seen a healthcare professional in the last 12 months.
At some points during the pandemic, nearly 2 in 5 households with children reported their kids weren’t eating enough because food was unaffordable.

Colorado households with children where children were not eating enough because food was unaffordable, June 2020—March 2022

Nearly 18 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics and other partners declared children’s mental health a national emergency.

![Graph showing rates of suicide among Colorado youth by age group (per 100,000 youth), 2010-2020.]

Rates of suicide among Colorado youth by age group (per 100,000 youth), 2010-2020

- **15- to 19-year-olds**
  - 2010: 11.5
  - 2011: 11.5
  - 2012: 11.5
  - 2013: 11.5
  - 2014: 11.5
  - 2015: 20.4
  - 2016: 20.5
  - 2017: 21.5
  - 2018: 21.5
  - 2019: 21.5
  - 2020: 21.6

- **10- to 14-year-olds**
  - 2010: 3.3
  - 2011: 3.3
  - 2012: 3.3
  - 2013: 5.3
  - 2014: 3.3
  - 2015: 6.7
  - 2016: 4.9
  - 2017: 4.9
  - 2018: 4.9
  - 2019: 4.9
  - 2020: 4.9

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
The number of deaths due to unintentional overdose among 15- to 24-year-olds more than doubled between 2019 and 2020.

Deaths due to unintentional or accidental overdose among 15- to 24-year-olds in Colorado, 2000—2020

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
A December 2021 study estimates that 2,100 Colorado children had lost a parent or primary caregiver to COVID-19, with children of color bearing the brunt of the losses.

Estimated number of Colorado children experiencing the death of a primary caregiver due to COVID-19 by race/ethnicity

Policy Strategies for Improving Child and Family Health

Ensure strong implementation of recent policy wins.
• Create a special enrollment period for pregnancy.
• Expand access to Medicaid and CHP+ for pregnant and postpartum Coloradans and children who are undocumented.
• Ensure social emotional development for children in child care and school settings.

Expand access to critical services and supports.
• Oral and behavioral health services in primary care, child care and school settings.
• Healthy school meals for all Colorado kids.

Invest in protecting all Coloradans from COVID-19, especially those most marginalized.
• Ensure access to vaccines and testing.
• Require masks in high-risk settings.
• Improve indoor air quality.
Early Childhood
Colorado's child care system has long been under-resourced. The pandemic exacerbated existing workforce and affordability challenges.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in mid-2021:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80% of Colorado child care centers surveyed reported a staffing shortage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47% were serving fewer children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40% were unable to open classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34% had longer waitlists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26% had to reduce operating hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compensation for Colorado’s early childhood workforce does not reflect the vital work they do.

Median annual wages for select education occupations in Colorado, 2020

- Child care teacher: $29,795
- Preschool teacher: $33,570
- Kindergarten teacher: $49,057
- Elementary teacher: $53,253

Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.
Child care disruptions have been common throughout the pandemic, affecting nearly half of all Colorado households with children under 5 as of early 2022.

Colorado households with children under 5 reporting a child care disruption caused by COVID-19 for at least one child in the household in the past four weeks

These child care disruptions caused frequent employment challenges for parents of kids under 5.

As of January - February 2022, the percent of Colorado households with children under 5 who reported that child care disruptions caused them to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Households with children ages 0 to 4</th>
<th>Households with children ages 5 to 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use vacation, sick days, or other paid leave</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut work hours</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise one or more children while working</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take unpaid leave</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not look for a job in order to care for children</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Strategies for Improving Early Childhood Outcomes

• **Make sustainable, adequate, long-term investments** in support of children’s early learning and development.

• **Recognize the vital role that our early childhood workforce plays** in supporting our children, families, communities, and economy. Make long-term, sustained investments in compensation and benefits that support the recruitment and retention of providers across all settings.

• **Center family, caregiver and provider voice** in the implementation and decision-making processes of the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.
Colorado’s public PK-12 enrollment numbers increased in the fall of 2021, but remained far below pre-pandemic levels.

Number of students enrolled in Colorado public schools, 2019-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>913,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>883,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td>886,517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colorado Department of Education.
2021 student enrollment data also show a likely undercount of kids eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) in Colorado.

Fall count of Colorado public school students identified as eligible for FRL, Fall 2019—Fall 2021

- **Free lunch eligible**
- **Reduced-price lunch eligible**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Free lunch eligible</th>
<th>Reduced-price lunch eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>298,139</td>
<td>73,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>295,313</td>
<td>59,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td>273,688</td>
<td>55,912</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colorado Department of Education.
CMAS results must be interpreted with caution given significantly low participation rates in 2021.

In spring 2021:
- ELA assessments were given to grades 3, 5 and 7
- Math assessments were given to grades 4, 6 and 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>ELA Grade 3</th>
<th>ELA Grade 5</th>
<th>ELA Grade 7</th>
<th>Math Grade 4</th>
<th>Math Grade 6</th>
<th>Math Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colorado Department of Education.
CMAS results must be interpreted with caution given significantly low participation rates in 2021.

In spring 2021:
- ELA assessments were given to grades 3, 5 and 7
- Math assessments were given to grades 4, 6 and 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA grade 3</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA grade 5</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA grade 7</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math grade 4</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math grade 6</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math grade 8</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colorado Department of Education.
Students of color, whose families have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic’s health and economic effects, experienced some of the largest declines in the high school graduation rate.

Percentage point change in on-time graduation rates of Colorado high school students by race/ethnicity, 2020 – 2021

- American Indian or Alaska Native: -2.2%
- Hispanic or Latino: -1.2%
- Two or more races: -0.7%
- Black or African American: -0.6%
- All students: -0.2%
- Asian: 0.3%
- White: 0.6%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 3.7%

Source: Colorado Department of Education.
Groups of students who have historically faced more barriers to educational opportunity also saw larger-than-average declines in graduation rates.

Percentage point change in on-time graduation rates of Colorado high school students by select characteristics, 2020-2021:

- Students who are migrant: -4.7%
- Students who are homeless: -3.1%
- Students with limited English proficiency: -2.7%
- Economically disadvantaged students: -1.7%
- Students with disabilities: 4.6%

Source: Colorado Department of Education.
Immediate college enrollment also fell. Disparities between rural and urban students held.

Percent of HS graduates enrolling in post-secondary education the semester after graduation by district type, 2020

- All CO graduates: 50.5%
- Small rural graduates: 43.2%
- Rural graduates: 47.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Higher Education.
Policy Strategies for Improving K-12 Education Outcomes

Ensure strong implementation of recent policy wins.
• Enact a new, more accurate measure of students experiencing economic disadvantage.
• Invest state funds to address disparities between low- and high-wealth districts.

Invest in comprehensive behavioral health support, services and data collection efforts.
• Adequately measure and respond to students’ and educators’ social and emotional needs.

Ensure transparent and easily accessible reporting on state and local uses of funds received through various federal stimulus packages (including the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act).
Join us in helping make Colorado a better place to be a kid.

September 15, 2022 • 4-6 p.m. • The Studio Loft at Ellie Caulkins Opera House
Thank you

sarah@coloradokids.org
erica@coloradokids.org

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