The 2023 legislative session was a critical time for taking steps to make what we know is possible for Colorado kids a reality. The Colorado Children’s Campaign worked to turn effective pandemic-era policies that supported children’s health and well-being into more permanent features of our state’s landscape; to implement and fund innovative programs that will support our youngest children and their families; to ensure our schools have what they need to serve all young people equitably; and to respond to a fast-changing national context with policies that secure access to health care and services.

The bills we championed and supported in our key focus areas - Youth Success, Family Economic Prosperity, Child and Family Health, and Early Childhood - place our foot firmly on the path toward realizing every chance for every child as we look, for the first time in the 2020s, toward a decade outside of a global public health emergency. Many were passed with bipartisan support - evidence of Coloradans working together to create and implement systems that best serve Colorado families. Our state’s systems are always works in progress, and the Colorado Children’s Campaign is committed to identifying inequities and working to address them through evidence-based policy.

**HB23-1300: Multi-Year Continuous Eligibility for Medicaid and CHP+ (Sirota & Bird/Zenzinger & Kirkmeyer):**
Allows the state to provide continuous Medicaid and Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) coverage to children from birth to age 3 and to provide 12 months of coverage for Coloradans leaving state prison. The bill also creates a study of how to improve the state Medicaid program to support Coloradans’ health, food security, and housing stability. Extending Medicaid and CHP+ coverage for young kids and people leaving carceral settings builds on a successful pandemic-era policy, improving oral and behavioral health, well-being, and access to health services for thousands of Coloradans during critical life periods.

**SB23-189: Access to Reproductive and Preventive Health Services (Moreno & Cutter/Michaelson Jenet & Garcia):**
Reduces surprise billing, removes patient cost-sharing for reproductive health care services offered to privately insured Coloradans, and codifies coverage of Affordable Care Act preventive services in Colorado. This includes critical resources such as preventive fluoride for young children, perinatal depression screening, and childhood immunizations. The bill also expands access to reproductive health services for people who use Medicaid, including by adding family planning-related services to the state’s reproductive health program for undocumented Coloradans.

**SB23-214: Family Planning Funding in the Long Bill (Zenzinger/Bird):**
Increases funding for the Family Planning Program at the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment to serve more people at clinics across the state. The program helps create financially secure Colorado families and enables people to chart their own futures.

**HB23-1091: Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Renewal (Pugliese & Kipp/Marchman & Rich):**
Renews the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (CCTC) for an additional three years. Child care providers rely on the donations incentivized by the CCTC (an estimated $60 million yearly, statewide) to fund their core programs, increase quality and wages, improve access to care for families, expand their capacity, and provide professional training and career pathway support for staff.

**HB23-1290: Retain Revenue for Universal Preschool (McCluskie & Sirota/Moreno & Fields):**
Refers a question to November 2023 voters about whether to retain excess revenue raised from Proposition EE, a ballot measure Coloradans passed overwhelmingly in 2020. Prop EE raised taxes on tobacco and nicotine products to fund a free, voluntary universal preschool program. Retaining the additional revenue will allow Colorado to provide universal preschool services and extend additional preschool programming to more children, especially those with qualifying factors who need it most.
Allows all parties in a residential eviction proceeding to choose whether they intend to participate in person or virtually, extending an effective pandemic-era practice. This bill will help ensure that fewer people receive a default judgment and lose their home solely because they cannot appear in-person for an eviction hearing due to barriers such as difficulty taking time off work, finding child care, or accessing transportation.

This is good progress, but Colorado must further improve the transparency and fairness of eviction processes by collecting and publishing more consistent, comprehensive data. Better data collection around these traumatic events would increase understanding of who is most affected and allow policymakers to identify the best ways to prevent families from being evicted.

SB23-287: Public School Finance Act (Zenzinger & Lundeen, McLachlan & Kipp):
Creates a task force of school finance experts to deliver specific recommendations for a modernized, equitable, and student-centered school finance formula by January 2024. The School Finance Act also fully funds the Mill Levy Override Match Fund, which supports school districts that struggle to raise local revenue to meet student needs due to low property wealth.

While these are exciting wins for public education, Colorado’s School Finance Formula is still very much outdated, inequitable, and not serving the needs of students throughout the state. Policymakers must do more to prioritize student learning needs rather than maintaining an inequitable status quo.

The Colorado Children’s Campaign is the state’s leading nonprofit, nonpartisan research, advocacy, and policy organization focused on Colorado’s children. We advocate for the development and implementation of data-driven, equity-informed public policy that improves child and family well-being across the state. Since 1985, we have worked alongside families, advocates, experts, and policymakers from every corner of the state and every political perspective to improve the well-being of Colorado kids.

GET THE FACTS!
Looking for data on Colorado kids and families? Visit the KIDS COUNT Data Center for the most up-to-date sources of information on demographics, outcomes and more.
Visit datacenter.kidscount.org/CO

KIDS COUNT in Colorado 2023

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