



COLORADO

Governor Jared Polis

Since taking office, Colorado has become one of the best places for young families, and that is thanks in large part to Governor Polis' commitment to expand high-quality early childhood education opportunities for every child in our state. During his first year in office, he worked with legislators on both sides of the aisle to pass free, full-day kindergarten, saving families hundreds of dollars each month. The Governor knows that strong early childhood education and child care lead to a stronger workforce and a better economy, which is why he has continued to make investments in this area throughout his time in office. The COVID-19 pandemic made this priority even more urgent, which is why the Governor has partnered with Colorado legislators to make historic investments in Colorado's children.

The Governor's **Free full day-kindergarten program saved Colorado families up to \$500 per-month and now universal preschool is going to save Coloradans on average \$4,300 per year.**

The State of Early Childhood Education in Colorado

- In 2019, Governor Polis made it a priority to pass the long-awaited legislation providing free, full-day kindergarten to every child in Colorado. Families across the state were having to choose between sending their child to kindergarten or saving for their college education, and some families simply couldn't afford it. Governor Polis worked with Republican and Democratic legislators to pass this historic legislation helping Colorado families. This didn't just open up opportunities for kindergarteners, but also expanded access to preschool slots.
- In 2020, Coloradans overwhelmingly voted to fund universal preschool for every child in Colorado, fulfilling the Governor's campaign promise. The administration is now working on implementation. **This is going to save Coloradans on average \$4,300 per year.**

Legislative Accomplishments

- **HB21-1304 Early Childhood System**: Creates a new Department of Early Childhood that will align and strengthen the state's birth through kindergarten entry system, including helping to implement universal access to free, voluntary preschool passed by the voters through prop EE.
- **SB21-236 Increase Capacity Early Childhood Care and Education**: Provides for nearly \$400 million in federal and state funding to provide support for new and existing early childhood providers, including grants for employer-based providers and recruitment, retention and salary grants to providers, to help weather the pandemic and increase access to high-quality early childhood programming for more children.
- **HB21-1222 Regulation of Family Child Care Homes**: Expands child care access in family child care homes by aligning local regulations, specifically by requiring family child care

homes to be classified as residences for local zoning, land use, fire and life safety, and building code regulations.

- HB21-1274 Unused State-Owned Real Property Beneficial Use: Requires an inventory of unused state-owned real property to determine whether it is suitable for construction of affordable child care; allows the state to seek proposals and enter into contracts with developers to build child care facilities on the state-owned property.
- SB21-201 Stricter Transparency and Enforcement in Child Care: Improves child care safety by requiring the state to post on its website the names and location of illegally operating child care providers, including whether they received a cease and desist order, and establishes penalties for violations of cease and desist orders.
- HB20B-1002 Emergency Relief Programs for Child Care Sector: Authorizes child care infrastructure grants with \$45 million in state funding, including sustainability grants to all licensed child care providers and “emerging and expanding” grants for establishing, renovating, or expanding child care facilities. Authorizes and funds local early childhood councils to support grantees’ efforts and culturally and linguistically competent outreach and technical assistance for applicants.
- HB20-1427 Cigarette Tobacco and Nicotine Products Tax: Referred a ballot measure, Prop EE, at the 2020 election to increase the state tobacco tax and establish a nicotine product tax to fund high-quality universal preschool for all children in the year prior to Kindergarten in a mixed delivery system, to begin in July 2023.
- SB20-126 Allow Home Child Care in Homeowner Association Community: Allows any homeowner to operate a family child care home by prohibiting homeowner’s associations from disallowing child care homes.