

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

PREAMENDED

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 24-0146.01 Josh Schultz x5486

HOUSE BILL 24-1009

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Joseph and McLachlan,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Ginal and Rich,

House Committees

Education
Appropriations

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO**
102 **PROVIDE CHILD CARE LICENSING RESOURCES IN PREVALENT**
103 **LANGUAGES, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN**
104 **APPROPRIATION.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill requires the department of early childhood (department) to provide education and information in plain language and in prevalent languages to help individuals complete the paperwork required to meet

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

child care licensing compliance requirements.

The bill also requires the department to provide services in prevalent languages to individuals seeking to open or otherwise participate in the operation of an early childhood program or facility licensed by the department.

The bill defines prevalent languages as the 2 most prevalent languages spoken in Colorado.

The bill creates the bilingual licensing unit to help the department satisfy its duties and requires the general assembly to appropriate \$235,000 from the general fund to the department for the 2024-25 state fiscal year and for each year thereafter to pay the costs of the bilingual licensing unit's activities.

The bill also requires the general assembly to appropriate \$45,000 from the general fund to the department for the 2024-25 state fiscal year to pay costs associated with updating the department's mobile licensing application.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly
3 finds and declares that:

4 (a) All Colorado children are entitled to quality child care and
5 education services;

6 (b) Quality early care and education contribute to the development
7 of cognitive and social-emotional skills, including attentiveness,
8 persistence, motivation, self-control, and teamwork;

9 (c) The child care sector in Colorado is too limited to serve all of
10 the young children in the state who need care. Large portions of
11 Colorado, especially rural areas, are **licensed** child care deserts where,
12 regardless of cost, families cannot find local services for their children.

13 (d) According to the Bell Policy Center, the total capacity for
14 licensed child care is for 156,691 children in Colorado, while there are
15 231,993 children under six years of age with all parents in the workforce.
16 This is a gap of 75,302 children who do not have an available licensed

1 child care provider.

2 (e) In response to these challenges and in support of the mission
3 of the department of early childhood to ensure the delivery of a
4 comprehensive, community-informed, data-driven, high-quality, and
5 equitable early childhood system that supports the care, education, and
6 well-being of all of Colorado's young children, their families, and early
7 childhood professionals in all settings, the state has an obligation to
8 promote greater access to child care by expanding the provider pool.

9 (2) The general assembly also finds and declares that:

10 (a) The department of early childhood must update its mobile
11 licensing application to offer fair access to resources in prevalent
12 languages, ultimately facilitating the process for providers to become
13 licensed;

14 (b) This act represents the state's commitment to addressing the
15 critical need for accessible licensing services in prevalent languages,
16 serving as a testament to the state's dedication to ensuring equitable
17 access to child care licensing resources and support; and

18 (c) Early care and education programs are a cornerstone of child
19 development, and language should not be a barrier to access to care for
20 children across Colorado.

21 (3) Therefore, the general assembly declares that:

22 (a) The general assembly affirms the vital role of a culturally and
23 linguistically diverse child care provider population in addressing the
24 multifaceted needs of Colorado's diverse communities;

25 (b) The department of early childhood shall be required to provide
26 licensing services in prevalent languages in order to ensure fair access to
27 the child care licensing process;

1 (c) There shall be a bilingual licensing unit within the department
2 of early childhood; and

3 (d) The department of early childhood shall update its mobile
4 licensing application accordingly.

5 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26.5-5-303, **add**
6 (20.3) and (20.5) as follows:

7 **26.5-5-303. Definitions.** As used in this part 3, unless the context
8 otherwise requires:

9 (20.3) "PLAIN LANGUAGE" MEANS WRITING THAT IS CLEAR,
10 CONCISE, WELL-ORGANIZED, AND THAT FOLLOWS OTHER BEST PRACTICES
11 APPROPRIATE TO THE SUBJECT OR FIELD AND INTENDED AUDIENCE, AS
12 DEFINED BY THE FEDERAL "PLAIN WRITING ACT OF 2010", PUB.L.
13 111-274.

14 (20.5) "PREVALENT LANGUAGES" MEANS THE TWO MOST
15 PREVALENT LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE STATE OF COLORADO, AS
16 IDENTIFIED IN THE LATEST AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY PUBLISHED BY
17 THE FEDERAL CENSUS BUREAU.

18 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26.5-5-304, **amend**
19 (4) as follows:

20 **26.5-5-304. Application of part - definition - repeal.** (4) The
21 department shall provide education and information in an accessible
22 manner, IN PLAIN LANGUAGE, AND IN PREVALENT LANGUAGES on the state
23 licensing website for child care providers who are exempt pursuant to this
24 section but are interested in becoming a licensed child care provider.

25 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26.5-5-309, **add** (7)
26 as follows:

27 **26.5-5-309. Licenses - rules - definition - appropriation -**

1 **repeal.** (7) (a) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE,
2 PROVIDE ESSENTIAL RESOURCES IN PREVALENT LANGUAGES TO HELP CHILD
3 CARE PROVIDERS AND PROSPECTIVE PROVIDERS COMPLETE THE
4 NECESSARY PAPERWORK TO MEET CHILD CARE LICENSING COMPLIANCE
5 REQUIREMENTS. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REVIEW EXISTING RESOURCES
6 AND ENSURE THAT THE ENGLISH VERSIONS ARE WRITTEN IN PLAIN
7 LANGUAGE TO FACILITATE THE TRANSLATION OF THESE RESOURCES INTO
8 PREVALENT LANGUAGES. THE DEPARTMENT MAY PROVIDE ESSENTIAL
9 RESOURCES IN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES AS NEEDED IN ORDER TO MEET
10 THE NEEDS OF COLORADO COMMUNITIES, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE
11 APPROPRIATIONS.

12 (b) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE,
13 ENGAGE IN OUTREACH AND MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS IN PREVALENT
14 LANGUAGES WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS WHO PROVIDE, ARE
15 CONSIDERING PROVIDING, OR ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF THOSE PROVIDING
16 LICENSED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO FOSTER A MORE
17 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PROVIDER POPULATION.

18 (c) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE SERVICES IN PREVALENT
19 LANGUAGES TO INDIVIDUALS SEEKING TO OPEN OR OTHERWISE
20 PARTICIPATE IN THE OPERATION OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM OR
21 FACILITY LICENSED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

22 (d) (I) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL UPDATE ITS MOBILE LICENSING
23 APPLICATION TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL INFORMATION IN PREVALENT
24 LANGUAGES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS
25 SUBSECTION (7). FOR THE 2024-25 STATE FISCAL YEAR, THE GENERAL
26 ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS TO THE
27 DEPARTMENT FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO PAY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH

1 THIS SUBSECTION (7)(d).

2 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (7)(d) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 20,
3 2026.

4 (e) (I) ON OR BEFORE MARCH 30, 2026, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
5 SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE, THE PUBLIC AND
6 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF
7 REPRESENTATIVES, AND THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
8 OF THE SENATE, OR ANY SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, CONCERNING BARRIERS
9 FACED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH
10 IN BECOMING LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

11 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (7)(e) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 20,
12 2026.

13 **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 26.5-5-330 as
14 follows:

15 **26.5-5-330. Bilingual licensing unit - appropriation.** (1) THE
16 BILINGUAL LICENSING UNIT IS CREATED IN THE DEPARTMENT TO
17 FACILITATE THE SATISFACTION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S DUTIES DESCRIBED
18 IN SECTION 26.5-5-309 (7).

19 (2) FOR THE 2024-25 STATE FISCAL YEAR AND EACH STATE FISCAL
20 YEAR THEREAFTER, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE TWO
21 HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS TO THE DEPARTMENT FROM
22 THE GENERAL FUND TO PAY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF
23 THE BILINGUAL LICENSING UNIT CREATED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS
24 SECTION.

25 **SECTION 6. Appropriation.** For the 2024-25 state fiscal year,
26 \$280,928 is appropriated to the department of early childhood for use by
27 the licensing and administration division. This appropriation is from the

1 general fund and is based on an assumption that the division will require
2 an additional 2.7 FTE. To implement this act, the division may use this
3 appropriation for the bilingual licensing unit.

4 **SECTION 7. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
5 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
6 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
7 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
8 institutions.