

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

**ENGROSSED**

*This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted  
on Second Reading in the House of Introduction*

LLS NO. 26-0494.01 Anna Petrini x5497

**SENATE BILL 26-020**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Bright and Ball,**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Sirota and Gonzalez R.,**

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**Senate Committees**

Education  
Appropriations

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING MEASURES RELATED TO CHILD CARE PROVIDER**  
102           **LICENSING, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH,     INCREASING**  
103           **RELIANCE ON TRAINED PERSONNEL FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
104           **EARLY CHILDHOOD, IMPOSING CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS IN**  
105           **CONNECTION WITH REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNING**  
106           **AUTHORITIES, AND CREATING A TASK FORCE.**

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**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)

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.*

SENATE  
Amended 2nd Reading  
April 10, 2026

to make reasonable efforts to expand and standardize the use of a digital data platform as a centralized digital file system for certain child care provider information (digital provider file system). The digital provider file system must integrate the professional development information system currently administered by the department and must house records related to staff background checks and child care provider policy documents, consistent with applicable privacy protections.

Current law permits the department to authorize or contract with a third party to investigate and inspect a facility applying for certain types of child care licenses. The bill requires the department, on or before July 1, 2026, to begin phasing out its reliance on third parties where feasible and to prioritize the use of department personnel to conduct the investigations and inspections instead. The department shall establish standardized training, protocols, and supervision for department personnel and authorized or contracted third parties.

The bill permits the department to grant a provisional license for up to 9 months to a child care facility that has satisfied all state-level licensing standards pending resolution of a delay or dispute with a statutory or home rule city, town, city and county, or county where the facility is situated (local governing authority) that prevents compliance with applicable zoning and land use development regulations. A local governing authority that imposes requirements related to the inspection, permitting, licensing, or approval of a child care center or family child care home beyond the state-level licensing standards (local approval process) shall prioritize provisionally licensed child care facilities so that the local approval process concludes within 9 months, and limit, or, in certain cases, provide exemptions from, associated fees.

The bill creates the child care licensure and quality task force (task force) to study and report on recommendations for a streamlined and easy-to-use child care licensure and quality system in the state (study). The task force shall report on its findings and recommendations before January 1, 2027, to the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate, the governor, and the department. The performance of the study is dependent upon the task force's receipt of sufficient gifts, grants, and donations.

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

2           **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 26.5-5-333 as  
3 follows:

4                     26.5-5-333. Professional development information  
5 system records - rules.

1           THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL ADOPT RULES CONCERNING  
2           REQUIREMENTS FOR FACILITIES LICENSED PURSUANT TO THIS PART 3 TO  
3           MAINTAIN UP-TO-DATE EMPLOYEE RECORDS IN THE PROFESSIONAL  
4           DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM ADMINISTERED BY THE  
5           DEPARTMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 26.5-1-106 (1)(a)(I).

6           **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26.5-5-316, **amend**  
7           (3)(a)(I); and **add** (3)(a)(III) and (3)(a)(IV) as follows:

8           **26.5-5-316. Investigations and inspections - local authority -**  
9           **reports - rules.**

10           (3) (a) (I) Except as otherwise provided in ~~subsection (3)(a)(H)~~  
11           SUBSECTIONS (3)(a)(II) AND (3)(a)(III) of this section, the department may  
12           authorize or contract with any county department, the county department  
13           of health, or any other publicly or privately operated organization that has  
14           a declared interest in children and experience working with children or on  
15           behalf of children to investigate and inspect the facilities applying for an  
16           original or renewal license or applying for a permanent license following  
17           the issuance of a probationary or provisional license ~~under~~ PURSUANT TO  
18           this part 3 and may accept reports on ~~such~~ investigations and inspections  
19           from ~~such~~ THE agencies or organizations as a basis for ~~such licensing~~  
20           MAKING LICENSING DECISIONS. When contracting for investigations and  
21           inspections, the department shall assure that the contractor is qualified by  
22           training and experience and has no conflict of interest with respect to the  
23           facilities to be inspected.

24           (III) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (3)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION,  
25           ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2026, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, WHERE FEASIBLE,  
26           BEGIN PHASING OUT ITS RELIANCE ON PERSONS AUTHORIZED OR  
27           CONTRACTED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION TO

1 PROVIDE THE TYPES OF SERVICES THE DEPARTMENT'S LICENSING  
2 SPECIALISTS PROVIDE IN CONNECTION WITH THE INVESTIGATION AND  
3 INSPECTION OF THE FACILITIES APPLYING FOR AN ORIGINAL OR RENEWAL  
4 LICENSE OR APPLYING FOR A PERMANENT LICENSE FOLLOWING THE  
5 ISSUANCE OF A PROBATIONARY OR PROVISIONAL LICENSE PURSUANT TO  
6 THIS PART 3, AND SHALL PRIORITIZE THE USE OF LICENSING SPECIALISTS  
7 EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES. NOTHING IN  
8 THIS SUBSECTION (3)(a) REQUIRES THE DEPARTMENT TO PHASE OUT ITS  
9 RELIANCE ON PERSONS AUTHORIZED OR CONTRACTED TO PERFORM HEALTH  
10 AND SANITATION INSPECTIONS AND RELATED PLAN REVIEWS REQUIRED AS  
11 PART OF THE CHILD CARE LICENSING PROCESS AND CONDUCTED BY THE  
12 DEPARTMENT OR A LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY.

13 (IV) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH STANDARDIZED  
14 TRAINING, PROTOCOLS, AND SUPERVISION FOR DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL  
15 AND ANY PERSONS AUTHORIZED OR CONTRACTED PURSUANT TO  
16 SUBSECTION (3)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION TO PROMOTE CONSISTENCY IN THE  
17 INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND THE  
18 STANDARDIZATION OF INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS  
19 ACROSS THE STATE.

20 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26.5-5-310, **add**  
21 (1)(c)     as follows:

22 **26.5-5-310. Compliance with local government zoning**  
23 **regulations - notice to local governments - provisional licensure -**  
24 **rules.**

25 (1)(c) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (1)(a) OF THIS SECTION TO  
26 THE CONTRARY, THE AVAILABILITY OF SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND LICENSED  
27 FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES AND LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS IS A

1 MATTER OF STATEWIDE CONCERN. THEREFORE, PERMITTING FRAGMENTED  
2 REGULATION AMONG JURISDICTIONS IMPEDES AND INFRINGES UPON THE  
3 DEPARTMENT'S APPROPRIATE AND CONSISTENT LICENSING AND  
4 REGULATION OF FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES AND CHILD CARE CENTERS  
5 THROUGHOUT THE STATE. ACCORDINGLY, A LOCAL GOVERNING  
6 AUTHORITY THAT IMPOSES REQUIREMENTS IN ADDITION TO THE  
7 STATE-LEVEL LICENSING STANDARDS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO THIS PART  
8 3 RELATED TO THE INSPECTION, PERMITTING, LICENSING, OR APPROVAL OF  
9 A CHILD CARE CENTER OR FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME SHALL:

10 (I) PRIORITIZE THE INSPECTION, PERMITTING, LICENSING, OR  
11 APPROVAL PROCESS OF A CHILD CARE CENTER OR FAMILY CHILD CARE ==  
12 HOME WITH WHICH THE LOCAL GOVERNING AUTHORITY HAS HAD A  
13 DISPUTE OR CAUSED A DELAY, TO COMPLETE THE INSPECTION, PERMITTING,  
14 LICENSING, OR APPROVAL PROCESS TO THE EXTENT REASONABLY  
15 PRACTICABLE; AND

16 (II) LIMIT, TO A REASONABLE MAXIMUM ESTABLISHED BY  
17 DEPARTMENT RULE, THE FEES ASSOCIATED WITH ANY CHILD CARE  
18 CENTER'S OR FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME'S INSPECTION, PERMIT, LICENSE,  
19 OR APPROVAL THAT IS REQUIRED FOR A CHILD CARE CENTER OR FAMILY  
20 CHILD CARE HOME BY THE LOCAL GOVERNING AUTHORITY BUT THAT IS  
21 NOT REQUIRED BY THE STATE-LEVEL LICENSING STANDARDS ESTABLISHED  
22 IN THIS PART 3; EXCEPT THAT THIS LIMITATION DOES NOT APPLY TO FEES  
23 ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTH AND SANITATION INSPECTIONS AND RELATED  
24 PLAN REVIEWS REQUIRED AS PART OF THE CHILD CARE LICENSING PROCESS  
25 AND CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OR A LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH  
26 AGENCY.

27 == ==

1           **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 26.5-5-322.5 as  
2 follows:

3           **26.5-5-322.5. Child care licensure \_\_\_ task force - created -**  
4 **membership - reporting - repeal.**

5           (1) \_\_\_ THE CHILD CARE LICENSURE \_\_\_ TASK FORCE IS CREATED IN  
6 THE DEPARTMENT TO STUDY AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED  
7 TO THE CHILD CARE LICENSURE \_\_\_ SYSTEM IN COLORADO.

8           \_\_\_  
9           (2) (a) THE CHILD CARE LICENSURE \_\_\_ TASK FORCE CONSISTS OF  
10 THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

11           (I) THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING  
12 MEMBERS:

13           (A) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE  
14 PROVIDERS;

15           (B) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER; \_\_\_

16           (C) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME;

17 AND

18           (D) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN ORGANIZATION OF PROVIDERS OF  
19 OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-105.5-103;

20           (II) THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHALL  
21 APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

22           (A) A MULTILINGUAL CHILD CARE PROVIDER FROM A SMALL  
23 BUSINESS OR FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME;

24           (B) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A COMMUNITY-BASED OR EARLY  
25 CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION; AND

26           (C) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT;

27           (III) THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE SHALL APPOINT THE

1 FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

2 (A) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A HEAD START PROGRAM;

3 (B) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE  
4 PROVIDERS; ==

5 (C) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER; AND

6 (D) A TECHNOLOGY EXPERT FAMILIAR WITH CREATING AND  
7 IMPLEMENTING STATE AGENCY TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS;

8 (IV) THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
9 SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

10 (A) A REPRESENTATIVE FROM A RURAL CHILD CARE PROVIDER;

11 (B) AN INDIVIDUAL WITH EXPERTISE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
12 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; ==

13 (C) THE PARENT OF A CHILD CARED FOR IN A LICENSED CHILD CARE  
14 CENTER OR LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME; AND

15 (D) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATUTORY OR HOME RULE CITY,  
16 TOWN, CITY AND COUNTY, OR COUNTY; AND

17 (V) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT ONE MEMBER WHO IS A  
18 REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT AND ONE MEMBER WHO IS A  
19 REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
20 ENVIRONMENT. A MEMBER APPOINTED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION  
21 (2)(a)(V) IS A NONVOTING MEMBER.

22 (b) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE THEIR INITIAL  
23 APPOINTMENTS TO THE TASK FORCE NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2026.

24 (3) EACH MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE WHO IS APPOINTED  
25 PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION SERVES AT THE PLEASURE  
26 OF THE APPOINTING OFFICIAL. THE TERM OF APPOINTMENT FOR TASK  
27 FORCE MEMBERS EXPIRES ON JULY 1, 2027.

1                   (4) MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE SERVE WITHOUT  
2 COMPENSATION AND WITHOUT REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES.

3                   (5) (a) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT SHALL  
4 CONVENE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE NO LATER THAN THREE  
5 WEEKS AFTER THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAS DETERMINED THAT THE TASK  
6 FORCE HAS RECEIVED AN AMOUNT OF GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS  
7 SUFFICIENT TO BEGIN ITS WORK DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION OR AUGUST  
8 1, 2026, WHICHEVER IS LATER.

9                   (b) THE TASK FORCE SHALL ELECT A CHAIR FROM AMONG THE TASK  
10 FORCE'S MEMBERS.

11                   (c) THE TASK FORCE SHALL MEET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES IN 2026 TO  
12 COMPLETE THE DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THIS SECTION. THE CHAIR MAY CALL  
13 ADDITIONAL MEETINGS, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE MONEY, AS NECESSARY  
14 FOR THE TASK FORCE TO COMPLETE ITS DUTIES. THE TASK FORCE SHALL  
15 ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE TO  
16 PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETINGS REMOTELY.

17                   (6) THE TASK FORCE SHALL STUDY AND RECOMMEND REFORMS TO  
18 COLORADO'S LICENSURE SYSTEM WITH THE GOAL OF CREATING A  
19 COHERENT, STREAMLINED FRAMEWORK THAT DOES NOT REDUCE THE  
20 QUALITY OF SETTINGS ALREADY IN PLACE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S  
21 LEARNING.

22                   (7) WITH THE HELP OF A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY DESCRIBED IN  
23 SUBSECTION (8) OF THIS SECTION, THE TASK FORCE SHALL:

24                   (a) UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE STATE'S CHILD  
25 CARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSES FOR CHILD CARE  
26 CENTERS AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES; AND

27                   (b) DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING A STREAMLINED

1 LICENSURE SYSTEM FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS AND FAMILY CHILD CARE  
2 HOMES.

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 (8) THE TASK FORCE SHALL CONTRACT WITH AN INDEPENDENT  
5 THIRD-PARTY ENTITY TO FACILITATE TASK FORCE MEETINGS AND PREPARE  
6 A FINAL REPORT SUMMARIZING THE TASK FORCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS  
7 DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (7) OF THIS SECTION.

8 (9) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2027, THE TASK FORCE SHALL  
9 REPORT ON ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF  
10 THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, OR ANY SUCCESSOR  
11 COMMITTEES; THE GOVERNOR; AND THE DEPARTMENT.

12 (10) (a) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE  
13 IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION BE FUNDED ENTIRELY BY GIFTS,  
14 GRANTS, AND DONATIONS, AND THAT GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS  
15 WILL BE RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE TASK FORCE'S WORK.  
16 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL NOT APPROPRIATE MONEY FROM THE  
17 GENERAL FUND FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION, AND THE  
18 DEPARTMENT AND APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL CARRY OUT THEIR  
19 DUTIES SET FORTH IN THIS SECTION WITHIN EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS.

20 (b) THE DEPARTMENT MAY SEEK, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND GIFTS,  
21 GRANTS, OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES TO  
22 IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION. THE TASK FORCE SHALL NOT IMPLEMENT THIS  
23 SECTION UNLESS THE TASK FORCE RECEIVES AN AMOUNT OF GIFTS,  
24 GRANTS, AND DONATIONS THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEEMS  
25 NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.

26 (c) THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (7) OF THIS SECTION  
27 AND FINAL REPORT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (9) OF THIS SECTION ARE

1 CONTINGENT ON MONEY BEING AVAILABLE TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITIES  
2 AND FINAL REPORT. IF MONEY IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE TASK FORCE OR  
3 ANY OTHER ENTITY TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES REQUIRED PURSUANT TO  
4 THIS SECTION, THE TASK FORCE OR THE ENTITY IS NOT REQUIRED TO CARRY  
5 OUT THE DUTIES. A CONTRACT WITH A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY THAT WILL  
6 PROVIDE SERVICES RELATED TO TASK FORCE MEETING FACILITATION,  
7 RECOMMENDATIONS, AND THE FINAL REPORT MUST BE CONTINGENT ON  
8 GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS BEING AVAILABLE FOR THOSE PURPOSES.

9 (11) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028.

10 **SECTION 5. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
11 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
12 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
13 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
14 institutions.