

# Presentation to the Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission

Colorado Office of Early Childhood (OEC)



**COLORADO**  
Office of Early Childhood  
Department of Human Services

A photograph of a classroom scene with a blue semi-transparent overlay. In the foreground, two young boys are seated at a light-colored wooden table, focused on playing with various educational cards. The boy on the left wears a grey sweatshirt with a Mario character graphic, and the boy on the right wears a blue and black striped shirt. The table is covered with numerous cards featuring numbers (e.g., 8, 25, 16, 2, 30, 40, 66, 7) and colorful dot patterns. In the background, other children are visible, including a girl in a white shirt and another in a pink shirt, engaged in activities. A teacher or adult is partially visible on the left, interacting with a child. The room is bright and decorated with educational posters and bird cutouts on the wall.

# Colorado's 2021 Early Childhood Roadmap for Action

Colorado Office of Early Childhood (OEC)

A woman with long blonde hair is seen from the side, carrying a young child in a grey carrier. They are standing in a grassy field with mountains in the background. The image is overlaid with a blue gradient.

## OEC's “Why”

### Our Mission

We support families and communities so every child in Colorado thrives.

### Our Vision

To ensure all children in Colorado are valued, healthy, and thriving, we lead bold and innovative programming, remove barriers, and implement systems change.

### OEC Programs

See handout “Office of Early Childhood Programs” for more information.

# The OEC's "How"

The 6 Strategies to ensure all children are valued, healthy, and thriving:

## Strategy 1 Access

Ensure all families have equitable and easy access to high quality early childhood services so that all children start school ready to succeed.

## Strategy 2 Workforce

Support the early childhood workforce, so that they have the tools to nurture and teach children in their care.

## Strategy 3 Family Strengthening

Provide communities and families with the support they need so children have a strong environment in which to thrive.

## Strategy 4 Educate

Educate the public and policymakers about the evolving needs of young children and families to ensure effective advocacy and systems change.

## Strategy 5 Alignment

Align available public and private funding streams to simplify administration and amplify the impact of early childhood services.

## Strategy 6 Culture

Align our work with our mission, vision and values to ensure we implement bold, effective and innovative early childhood programming.



A background image of a man with dark hair holding a baby in his arms. They are outdoors, with green foliage and a tree trunk visible. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle that contains the text.

# Strategy 1

Increase equitable and easy access to high quality early childhood services

- a) In the home and communities;
- b) In child care and preschools; and
- c) In healthcare settings

# Strategy 1a: Increase access in the home

OEC offers families a continuum of evidence-based home visiting programs to help parents be their child's first and best teacher.

## Programs

- Early Intervention Part C
- Early Start
- Parents as Teachers
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
- Child First
- Safe Care
- Early Head Start

# Strategy 1a: Increase access in the home

OEC offers families a continuum of evidence-based home visiting programs to help parents be their child's first and best teacher.

## Priority Actions

- Implement Home Visiting Investment Taskforce Recommendations, including expanding home visiting services to an additional 1,700 families
- Increase access to Medicaid funding for home visiting programs
- Create Early Intervention Early Start Model
- Implement transfer of Early Intervention Evaluations



# Strategy 1b: Increase access in child care and preschool settings

Increase access to high-quality child care and preschool settings so that all children can reach their full potential.

## Programs

- Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)
- Child Care Licensing, Child Care Quality Initiatives (CCQI)
- Colorado Shines Brighter
- Early Childhood Councils
- Expanding Quality for Infants and Toddlers (EQIT)
- Head Start



# Strategy 1b: Increase access in child care and preschool settings

Increase access to high-quality child care and preschool settings so that all children can reach their full potential.

## Priority Actions to Increase Access

*See handout [“State and Federal Stimulus Strategies: Ensure All Families Have Equitable and Easy Access”](#) for more information.*

Launch the following stimulus funded initiatives:

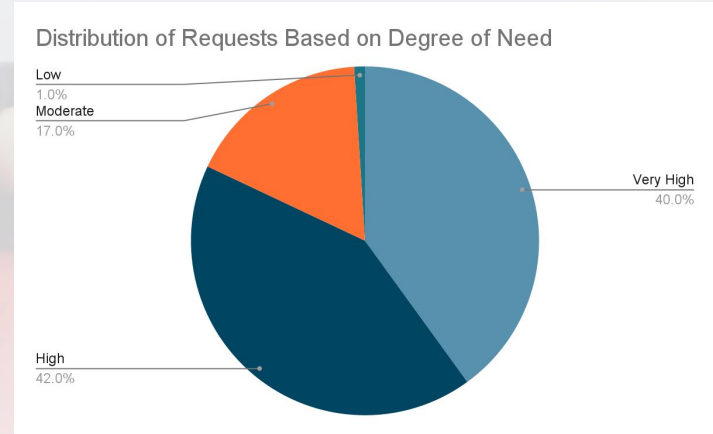
- Employer-based Child Care Facilities
- CIRCLE Grants
- Councils' Systems Realignment & Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Data Collection
- Family Child Care Home Navigator Program
- Access to Inclusive Care
- Emerging & Expanding Grants
- Reducing CCCAP Copayments
- CCCAP Rates & Payments
- Mobile Child Care Pilot for Substance Abuse Treatment

# Access in Action: Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant Program

*"The support the E and E grant has provided to individuals in our county is incredible! Providers have been able to apply for contracted services and/or learning materials they would ordinarily go without and or have to save to fix and or update when they had the money. We are exploding with new emerging providers that have committed themselves to support the children and families in our county!"*

## Progress Since Program Began in February, 2021

Total Applications Received	208
Total Funds Granted	\$3,171,473
Total Funds Remaining	\$5,579,856
# New Slots Potentially Added *	2,257
Total Currently Under Review	\$4,498,718
# New Slots Under Review *	2,591



As of 8/9/2021

Total allocated by Legislature = \$8,751,329

\* New slot figures are those stated by providers at application and have yet to be verified. They will be reconciled with final numbers as projects are implemented. [Application Process](#) and [Child Care Deserts](#)

# Access in Action: Safe Child Care Task Force

***“The Safe Child Care Task Force will recommend necessary reforms in child care settings to keep children safe, inform parents and care providers about licensed and unlicensed care options, and inform practices regarding illegal child care.”***

## Draft Recommendations

- Create a communication or education plan to reach diverse audiences through multiple channels
- Create an enforcement unit in the OEC Division of Licensing to identify, investigate, and enforce regulations
- Establish resources for first responders to help them identify and address unsafe care
- If a fatality, near fatality, or egregious incident occurs, immediately convene relevant parties by phone or zoom to share information and identify next steps
- Consider updating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) used by child care licensing
- Consider using co-responders, such as a licensing specialist, when responding to complaints of unsafe care



# Strategy 1c: Partner with health care providers

To support parents who access early childhood and maternal health support through their doctors.

## Programs

- Healthy Steps
- Reach Out Read
- Family Connects
- Colorado Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems: Health Integration Prenatal-to-three Program (CO-ECCS)

# Strategy 1c: Partner with health care providers

To support parents who access early childhood and maternal health support through their doctors.

## Priority Actions

- Increase number of families who can access Healthy Steps and Reach out Read
- Explore Family Connects implementation in Colorado
- Align early childhood and maternal child health
- Monitor social determinants of health screening pilots in healthcare settings
- Promote closed loop e-referral systems



# Strategy 2: Support our early childhood workforce

**Provide the tools, resources, and support for professionals who care for our children and families.**

## Programs

- Early Childhood Professionals, including assistant teachers, lead teachers, directors and more through OEC programs including Professional Development Information Systems (PDIS), CCCAP, CCQI, Colorado Shines Brighter
- Early Intervention Providers
- Family Advocates
- Home Visitors
- Care Navigators (Early Childhood Councils)
- County Case Managers
- Parent Educators
- Behavioral Health Specialists
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants
- Nurses



# Strategy 2: Support our early childhood workforce

Provide the tools, resources, and support for professionals who care for our children and families.

## Priority Actions

*See [handout “State and Federal Stimulus Strategies: Support the Early Care and Education Workforce”](#) for more information.*

Launch the following stimulus funded initiatives:

- Workforce Recruitment & Retention Programs
- CCCAP Teacher Salary Grant Program
- Free 101 and 103 Coursework
- Teacher Peer Mentorship
- Free Online Director Training
- Targeted Workforce Retention Grants

# Strategy 2: Support our early childhood workforce

## Workforce Networking and Skill Building

### Priority Actions

- Increase availability of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services, Incredible Years, Branches, Flourishing in the Pandemic, and other programs to help child care providers and children struggling with the social and emotional challenges the pandemic has caused.
- Strengthening Colorado's Families and Communities Conference
- Expand Home Visiting Workforce Development (Motivational Interviewing, Reflective Supervision, Strengthening Families through Protective Factors, and Trauma Informed Care)
- Expand Family Advocacy Workforce Development



# Strategy 3: Strengthen communities and families

**Provide evidence-based supports and services to improve family well-being by increasing family protective factors.**

## Programs

- Family Resource Centers
- Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Trust Fund (CO CAP Board)
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families
- Federal Community Based Child Abuse Prevention
- Colorado Shines Brighter
- Early Childhood Councils
- Colorado Community Response (CCR)
- Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families
- Fatherhood Program
- Resources for Family Friend and Neighbor, including PDIS
- Home Visiting
- Early Start



# Strategy 3: Strengthen communities and families

**Provide evidence-based supports and services to improve family well-being by increasing family protective factors.**

## Priority Actions

- Restore funding for Family Support Services
- Implement the Partnership for Thriving Families community of practice
- Offer community grants for the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Release Parent Hub, a centralized website for family-facing information
- Implement Family Friend and Neighbor Strategic Action Plan
- Provide leadership training opportunities with parent stipends
- Offer respite services and recreational support for families
- Offer Protective Factors Training in PDIS and inclusion in Colorado Shines

A photograph of a classroom scene with a blue semi-transparent overlay. In the foreground, two young boys are seated at a light-colored wooden table, focused on playing with numerous colorful cards that feature numbers and mathematical symbols. The boy on the left wears a grey sweatshirt with a Mario character graphic, while the boy on the right wears a dark blue long-sleeved shirt with horizontal stripes. In the background, other children are visible, including a girl in a pink shirt and another in a blue shirt, engaged in activities. A teacher or adult is partially visible on the left side of the frame. The overall atmosphere is educational and interactive.

# Federal & State Stimulus Funding Stakeholder Engagement



## **CRRSA Funding Overview**

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) included an increase of \$119 million to Colorado in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). These funds must be obligated by September 30, 2022 and fully spent by September 30, 2023.





# CRRSA Feedback Gathering

## Background

The OEC conducted a stakeholder feedback survey to determine what funding strategies the Colorado early childhood stakeholder community preferred.

## Participants

2,233 individuals took the survey.

## Results

The final strategies Colorado put forth reflect many of those strategies that stakeholders valued most, including:

- Reducing CCCAP copayments
- Increasing early childhood mental health support
- Raising CCCAP rates and paid absences
- Offering sustainability grants to providers
- Providing workforce recruitment and retention supports

See handout *"Federal Stimulus Strategies Survey Results"* for additional information.



## ARP Funding Overview

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act included multiple funding streams to support the early care and learning sector. Colorado has received over \$470 million through the ARP Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), specifically:

- \$286 million for a Child Care Stabilization Grant fund to offer immediate grants to child care providers struggling to stay open, retain the state's early childhood educator workforce, and reduce family child care tuition or co-payments. These funds must be obligated by September 30, 2022 and fully spent by September 30, 2023:
  - 90% (\$257M) must go out as direct aid to child care providers;
  - 10% (\$28M) may be used for administrative expenses and supply building;
- \$178.5 million for flexible supplemental CCDF award. These funds must be obligated by September 30, 2023 and fully spent by September 30, 2024 ;



## ARP Funding Overview, Continued

The ARP Act also includes \$8,444,078 million through other funding streams, including:

- \$829,563 Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant to be spent by September 30, 2022 on basic needs of families in existing funded programs, workforce development, limited expansion of services, and technology.
- \$4,200,999 Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant to be spent by September 30, 2025 on direct services to families, workforce development, data system enhancements, cross-system collaboration, local child maltreatment prevention planning, and parent leadership support.
- \$3,339,306 Part C Early Intervention Grant to be spent by September 30, 2023 on direct services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, and other costs related to implementing a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide system.



A man and a young child are walking away from the camera on a grassy field. The man is wearing a light blue shirt and jeans, and the child is wearing a light blue shirt and dark pants. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a blue sky. A yellow tractor is visible in the distance.

# ARP Feedback Gathering

## Background

The OEC partnered with Early Milestones Colorado to gather data to inform ARP strategies. Early Milestones conducted 8 focus groups, reviewed data from their COVID surveys, collected information from subject matter experts, and reviewed secondary data to identify possible priority areas for spending stimulus funds.

## Priorities Identified

- Benefits and Compensation
- Facilities
- Family Tuition Relief
- Financial Stability
- Flexible Use of Funds
- Health and Mental Health
- Substitutes
- Training and Coaching



## Next Steps

### The OEC Will:

- Host a town hall to give an overview of all strategies.
- Prepare and execute a communications plan to ensure equitable and inclusive access to families and providers in Colorado.
- Develop 25+ work plans for each new Priority Action, including implementation partners, sustainability planning, and outcome measures.
- Create funding strategies for Supplemental Discretionary CCDF \$178M.



**THANK YOU.**  
**Questions?**



**COLORADO**

Department of Human Services