

## 2024 Legislative Wrap-up

2024 Legislative Highlights: Advancing  
Early Childhood Education in Colorado



As one of Colorado's leading advocates for early care and education, Clayton Early Learning has played a pivotal role in advancing policies that enhance Early Childhood Education in every aspect. With a heartfelt focus on the well-being of Colorado's youngest children and their families, we deeply appreciate our legislators' thoughtful and courageous approaches to addressing critical issues for children, families, and educators. We extend our gratitude to all our Parents, Families, Staff, and Ambassadors who have dedicated their time to advocating for Early Childhood Education. Here are some highlights from 2024 Legislation that closely align with Clayton Early Learning's mission:

### Early Childhood Education & Development

At Clayton, we prioritize advocating for Early Childhood Education & Development. We work with children aged 0-5 and understand that crucial developmental milestones occur during this period. We strongly support robust early childhood education and development policies because we believe that they form the foundation for a child's future success. Early childhood education has a significant impact on cognitive, social, and emotional development, which are essential for lifelong learning. By supporting legislation that prioritizes early childhood initiatives, we ensure that every child receives a high-quality education from the beginning, setting a strong base for their academic and personal growth. These policies not only benefit individual children but also improve communities by nurturing a skilled, resilient workforce and reducing long-term societal costs. At

Clayton Early Learning, we believe that investing in our youngest learners today ensures a brighter, more equitable future for all.

**Bilingual Child Care Licensing Resources, HB24-1009 | Passed |** Mandates the Colorado Department of Early Childhood to provide educational resources and information in plain language and the state's two most spoken languages to aid in meeting childcare licensing requirements. It establishes a bilingual licensing unit and appropriates funds to update the department's mobile licensing application, ensuring improved accessibility and support for early childhood program operators and applicants.

**Improved Access to the Child Care Assistance Program, HB24-1223 | Passed |** Revises Colorado

childcare assistance program (CCCAP) streamlines the application process by focusing on essential eligibility criteria, preventing counties from imposing additional requirements, and mandating that applicants update only changed information during redetermination. These changes aim to simplify access to childcare assistance and reduce bureaucratic barriers for eligible families across the state.

**Programs for the Development of Child Care Facilities, HB24-1237 | Passed** establishes three new programs under the Division of Housing in the Department of Local Affairs to support childcare infrastructure in Colorado. These programs include technical assistance for facility development, planning grants for regulatory updates, and capital grants for construction, with policies to be adopted by November 1, 2024. Annual reports will track outcomes and funding, ensuring transparency and accountability to legislative committees and the Department of Early Childhood.

**State Income Tax Credit for Care workers, HB24-1312 | Passed** allows refundable income tax credit for qualifying resident individuals employed in the care workforce from 2025 to 2028, providing \$1,200 for single filers and \$2,400 for joint filers, contingent on adjusted gross income thresholds and specific job roles. It mandates electronic reporting by relevant departments to facilitate credit administration, along with penalties for non-compliance by long-term care employers, and allocates \$47,193 for initial implementation costs in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

**Sunset Continue Colorado Department of Early Childhood Executive Director Rule-Making, HB24-1332 | Passed** extends the rule-making authority of the executive director of the Department of Early Childhood, based on recommendations from the Department of Regulatory Agencies' 2023 sunset review, ensuring authority remains effective until September 1, 2031. HB24-1387 Preschool Programs Cash Fund.

**Preschool Programs Cash Fund, HB24-1387 | Passed** The act allows the Department of Early Childhood to use remaining annual appropriations from the Preschool Programs Cash Fund to expand preschool services for low-income children and support the universal preschool program. It prevents the full depletion of the fund by the legislature before the fiscal year begins, designating any unappropriated balance as a reserve from which the department can request supplemental appropriations as needed.

## Healthy Families, Healthy Children

**At Clayton Early Learning, we advocate for healthy families and healthy children. We understand that a child's health and well-being are fundamental to their overall development and success. By supporting policies that prioritize the health of families and children, we ensure access to essential healthcare services, nutritious meals, and supportive environments that promote physical and mental wellness from an early age. This Policies not only enhances the immediate well-being of children and families but also contribute to long-term societal benefits, including reduced healthcare costs and improved educational outcomes. We are committed to nurturing healthy, thriving communities through our advocacy efforts, ensuring every child has the opportunity to grow up happy, healthy, and ready to learn.**

**High-Acuity Crisis for Children & Youth, HB24-1038 | Passed** mandates HCPF, BHA, and CDHS to develop a comprehensive care system for children and youth under 21 with complex behavioral health needs, including assessments, intensive care coordination, expanded services, and treatment foster care. It also establishes a training academy for residential child care providers, expands treatment beds, sets quality standards, extends emergency resources, raises reimbursement rates, and initiates pilot programs for juvenile justice-involved youth, with funding for implementation in 2024-25.

**Maternal Health Midwives, HB24-1262 | Passed** mandates the Colorado Civil Rights Commission to establish specific guidelines for receiving maternity care reports, adds midwives to key advisory boards and

committees, and requires health facilities offering maternal health services to notify relevant parties at least 90 days before service eliminations. Additionally, it enables the Department of Public Health and Environment to contract with a third-party evaluator to study perinatal healthcare practices, closures, and health professional shortages, and to recommend guidelines for managing closures and transferring care.

#### **Firearms & Ammunition Excise Tax, HB24-1349**

**| Passed |** In November 2024, Colorado voters will decide on a 6.5% excise tax on firearm sales, aimed to generate an estimated \$39 million annually for mental health services, school safety, and support for victims of violence, pending approval of the ballot measure.

#### **Continue Youth Mental Health Services Program, SB24-001**

**| Passed |** The "I Matter" youth mental health program, set to expire in June 2024, will now continue until June 2034 under new legislation. The act removes procurement exemptions for selecting a vendor and mandates annual reporting and data submission requirements, alongside a \$5 million appropriation for the program.

#### **Behavioral Health First Aid Training Program, SB24-007**

**| Passed |** The act establishes the Behavioral Health First Aid Training Program under Colorado's Office of Suicide Prevention, aimed at educating various community members, including educators, law enforcement, and nonprofit staff, on recognizing and responding to mental health and substance use challenges. It mandates the office to contract with a nonprofit to administer the program statewide, evaluate its impact annually, and allocate \$250,000 towards its implementation.

#### **Children's Behavioral Health Statewide Systems of Care, SB24-059**

**| Loss |** The legislation aims to create a comprehensive statewide system of care for children's behavioral health in Colorado. It includes provisions for coordination among agencies, improving access to services, and allocating funds to support the establishment and

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maintenance of this system.

#### **Improving Prenatal Health Outcomes, SB24-175**

**| Passed |** The legislation mandates health benefit plans to cover doula services at the same level as recommended by Colorado's Medicaid program, effective July 1, 2025. It also empowers the Department of Public Health and Environment to collaborate with a perinatal quality collaborative to improve maternal and infant health outcomes statewide, requiring hospitals to report data and participate in quality improvement initiatives starting December 15, 2025.

#### **Support for Working Families**

**At Clayton Early Learning, advocating for Support for Working Families during the 2024 legislation is of utmost importance. We understand that access to affordable childcare and supportive family policies are essential for working parents to thrive professionally and personally. By supporting legislation that provides funding for childcare subsidies, paid family leave, and flexible work arrangements, we ensure that families can maintain stability while fostering their children's development in nurturing environments. These Policies not only benefit the immediate families we serve but also contribute to a stronger economy by empowering parents to participate fully in the workforce. At Clayton Early Learning, we believe that supporting working families is a cornerstone of building resilient communities where every child has the opportunity to flourish.**

#### **Baby Bonds Program Study, HB24-1297**

**| Loss |** The bill would mandate a study by the state treasurer to explore the feasibility of implementing a "baby bonds" program, where the state would invest funds for eligible children to use for specified purposes upon turning 18. The study must assess wealth distribution, evaluate existing public assistance opportunities, consider investment options, and examine how such a program could address racial wealth disparities, with a report due to the general assembly by April 15, 2025.

**Repeal & Reenact Earned Income Tax Credit Increase, HB24-1084 | Passed** | reinstates and modifies legislation from House Bill 23B-1002 to double the earned income tax credit for Colorado residents for tax year 2023, reflecting 50% of the federal credit claimed. This adjustment serves as a one-time refund of surplus state revenues for the 2022-23 fiscal year, with an appropriation of \$51,483 from the general fund to the Department of Revenue for implementation.

**Increase Protections for Minor Workers, HB24-1095 | Passed** | Starting January 1, 2025, this legislation enhances penalties under the "Colorado Youth Employment Opportunity Act of 1971" (CYEOA), directing collected fines into a wage theft enforcement fund and requiring entities violating CYEOA to compensate aggrieved individuals for damages. It also removes a provision penalizing legal guardians who knowingly allow minors to work in violation of CYEOA, institutes new conditions for penalty reduction, mandates public disclosure of final violation orders, and extends anti-discrimination protections to those asserting CYEOA rights, with \$125,255 allocated for implementation in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

**Defendant Filing Fees in Evictions, HB24-1099 | Passed** | The legislation amends civil court procedures by eliminating the fee for defendants filing answers in eviction cases and removes the process for waiving filing fees in residential eviction actions. It also mandates county courts to serve physical filings on plaintiffs and prohibits fees related to this service, while appropriating \$122,743 to the judicial department for the 2024-25 fiscal year, primarily for courts administration and information technology infrastructure.

**Earned Income Tax Credit Data Sharing, HB24-1288 | Passed** | The legislation requires the Department of Revenue to share tax credit claimant contact information confidentially with state departments for outreach purposes.

It sets up a pilot program to help 100,000 households claim tax credits, facilitated by a third-party entity for data sharing and reporting, with \$167,585 appropriated for implementation in fiscal year 2024-25, and permits governments to use data for automatic benefit program enrollment or eligibility notifications.

**Family Affordability Tax Credit, HB24-1311 | Passed** | The legislation establishes a refundable family affordability tax credit in Colorado from 2024 to 2033, varying by child's age and taxpayer income, adjusting with state revenue growth and inflation. It includes monthly refunds, exempts the credit from affecting public assistance eligibility, and allocates \$178,491 for Department of Revenue implementation in 2024-25.

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**Out-of-School Time Grant Program, HB24-1331 | Passed** | The act creates the Out-of-School Time Program Grant Program under the Department of Education, funding eligible nonprofits to offer academic enrichment and related services to public school students outside regular hours. It emphasizes academic support, student engagement, workforce skills, and life readiness, requiring annual reports to the department and ongoing legislative funding of \$3.5 million annually starting from 2024-25.

**Racial Equity Study, SB24-053 | Passed** | The act establishes the Black Coloradan Racial Equity Commission within the legislative department to conduct a comprehensive study on the historical and ongoing impacts of slavery and systemic racism on Black Coloradans, utilizing historical research by the State Historical Society and an

economic analysis by a third party. The commission will present findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor, with funds sourced from gifts, grants, or donations allocated to a dedicated cash fund for the study's expenses.

**Monthly Residential Eviction Data & Report, SB24-064 | Passed |** The new law requires the judicial department to publish monthly reports on residential evictions, which will increase transparency. It also establishes a standard procedure for handling eviction complaints with a new form that can be accessed online. Courts will have the flexibility to accept non-standard complaint forms. Additionally, the law allocates \$136,122 from the general fund to the judicial department for the 2024-25 fiscal year to support these improvements in court administration.

### **Clarify Individualized Education Program**

**Information, SB24-069 | Passed |** The act mandates the Department of Education to develop and provide a plain-language training program by July 1, 2026, on individualized education program laws and procedures, including rights for parents and students. It requires in-person delivery of the program and online accessibility of related information. Additionally, it appropriates \$75,288 from the general fund in the 2024-25 fiscal year to support implementation.

**Payment of Family & Medical Leave Benefits, SB24-155 | Passed |** The act updates Colorado's paid family and medical leave laws to allow for the collection of overpaid benefits, exempts these judgments from certain creditor protections, and permits coordination with workers' compensation benefits. It also enables the Division of Family and Medical Leave Insurance to access workers' compensation records and allows the Department of Revenue to share tax data to support benefit coordination efforts.

## Contact Us

For more information about Policy & Advocacy work at Clayton Early Learning, please contact **Lydia Waligorski, Director of Policy & Advocacy**, at [lwaligorski@claytonearlylearning.org](mailto:lwaligorski@claytonearlylearning.org), or at 303-393-5623, or **Ealasha Vaughner, Manager of Policy & Advocacy**, at [evaughner@claytonearlylearning.org](mailto:evaughner@claytonearlylearning.org)

