

2022 Legislative Wrap Up

Colorado Takes Positive Steps to Better Support Families



Early Childhood Education And Development

Department Early Childhood And Universal Preschool Program, [HB 22-1295](#)* This bill establishes the duties of the new Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) and its executive director by relocating all early childhood programs from the Departments of Human Services and Education. The bill also creates Colorado's universal preschool program that will go into effect beginning school year 2023-24.

Early Childhood Educator Income Tax Credit, [HB 22-1010](#)* This bill creates a refundable income tax credit for all eligible early childhood educators. This tiered credit is tied to the educator's credential level and will provide additional take home pay to early childhood educators, who are often paid low-wages.

Child Care Support Programs, [SB 22-213](#)* This bill utilizes flexible American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to increase access to high-quality child care, strengthen the early childhood workforce, and support the parents/caregivers of our youngest learners. The state will invest in proven, scalable efforts that promote school readiness in child care programs and in homes, including:

- Employer-Based Child Care (\$10M);
- Emerging & Expanding Child Care (\$16M);
- Family, Friend & Neighbor (FFN) Training (\$7.5M);
- Early Childhood Recruitment & Retention (\$15M); and
- Home Visiting (\$1M).



Expansion Of Experiential Learning Opportunities, [SB 22-140](#) This bill expands experiential learning opportunities through work-based learning incentive programs, a digital navigation program, a career-aligned English as a second language program, and a global talent task force to study in-demand occupations. Of note to the early childhood field, the bill requires the Office of New Americans to convene an 18-month global talent task force to study the process for certain in-demand occupational licenses – including child care providers and teachers – and determine how to better take advantage of the global pool of skilled workers. This bill also provides tools for new Americans and English language learners to enter into work-based learning programs to improve language and skills development for specific occupations and careers.

Child Care Center Property Tax Exemption, [HB 22-1006](#) This bill allows landlords that lease properties to nonprofit child care centers to be eligible for property tax exemptions. Providing this property tax exemption for landlords may incentivize new spaces or reduced rents for tenants operating these types of child care centers.

*Clayton Early Learning is an innovation hub that fosters thriving, equitable communities by partnering with families to **nurture** a whole child, whole family approach to the early years, **discover** what works, and **advance** systems change. Clayton is proud to have provided subject matter expertise, created and led coalitions, and highlighted parent and staff leadership to inform the direction of the 2022 legislative session. With the well-being of Colorado's youngest children and their families at heart, we appreciate our legislators' thoughtful and bold approaches in addressing critical issues affecting children, their families and their caregivers as our communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this forward-thinking effort, Colorado is poised to take several positive steps to improve the lives of our youngest children, families and their communities. From implementing a new early childhood state department, improving access to health care for Colorado's immigrant populations, and reforming our tax policy to support working families, Colorado took major steps towards making our state the best place to raise a family.*

Learn more about Clayton's Policy and Advocacy work at ClaytonEarlyLearning.org/advocacy

*Denotes priority bill

Healthy Families, Healthy Children



Family And Medical Leave Insurance Fund, [HB 22-1133*](#) This bill provides an advance payment of premiums for state employee family and medical leave coverage to implement the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act. Paid family and medical leave offers economic security to families and reduces the rates of infant mortality and stress and depression for mothers.

Health Benefits For Colorado Children And Pregnant Persons, [HB 22-1289*](#)

This bill extends full health coverage for undocumented pregnant people and children up to Colorado's CHIP eligibility income limit, and provides Colorado with the opportunity to draw down additional federal funds to cover the full 12 months of postpartum coverage for people who receive prenatal and delivery care through CHIP.

To allow for Coloradans to access CHIP, the bill creates a special enrollment period for pregnancy so they can sign up for health insurance through Connect for Health Colorado.

These changes will improve access to quality health insurance coverage, breast pumps, diapers, and evidence-based health care models.

Reproductive Health Equity Act, [HB 22-1279](#) This bill protects reproductive rights as fundamental rights in Colorado, ensuring that people have access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care including contraception and abortion. The bill also states that fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses do not have independent rights under the laws of the state.

Clean Water In Schools And Child Care Centers, [HB 22-1358](#) This bill creates the school and child care clean drinking water fund to help schools, child care centers, and family child care homes pay for the costs of testing and remediation of lead in drinking water. Family child care homes are able to opt out of compliance with the bill.

Critical Services For Low Income Households, [HB 22-1380](#) This bill creates a community food access program in the Colorado Department of Agriculture to improve access to and lower prices for healthy foods in low-income and underserved areas of the state. The bill also provides a one-time grant of \$25,000 to small grocery retailers to improve infrastructure and technological capabilities to accept SNAP, WIC, and other food access programs. Lastly, the bill will help the Department of Human Services integrate data systems to support eligibility of families across benefits programs.

Regulate Dental Therapists, [SB 22-219](#) The bill creates a license and licensure process for Dental Therapists in Colorado. Dental therapists are a great alternative treatment provider, particularly for many of the counties that do not currently have any dental providers. This bill expands access to quality dental care, which will improve oral health outcomes for many communities and decrease the disparities that exist along geographic areas, racial and ethnic lines, and income levels.

Support For Working Families

Sales Tax Exemption Essential Hygiene Products, [HB 22-1055*](#) This bill eliminates the state sales tax on menstrual products, infant diapers, and older adult incontinence products. Removing the state sales tax on these items acknowledges that they are essential products like food and medicine and will help families be able to afford these products more easily.

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Modifications To Colorado Works Program, [HB 22-1259*](#) Colorado Works is the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which provides financial support to families who live below the federal poverty level. This bill increases basic cash assistance to keep up with the rising cost of living; makes improvements to how families are served; creates a smoother off-ramp from the program; and improves engagement and outreach with families.

TABOR Refund Mechanism For FY 2021-22 Only, [SB 22-233*](#) This bill will result in checks of at least \$400 to individuals and \$800 to joint filers who filed a 2021 state income tax return. This bill made changes to the mechanisms used to determine rebates under Colorado's TABOR law. Colorado had a record \$2 billion in revenue, and without the change in law, lower- and middle-class working Coloradans would have received nearly 40% less, and higher-income people would have received nearly 300% more.

Access To Suppressed Court Eviction Records, [SB 22-019](#) This bill fixes current law to allow an attorney, with permission from the person involved in an eviction proceeding, to access the eviction proceeding records in order to provide legal advice or mediation.

Create Fair Housing Unit Department Of Law, [HB 22-1082](#) This bill creates a fair housing unit within the existing Department of Law and authorizes the attorney general to investigate when there is reason to believe that there is a potential violation of housing related laws.

Teen Parent Driving Instruction Course, [HB 22-1042](#) This bill provides funding support for income-eligible teen parents ages 15-20 to cover the costs of driver's education courses, driver's permit fees, and driver's license fees.



Clayton Community Ambassador Program

Clayton Community Ambassadors exercised their leadership and advocacy skills, making major contributions to the success of Colorado's 2022 legislative session. This innovative program provides Head Start and Early Head Start parents and staff the opportunity to participate in specialized trainings with community partners, network with professionals, and learn the skills needed to become changemakers within their community. Based on the belief that the most influential catalysts for change are those directly affected by policy decisions, this unique program empowers those with lived experiences to communicate effectively with lawmakers, adding an authentic perspective to conversations that impact children and families in Colorado. This year, Ambassadors were actively involved in the policy process through: 20+ visits with policymakers; 15 testimonies; 12 coalitions; 5 media engagements; 6 trainings and presentations; and 2 advocacy days.

For more details about the 2022 legislation that shaped these pivotal results for Colorado's children and families, please contact Christina Walker, Clayton's Director of Policy & Advocacy at 303.393.5623 or cwalker@claytonearlylearning.org.

