



HB26-1259

Department of Early Childhood Cleanup

STATUS: House Second Reading passed with no amendments

SPONSORS: Rep. Sirota (D), Sen. Bridges (D), Sen. Marchman (D)

SUMMARY: The bill makes the following changes to state law related to CDEC:

- Indefinitely continues licensing exemptions for informal childcare provided in home by FFNs
- CCCAP changes: Providers may serve families before final CCCAP eligibility is determined and receive reimbursement if the family is later found eligible. If they are found ineligible, the state will not reimburse for services already provided.
- Narrows the age range served by ECMH program from prenatal to 8 to prenatal to 6; ends the annual program report after 2027; delays the program's inclusion in CDEC SMART Act by a year to 2028.
- Allows use of General Fund or State Education Fund for the Universal Preschool Program.
- Requires the administration of preschool services for eligible children who are three years or younger and do not have disabilities to be effectuated by a school district or charter school
- Changes eligibility for SE learning programs grant; social-emotional curricula must be research-based to be eligible for SE learning programs grant. This loosens current standards slightly by changing the current language from "proven, evidence-based intervention" to "research-based intervention."

FISCAL NOTES: The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis: minimal state revenue, minimal state workload, local government, school districts. No appropriation is required.

SUPPORT: Weld County

OPPOSITION: No currently registered opposition

MONITORING: Aurora Public Schools, Colorado Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, Colorado Counties, Colorado Rural Schools Alliance, ECCLA, Mile High United Way, American Academy of Pediatrics

PROS

- By indefinitely continuing licensing exemptions for FFNs, the bill helps to support the informal childcare supply. This is especially important for rural families, families with non-traditional work schedules, and low-income households
- Allowing the use of General Fund and State Education Fund dollars for UPK will improve stability for UPK
- The change in eligibility for SE grants from evidence-based to research-based may allow more innovative or newer programs to qualify for funding.
- Allowing providers to serve families before final CCCAP eligibility is determined will help families access childcare quicker

CONS

- Making the FFN licensing exemption permanent means some childcare settings will continue operating without state health and safety standards, rising uneven quality and weaker child protections.
- The change to CCCAP rules also presents a risk to providers given that if a family is found ineligible after pre-determination, they will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Lowering the age cap in ECMH from 8 to 6 could leave early elementary students without support.