



## SB26-019

### Early Childhood Local System Consolidation

**STATUS:** Introduced in Senate, Assigned to Education.  
**Next hearing is scheduled for February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:30 pm.**

**SPONSORS:** Sen. Matt Ball (D), Sen. Scott Bright (R), and Rep. Emily Sirota (D)

**SUMMARY:** SB26-019 restructures Colorado's early childhood coordination system by **eliminating Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs)** and **transferring their responsibilities to Early Childhood Councils (ECCs)**. The bill aims to improve coordination, accountability, and access to early childhood and family support services statewide by:

- **1) Shifting Responsibilities:** The bill eliminates Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs) and transfers all of their duties to Early Childhood Councils. This change takes effect July 1, 2026.
- **2) Expanded Roles for Early Childhood Councils:** Early Childhood Councils would be required to: Develop comprehensive community plans addressing early childhood needs. Coordinate with families, service providers, local governments, and other stakeholders to improve access to services. Recruit and support providers to create a mixed delivery system that expands choice for families. Help with workforce training and retention for the early care and education workforce. Monitor quality and availability of services and support improvement efforts. Promote data sharing and strategic outreach across systems serving families.
- **3) Strategic Planning and Accountability:** The bill requires councils to: Create scope of work plans tied to strategic goals and available funding. Establish accountability metrics aligned with these plans. Participate in annual performance reviews conducted by the state's early childhood department. Be subject to performance improvement processes and potential termination of agreements if goals are not met.

**FISCAL NOTES:** There is no fiscal note for this bill at this time.

**SUPPORT:** No currently registered support (likely to change as the bill progresses)

**OPPOSITION:** No currently registered opposition

## PROS

- Consolidating coordination responsibilities under Early Childhood Councils (ECCs) could reduce duplication between Local Coordinating Organizations (LCOs) and councils. A single coordinating entity may make the system easier for families and providers to navigate.
- Increased oversight may improve transparency and ensure public dollars are tied to measurable outcomes.
- Requiring community-wide early childhood plans may improve long-term planning and alignment across services (child care, health, family support, early education).
- Centralizing coordination may help align local efforts with the Colorado Department of Early Childhood's priorities and statewide initiatives. May reduce fragmentation across regions.
- Explicit inclusion of workforce recruitment, training, and retention could elevate workforce issues as a core system responsibility rather than an add-on.

## CONS

- Smaller or rural councils may struggle to meet expanded expectations.
- ECCs would absorb significant new responsibilities without guaranteed increases in capacity or funding.