

## Colorado's Dual Generation Approach to Subsidized Child Care Reform

Colorado delegates significant authority and flexibility in the administration of child care subsidies to local county governments and their human services agencies, often resulting in distinct policy and procedural differences from county to county.

The **CCAP Collaborative** was launched in summer 2013 by Colorado Children's Campaign, Clayton Early Learning and EPIC to create space for discussion about what was working well and what might be done differently.

We established an agreed upon philosophy that child care is an essential component of a state's early childhood/school readiness system AND its workforce development system

- Focus was not initially on legislation, rather on the intended two generation outcomes of the program and a fresh look at current implementation
- Mid-stream, a few key state Legislators expressed keen interest in the information and recommendations coming from the Collaborative
- As the CCAP Collaborative continued to meet and vet new ideas for more effective policy, a bill, **HB 14-1317**, was drafted by legislative leadership that successfully carried legislation needed to enact many of the identified policy changes

In the summer of 2014 a **Joint Legislation Implementation Task Force**, staffed by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) was appointed by the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) and the Office of Early Childhood Sub-PAC (policy advisory committee) to advise and assist with development of rules and data system changes needed to implement all provisions of HB 14-1317.

- Appointed members represent county elected officials, CDHS/OEC, Governor appointed members of the ECLC, county departments of human services, providers and advocates
- Periodic task groups have been/are assigned to develop more detailed recommendations and bring back to the full Task Force
- Work will be complete by end of December 2015, or Spring 2016

This work all began prior to the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. We were fortunate that nearly all of the new requirements, as well as the philosophy, of the reauthorized federal statute align with our state statute and policy revisions. In addition, most, if not all, funding needed to implement our revised policies was appropriated by the legislature.

## Primary Provisions of HB 14-1317

- Significantly lower co-pay for families below poverty
- Tiered co-pay based on quality
- Easing of the “cliff effect”
- Statewide floor for initial eligibility (set at no lower than 165%)
- Higher exit eligibility (at least at 185%)
- Easing of eligibility documentation requirements
- 12 month eligibility and longer job search periods
- Decoupling care schedule from parent’s work schedule
- Alignment of care authorization with Head Start program year
- Tiered provider reimbursement based on quality
- Encouragement for counties to contract for slots

Provisions have differing implementation time frames (as early as immediately and as late as July 1, 2016); most required rule revisions; some required new data elements or system changes; some required funding and of those, some were listed as “subject to available appropriations”.

Clayton Early Learning is a Colorado/National Catalyst in Quality Early Care and Education:

- Serving 700 low income children and families in high quality comprehensive early learning settings, including Educare Denver
- Training more than 2500 teachers annually reaching about 10,000 additional children
- Researching and evaluating promising practices in early childhood care and education
- Promoting effective and efficient early childhood policies and funding mechanisms, in partnership with Colorado Children’s Campaign, EPIC and other advocates