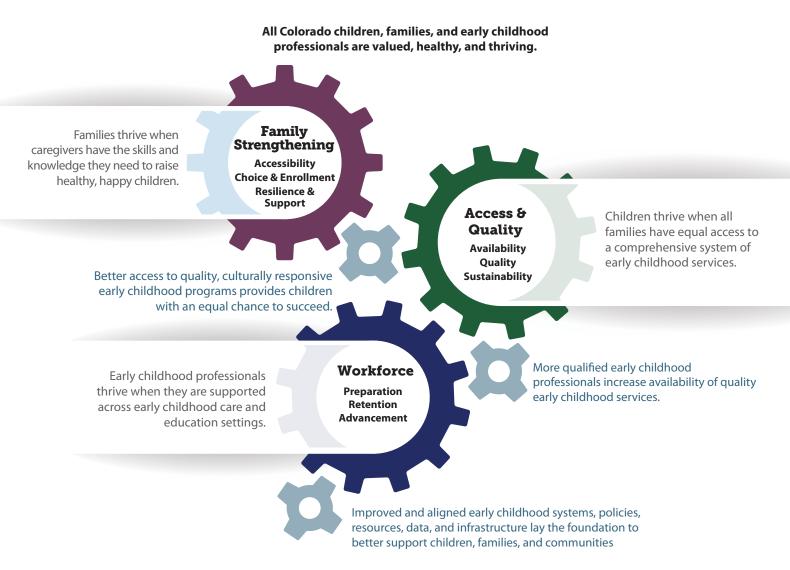


Strengthening Colorado's Early Childhood Sector



he Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) is dedicated to creating a state in which all children, families, and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy, and thriving. In support of this vision, CDEC received over \$700 million in federal and state stimulus funding in 2021-2022 to address pandemic recovery needs and advance efforts to strengthen and grow Colorado's early childhood sector.

More than 2,300 child care providers, the parents of young children, and other key stakeholders identified three main areas in which funding is needed, with the success of each area dependent on the success of the other areas. Together, the stimulus-funded activities strengthen our ability to provide an accessible, quality early learning and care system that serves all young children in Colorado.



Stimulus funds are being distributed by CDEC to early childhood programs and services, professionals, families, and others. The Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver is overseeing multiple, high-quality evaluations to ensure the goals of the funds are met and to identify opportunities for ongoing learning, scalability, and sustainability.

Stimulus Goals & Strategy Examples



Children thrive when all families have equal access to a comprehensive system of early childhood services.

Availability

Open, operate, and expand early childhood programs and services. Examples:

- Grants fund construction of employer-based child care centers.
- <u>Bonuses</u> incentivize providers to become licensed or CCCAP Qualified Exempt.

Quality

Improve quality of programs and services. Examples:

- Bonuses to providers enhance quality level through Colorado Shines system.
- Grants to update heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems provide clean, filtered air for children.

Sustainability

Sustain early childhood programs and services; improve financial viability. Examples:

- CCCAP policy increases payments to CCCAP providers based on child enrollment, regardless of attendance.
- <u>Business training</u> and consulting sessions support providers throughout the year.



Early childhood professionals thrive when they are supported across early childhood care and education settings.

Preparation

Provide diverse pathways to bring knowledgeable workforce into the field. Examples:

- <u>Scholarships</u> support students in pursuing certificates and degrees in early childhood.
- Apprenticeships provide an alternate career pathway for new and developing early childhood professionals.

Retention

Improve wages; provide a supportive work environment. Examples:

- <u>Teacher Wage Increase Pilot</u> boosts early childhood teacher salaries to provide a livable wage.
- <u>Substitute teacher fund</u> allows staff teachers to take time for personal needs and professional development.

Advancement

Expand professional development opportunities. Examples:

- Free online training supports new child care center directors.
- <u>Pilot program</u> creates statewide mentor network to support new teachers and develop leadership.

Family Strengthening

Families thrive when caregivers have the skills and knowledge they need to raise healthy, happy children.

Accessibility

Reduce barriers; help more families afford programs and services. Examples:

- New formula lowers CCCAP co-pays for families and prevents sharp fluctuations.
- Providers receiving <u>Stabilization</u> <u>Grants</u> share relief with families by maintaining or lowering tuition.

Choice & Enrollment

Support families to select and enroll in high-quality programs. Examples:

- Expanded income threshold increases family eligibility for CCCAP.
- Navigators support caregivers with real-time open enrollment data.

Resilience & Support

Tailor support to equip families to care for young children. Examples:

- <u>Counseling and consultation</u> support health and well-being of providers, families, and children.
- Information provided through trusted community settings helps families access early childhood supports.

View all <u>stimulus-funded strategies</u> and the outcomes they are helping to achieve.

