

## **Early Childhood Stimulus Evaluation: *Spotlight on CCCAP Teacher Wage Increase***

### **Background**

Between 2021 and 2022, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) received over \$700 million in state and federal stimulus funding to strengthen and expand the early childhood (EC) sector in Colorado. CDEC is distributing stimulus funds between February 2022 and September 2024 based on feedback from over 2,300 child care providers, families, and other stakeholders.

CDEC is dedicated to evaluating the stimulus-funded activities to ensure the goals of the funds were met and to identify opportunities for ongoing learning, scalability, and sustainability. CDEC partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) at the University of Denver to facilitate this complex evaluation work as the EC Evaluation Hub. The Colorado Lab is contracting with evaluation partners, as appropriate, to conduct high-quality evaluations of prioritized stimulus activities.

### **Evaluation of CCCAP Teacher Wage Increase Activity**

Together with CDEC and EC experts, the Colorado Lab prioritized 18 activities - comprising about 90% of stimulus funds - that have significant potential for meaningful and actionable evaluation, including the **CCCAP Teacher Wage Increase Pilot** activity.

The CCCAP Teacher Wage Increase targets EC Teachers in CCCAP participating programs to support increased compensation, reduce turnover, and hire qualified staff to fill gaps. Building from evidence outside of Colorado showing effectiveness at reducing teacher turnover, Colorado has an opportunity to rigorously evaluate this Pilot activity because the amount of funding available will not meet the demand. Evaluation efforts include:

- Leveraging the state's random assignment into the group receiving the salary boost to determine the impact of the Pilot on workforce retention, turnover, vacancies, wages, parity with desired roles, financial stability, reliance on public assistance, and program costs.
- Understanding program implementation, including outreach and participation.
- Unearthing challenges, success factors, and lessons learned to guide future investments.

The evaluation will include analysis of administrative data, baseline and follow-up surveys and interviews with EC teachers and directors, and exit interviews with resigning teachers.

### **Evaluation Team**

The Colorado Lab is partnering with MDRC and MetrixIQ to evaluate this stimulus-funded activity. MDRC is a national research firm with decades of experience performing evaluations in partnership with state and local government partners. MDRC's evaluation work is co-funded through the EC Evaluation Hub and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. MetrixIQ is CDEC's selected implementation vendor for the CCCAP Teacher Salary Increase Pilot. As part of this effort, the Colorado Lab is partnering with MetrixIQ to administer baseline surveys used to evaluate the effects of the Pilot.

This evaluation is being conducted on behalf of the State of Colorado Department of Early Childhood under the coordination of the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab to build evidence for stimulus-funded early childhood activities.