

HB 24-XXXX: Child-Friendly Communities

Representatives Bradfield and Lukens; Senators Marchman and Rich

A “child-friendly community” is one in which the needs of children and families can be met close to home or work. The availability of child care is critical to a thriving community and economy. This legislation seeks to create a more favorable environment for the development and creative reuse of facilities for child care in Colorado.

Why? After staffing, facilities represent the second-largest expense for child care operators. The processes to open a family child care home or commercial child care center are often lengthy, confusing, and costly. Colorado is missing out on many opportunities to expand access to child care because providers and potential partners get stuck in navigating these challenges. We have an opportunity to expand access to child care by recognizing the value of child care as community infrastructure, streamlining the navigation of the regulatory systems, and supporting access to capital. By helping to reduce these operating costs, we can free up capital for providers for other costs such as staffing, paving the way for a more sustainable business model.

This legislation helps to reduce costs and burden for child care by creating incentives and support for local governments, private partners, developers, and child care providers to:

- Formally recognize the critical value of child care
- Create regulatory alignment and simplification
- Navigate the process of creating or remodeling a child care facility
- Access capital to help with the development or remodel of child care spaces

Legislation Components

Program	Description
Child Care Development Technical Assistance	Create a support mechanism including training, web resources, and technical assistance to support local governments, private developers, and child care providers with the development of new family and commercial child care facilities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Understand the technical/licensing requirements for child care● Build capital stacks and identify appropriate locations that will support the development of new child care facilities● Understand local child care data related to needs, supply constraints, and affordability● Expert consultants to advise and support the implementation of recommended solutions
Child-Friendly Communities Planning Grant	Create a grant program to help local government accelerate the development of new family and commercial child care facilities by taking actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hiring assistance to evaluate and adopt policies to support child care development● Conducting a child care needs assessment● Conducting a local land and facility inventory● Developing and/or implementing aligned regulatory requirements and streamlined review and approval processes/timelines
Child Care Development Capital Fund	Funding to directly support the development or preservation of family and commercial child care facilities that meet a demonstrable need in a community. Local governments may apply independently or in partnership with a non-profit or private partner.

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