



2024 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY OVERVIEW



OUR MISSION: As the business community's nonpartisan voice for early childhood, EPIC leads efforts to build infrastructure and advance policies that support the workforce of today while developing the workforce of tomorrow.

The 2024 Colorado legislative session was full of wins for children and families. EPIC serves as a leader, a convener, and a partner to advance policy priorities that create positive outcomes for families and the economy.

BY THE NUMBERS



\$359 M

towards public investment in early care and education programs and support



100%

of Colorado legislators received information on EPIC's advocacy and policy priorities



11/11

EPIC-supported bills passed



22

business leaders engaged on EPIC's priority legislation

EPIC'S ADVOCACY AND POLICY AGENDA

EPIC shared our advocacy and policy agenda with all of Colorado's Representatives and Senators and thanked them for their service to Colorado.



EPIC team members Angela and Cassie at the Capitol sharing EPIC's legislative priorities and a small thank you gift.

EPIC'S LEGISLATOR BREAKFAST

EPIC hosted our first legislator breakfast at the Capitol. EPIC members met legislators and shared about our work and priorities for this session.



EPIC staff and members discussing policy priorities with legislators at the Legislative Breakfast event.

EPIC PRIORITY LEGISLATION

HB 24 1237

Programs for the Development of Child Care Facilities

SPONSORS: Rep Bradfield (R), Rep Lukens (D),
Sen Marchman (D), Sen Rich (R)

POSITION:

STATUS:

BIPARTISAN



Clearing the Path for New Child Care Supply: Solutions for Child-Friendly Planning, Housing, and Community Development (2023) laid the groundwork for this innovative legislation.

Creates 3 programs in the Department of Local Affairs to support the development of community-integrated child care:

- 1) **Technical Assistance:** develops training, web resources, and direct assistance for local governments, private developers, and child care providers as they navigate technical requirements in the development of new child care facilities.
- 2) **Local Government Planning Grant:** creates a planning grant to support local governments accelerate the development of child care facilities by reviewing local needs and streamlining processes and regulations.
- 3) **Capital Grant:** creates a grant program to directly support public-private partnerships for community projects to develop child care facilities

Together, these programs represent an innovative and unique approach to incentivizing and supporting communities with the integration of child care infrastructure.

In addition to our priority bill, EPIC supported several other bills aligned with our policy and advocacy priorities.



Community partners and EPIC staff testifying to the importance of Family-Friendly Communities legislation.



Grateful for the support of our Legislative sponsors and community partners.

EPIC participated in the Colorado Department of Revenue's workgroup to improve the administration and utility of the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit. The Department of Revenue will share a report summarizing their findings and recommendations with the state legislature this summer.

EPIC regularly provides comments to the Colorado Department of Early Childhood's rule making process. This important process creates rules for the implementation of critical early childhood programs including Universal Preschool and child care licensing.

PRIORITY #1

Advocate for policies that support children’s development and the needs of working families

Child care enables families to work, and families need access to a variety of affordable, high-quality early childhood supports and choices for their children. EPIC advocates for funding and program administration that creates an aligned, user-friendly, transparent, and effective system of resources centered on serving the needs of families and young children while ensuring that children have high-quality care and early education experiences.



HB 24 1223

Improved Access to the Child Care Assistance Program

SPONSORS: Rep Willford (D), Rep Garcia (D),
Sen Cutter (D), Sen Michaelson Jenet

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

- Simplifies the CCCAP application process
- Decreases family copayments
- Creates reimbursement policies that support provider financial sustainability

HB 24 1055

Child Passenger Safety and Education

SPONSORS: Rep Froelich (D), Rep Pugliese (R),
Sen F. Winter (D), Sen Priola (D)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

BIPARTISAN

- Aligns Colorado’s car seat and seatbelt requirements with national best practices
- Improves safety for children

HB 24 1332

Sunset Continue Colorado Department of Early Childhood Executive Director Rule-Making

SPONSORS: Rep Young (D), Rep Sirota (D),
Sen Buckner (D), Sen Michaelson Jenet (D)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

- Continues the Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) Executive Director’s rule making authority

SB 24 078

Outdoor Nature-Based Preschool Programs

SPONSORS: Sen Marchman (D), Sen Priola (D),
Rep Joseph (D), Rep McLachlan (D)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

- Creates a licensing structure for outdoor nature-based preschool programs (“Forest Schools”)
- Supports parent choice by expanding licensed child care options



HB 24 1311

Family Affordability Tax Credit

SPONSORS: Rep deGruy Kennedy (D), Rep Willford (D),
Sen Winter (D), Sen Coleman (D)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

- Creates a refundable tax credit for households with children
- Expected to cut child poverty in half in Colorado

“Tax credits incentivize significant investments in child care by employers, philanthropic donors, and others, supplementing public investments and helping to support financial sustainability in the child care sector.”

— EPIC PRESIDENT & CEO

PRIORITY #2

Advocate for investments in child care infrastructure to support and grow the economy

Child care is a critical service for economic development and growth in Colorado, and the state must invest in the physical infrastructure necessary to support child care services. EPIC advocates for communities and employers to be incentivized and supported to innovatively design, create, and sustain early child care and education services.

HB 24 1036

Adjusting Certain Tax Expenditures

SPONSORS: Rep Weissman (D), Rep Frizell (R),
Sen Hansen (D), Sen Kolker (D)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT *with Amendments*

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

BIPARTISAN

- Cleans up tax credits
- Child care facility investment tax credit was successfully extended for one year



PRIORITY #3

Advocate for policies that recognize and stabilize early childhood small businesses

EPIC helps to elevate the voices of those providing critical early childhood services and ensure systems are designed to support and stabilize the early childhood sector. The business of early childhood is incredibly challenging in many ways, and to ensure a sufficient supply of early childhood services, EPIC supports policies that value and create financial stability for these small businesses and their employees.



HB 24 1365

Opportunity Now Grants & Tax Credit

SPONSORS: Rep Lukens (D), Rep Soper (R),
Sen Bridges (D), Sen Will (R)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

BIPARTISAN

- Creates a grant program for a regional talent summit
- Creates an income tax credit for capital expenses related to training programs
- Opportunity Now supports workforce training for in-demand fields (including child care)

SB 24 002

Local Government Property Tax Rebates

SPONSORS: Sen Roberts (D), Rep McCluskie (D),
Rep Frizell (R)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

BIPARTISAN

- Gives local governments flexibility to provide tax credits or rebates for areas of specific local concern, including child care

HB 24 1009

Bilingual Child Care Licensing

SPONSORS: Rep Joseph (D), Rep McLachlan (D),
Sen Ginal (D), Sen Rich (R)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

BIPARTISAN

- Create bilingual access to child care licensing processes and supports

HB 24 1312

State Income Tax Credit for Careworkers

SPONSORS: Rep Sirota (D), Rep García (D),
Sen Rodriguez (D), Sen Bridges (D)

POSITION: OPPOSE SUPPORT

STATUS: FAILED PASSED

- Creates a tax credit for careworkers, including licensed and license-exempt child care providers

EPIC'S FIRST ANNUAL POST-SESSION REVIEW

EPIC hosted our first annual post-session review event in partnership with Mile High United Way after the legislative session wrapped up this year. EPIC policy committee chair Sue Renner moderated and we welcomed Representatives Bradfield and Garcia to talk about legislative support for early childhood.

Participants received a VIP tour of the Tamara M. Sparks Early Learning Center at Mile High United Way. EPIC provided critical technical assistance and support for this project. Both organizations were thrilled to highlight the center at this event.



Attendees learned more about the legislative session, heard from Reps. Bradfield and Garcia, and toured the Tamara M. Sparks Early Learning Center.

NOTEWORTHY

2024-25 Budgets for Early Childhood Programs

INCREASE OF

\$53.8 MILLION

for Universal Preschool (UPK)

\$4.9 MILLION

for a 2.0% increase in rates to community providers

\$2.03 MILLION

to support early childhood workforce attraction and retention efforts

INCREASE OF

\$21.1 MILLION

for Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)

\$2.8 MILLION

to support a universal home visiting pilot program offering comprehensive home evaluations to new mothers and infants

EPIC'S YEAR OF PROGRESS

The 2024 Colorado legislative session was very successful for EPIC, with our priority bill, HB 34-1237 Programs for the Development of Child Care Facilities, receiving strong bipartisan support and start-up funding. We couldn't have done it without the advocacy efforts of EPIC's members and partner organizations. Thank you for all of your efforts on this and our other EPIC-supported bills.

We also want to thank our policy team who spent long hours and late nights making sure that EPIC's member voices were heard at the Capitol:



Nicole Riehl
EPIC President & CEO



William Mutch
Contract Lobbyist,
Mutch Government
Relations



Beth Melton
Policy Advisor,
Melton Strategic Solutions

We are excited to celebrate a successful legislative session as we start planning for 2025!



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