
**Public Policy Committee
Pillar Position Statement**

Date: Jan. 1, 2024

Issue: Childcare & Early Childhood

Position:

Public policies and investments that increase access to childcare and investments in early childhood care and education are critical parts of a resilient and sustainable local economy and year-round community.

Strategy 1: Childcare as foundational.

- a. Advocate for policies and investments that directly increase the number of open childcare spots for Chaffee kids ages 0 - 5.
- b. Promote and assist as practicable the Chaffee County Early Childhood Council (CCECC) in their work to implement their current strategic plan.
- c. Elevate the interconnection and interreliance between childcare availability and workforce availability to local employers and decision-makers.
- d. Advocate and assist the gathering of quality and representative data regarding the childcare and early childhood needs of the community.

Rationale:

Chaffee County is a childcare desert. We lack adequate childcare spots and services for our current population, impacting the ability of individuals to fully engage in the economy and, in turn, limiting economic growth.

Background:

Today's children are tomorrow's workforce. And, more pointedly, today's parents are today's workforce. According to EPIC (Executives Partnering to Invest in Children) a nonprofit business advocacy organization in Colorado, the Centennial State is among the least affordable places for child care, and supply does not meet current demand creating what are oftentimes called "childcare deserts." And yet when we look to the future, and our workforce needs, we know based on data published by EPIC:

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- An investment in early child care and education can produce an \$8.60 return for each \$1 invested.
- Investments in early child care and education have substantial impact on educational success, as well as health, poverty, workforce development and the economy.
- Children participating in quality child care and education are more likely to stay away from teen pregnancy, drugs and criminal activity.
- Parents – the current workforce – are more productive when they are not concerned about their children during the work day.

There are a number of established childcare centers, and in-home childcare providers, but they are minimally meeting the needs of families. Most of these providers have "waitlists" that exceed two years. According to the Colorado State Demographer, Chaffee County is home to approximately 200 children under the age of one. However, the County only has 10 licensed child care slots to serve these infants. As Chaffee County continues to attract a younger and more diverse demographic this issue will grow.

Dig in Deeper:

Learn more about current local childcare & education context by exploring these resources.

- General
 - [CCECC Strategic Plan](#)
 - [CCECC 2023 Community Analysis](#)
 - [From Envision Chaffee Community Action Plan](#)
- Buena Vista
 - [CCCF Report to BV Trustees in regards to Carbonate Street including a Childcare facility](#)
 - [Appendix B](#)
 - [Childcare Study_ Katy Welter](#)