



**COLORADO**

**Office of Early Childhood**

Department of Human Services

## *State and Federal Stimulus Strategies*

# Ensure All Families Have Equitable and Easy Access

The Office of Early Childhood seeks to ensure all families have equitable and easy access to high quality early care and education services so that all children start school ready to succeed.

### **Activity 1: Child Care Stabilization Grants**

«» This activity provides more than 4,700 eligible child care providers that were in operation as of March 11, 2021 with recurring operational grant payments with amounts based on licensed capacity and quality level, with additional bonus awards added for providers meeting certain family needs, including providing care for infants and toddlers, offering nontraditional hours, and serving children with special needs, to both reflect the increased costs associated with meeting certain family needs and incentivize other providers to begin offering care in these areas. • These recurring grants will help Colorado maintain licensed child care capacity through a mixed delivery system, ensure early childhood educators remain fully compensated, and provide financial relief to families through reduced or waived tuition or copayments. This activity builds on the \$35 million State General Fund appropriation for sustainability grants that were allocated in House Bill 20B-1002. • Funding Source: ARP • Funding Amount: \$221,694,958 (Note that \$101,516,223 of this total is required to be used by providers to reduce family tuition and is also reflected as a family strengthening activity).

### **Activity 2: Employer based Child Care Facilities**

🏠 This program will provide financial assistance to employers to construct, remodel, renovate, or retrofit a child care center to provide licensed child care services on- or near-site to its employees. This program is expected to fund the creation of between 10-25 new child care centers with a maximum award of \$800,000. Eligible employers must provide a financial match of 50% for for-profit employers and 25% match for nonprofit or government employers. • Families in Colorado face a number of challenges accessing child care, including long wait lists, limited locations near work or home, or no local licensed child care options. These issues may worsen with increased demand for care as families return to work, population growth, and the implementation of Universal Preschool. This program will help address these issues and build more child care capacity. • Funding Source: State General Fund • Funding Amount: \$8,800,000

### Activity 3: CIRCLE Grants

📍🏠 The Community Innovation and Resilience for Care and Learning Equity (CIRCLE) fund will provide grants to child care providers and other community, education or governmental partners, such as Early Childhood Councils, for implementing innovative solutions for tough child care challenges worsened by the pandemic, including the affordability of child care, the lack of infant and toddler care, strengthening child care providers' business practices, workforce preparation, early childhood transitions, and ensuring all children with special needs and dual-language learners have equitable access to care. • CIRCLE Grants will fund activities that help families access care, particularly care that is currently most difficult to find. Improving these care options will help families enter or return to the workforce, and will ensure children have access to high-quality learning environments. • Funding Source: CRRSA & ARP • Funding Amount: \$24,800,000 (\$16,800,000 CRRSA; \$8,000,000 ARP)

### Activity 4: Quality Improvement Incentive

📍 This activity will provide one-time bonus incentive payments to an estimated 250 new child care programs and nearly 980 existing child care programs that commit to increasing their quality level through the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), to increase the number of high-quality child care providers in Colorado. Programs serving infants and toddlers that move from a Level 1 to a Level 2 will receive a \$2,000 bonus (for family child care homes) and a \$2,500 bonus (for centers). Programs serving infants and toddlers that move from a Level 2 to a Level 3-5 will receive a \$3,500 bonus (for homes) and a \$4,000 bonus (for centers). Centers that do not serve infants and toddlers would receive a bonus of \$1,500 to move from a Level 1 to a Level 2 and \$2,000 to move from a Level 2 to a Level 3-5. • This activity will increase the number of high-quality child care providers in Colorado, giving more families access to safe, licensed, quality child care services. • Funding Source: ARP • Funding Amount: \$3,278,380

### Activity 5: Licensing Incentive

📍🏠 This activity will provide a one-time bonus incentive payment of \$5,000 to become a licensed child care provider, or \$500 to become a qualified exempt provider, to an estimated 480 unlicensed providers in Colorado. • This activity will help increase the number of licensed child care providers in Colorado, and increase access to safe, licensed, quality child care for families. • Funding Source: ARP • Funding Amount: \$2,400,000

## Activity 6: Availability and Outreach of Child Care, Especially for Infants and Toddlers

«» ↗ 🏠 These funds will provide investments to maintain and grow the state's licensed child care provider population, especially for infant and toddler care, including supporting every Early Childhood Council's ability to provide outreach to providers and parents and report real-time supply data and improving access to licensed child care for all children. This program will support updated local-level resource and referral information about the availability of open slots and report it to the Colorado Shines data system. • Families currently struggle to find available care, especially for infants and toddlers, often calling many facilities to find a location with space for their child. This effort will help Colorado families more quickly identify facilities that have space, and will help Colorado overall understand the availability of open child care slots. • Funding Source: CRRSA • Funding Amount: \$3,352,466

## Activity 7: Family Child Care Home Navigator Program

↗ 🏠 This activity will provide funding to support each of the Early Childhood Councils to hire the necessary level of dedicated staff to ensure family child care home providers have a local navigator to connect them with support and resources to improve their business practices, support quality, and retain and grow their business. Each Council will receive funding to hire either a full-time or part-time Family Child Care Navigator position depending on the licensed child care provider population in their area. • Colorado has seen a decline in family child care home providers, resulting in a lack of access to child care, particularly infant and toddler care, in many areas. Research shows that utilizing more intensive outreach to and support of family child care home providers can increase the supply and quality of care for family child care homes. • Funding Source: CRRSA • Funding Amount: \$3,352,466

## Activity 8: Access to Inclusive Care

↗ 🏠 This activity will grow the number of providers offering inclusive and universally designed early learning environments by supporting provider access to adaptive materials, technical assistance, and training. These supports will help providers better meet the needs of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and special needs. Inclusion in early childhood means providing full access, participation, and support to children of all abilities in early education settings so they are able to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. • Research shows that providing inclusive early learning environments results in better outcomes for children with developmental delays and disabilities as well as their typically-developing peers. However, there is currently a lack of available care in Colorado for children with delays and disabilities. This activity will help increase the availability of that care across Colorado. • Funding Source : CRRSA • Funding Amount: \$1,257,957

## Activity 9: Emerging & Expanding Grant

📍 The Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant Program has been created for the purpose of expanding access and availability of licensed child care throughout Colorado, especially in areas where there are child care deserts. Eligible programs may apply for a grant between \$3,000 up to \$200,000 for expenses related to the expansion of current capacity or the opening of a new child care program. Programs must serve children ages birth to five to be eligible. • Colorado currently lacks enough licensed child care to serve all families across the state who would like to access it. This program will help new child care facilities start up, or existing facilities expand, by removing financial barriers to do so, giving more families, especially in child care deserts, access to care. • Funding Source: General Fund • Funding Amount: \$8,800,000

## Activity 10: CCCAP Rates & Payments

«» This activity is focused on supporting child care providers who accept families enrolled in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). It will support paying for increased absences, in other words, paying child care providers even if a child enrolled in CCCAP is not in attendance on some days. This activity will also increase the amount of money child care providers are paid to care for children enrolled in a CCCAP-funded program, in recognition of the increased cost of providing child care during the pandemic. • Increasing the number of absences paid for children enrolled in the CCCAP program, as well as the overall amount paid to providers for children enrolled in CCCAP, will further incentivize programs to accept CCCAP. When there is an increase in the number of providers who accept CCCAP, more eligible families will be able to access child care, and work or attend school. • Funding Source: CRRSA • Funding Amount: \$36,823,976

### Related Office of Early Childhood Wildly Important Goals (WIGs):

Increase statewide licensed child care capacity for children birth to five by 5% by June 30, 2022.

#### Key:

CRRSA - Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

ARP - American Rescue Plan

CCDF - Child Care & Development Fund

«» - Strategies that stabilize the early childhood sector

📍 - Strategies that grow and expand the early childhood sector

👤 - Strategies that support the OEC's capacity WIG

🏠 - Strategies that support the OEC's workforce WIG

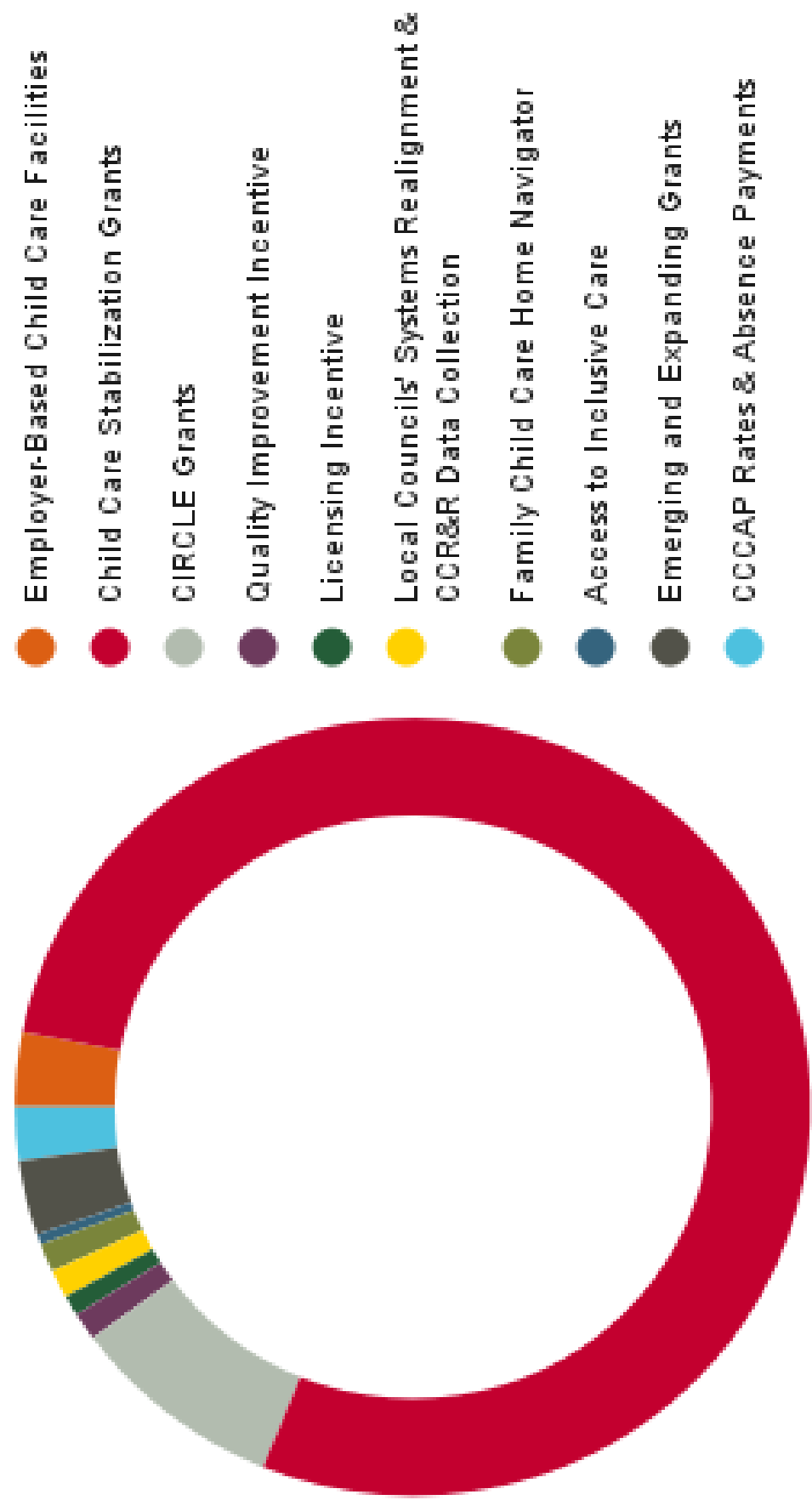
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# Percentage of Spending Breakdown Increase Access to Licensed, High Quality Child Care

Access - \$284M



\*\* These funds will be spent across two fiscal years, FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23.