

SENATE BILL 19-063 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN REPORT OVERVIEW

Colorado Senate Bill 19-063 required the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) to consult with the Early Childhood Leadership Commission and community stakeholders to draft a strategic action plan to address the declining availability of family child care homes and infant child care. The Strategic Action Plan report was published on December 1, 2019 and made the following findings and recommendations:

Key Findings:

- Colorado exceeds the national average in the rate of decreases in family child care homes.
- To adequately keep pace, Colorado must add at least **7,000 infant slots in centers and over 200 family child care home providers**.
- Colorado is ranked 8th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for the most expensive infant care.

Key Recommendations:

- **Operational Supports:** Provide financial, business, and professional support to prospective and existing family child care home providers and centers serving infants.
- **Professional Development:** Increase access to training and professional supports that enable infant care professionals and family child care providers to provide high-quality care.
- **Child Care Licensing:** Add resources to the child care licensing process to increase support and training to providers and decrease the time to obtain a background check.
- **Regulation:** Clarify, coordinate, and resolve differences among state and local regulatory agencies to remove administrative and financial burdens and assure safe environments for children in family child care homes.
- **Policy Review:** Examine how early education (and other) policies impact availability of licensed infant care and family child care homes.

Source: Colorado Senate Bill 19-063 Infant and Family Child Care Action Plan, text from summary overview page and introduction.

Highlight: Regulatory Recommendations

Challenge: Local zoning, licensing, and building code regulations often differ from State licensing requirements, prohibiting the opening and operating of a licensed family child care home in many communities. When an in-home child care facility is categorized as a small business, local regulatory agencies can assign additional requirements than what is required by State child care licensing rules and regulations. Another challenge comes from local regulatory agencies that have adopted the International Building Code, which also categorizes in-home child care facilities as small businesses. In such situations, the building code requires a sprinkler system, which is high cost for child care educators earning low wages. Additionally, Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) can completely prohibit the operation of family child care within a residence.

Policy recommendation: Pass legislation to require **local regulatory entities** to treat family child care homes as **residences** rather than small businesses, allowing family child care homes to operate across the state.

Benefit: By eliminating barriers to child care educators opening and operating in-home child care, the State can increase the availability of quality early child care options to families in communities across Colorado.