



The Bell Policy Center

303 E. 17th Avenue, Suite 400, Denver CO 80203 • 303.297.0456

Supports for Regulation of Family Child Care Homes (HB21-1222)

Testimony to the House Committee on Behavioral Health & Human Services

Nazia Hasan, Policy Analyst • March 30, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Nazia Hasan, policy analyst at the Bell Policy Center. The Bell Policy Center provides policymakers, advocates, and the public with reliable resources to create a practical policy agenda that promotes economic mobility for every Coloradan.

The Bell Policy Center supports [HB21-1222](#), which addresses key factors contributing to Colorado's decline in FCCH licensed capacity, such as conflicting regulation between state licensing allowances and local regulations and prohibitions of family child care in certain homes due to zoning restrictions. For some licensed FCCH providers, these added limitations reduce the number of children allowed in their care to a lower capacity than what the state allows and in other instances, local regulations restrict a provider's ability to obtain a child care license. These variances in regulation have limited access to safe, quality, and affordable child care for families across Colorado.

As you likely know, child care is critical for working families with young children to remain in the labor force. This is especially true for working mothers, and even more so as COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on women, specifically women with children. However, even prior to COVID-19, an analysis conducted by Center for American Progress finds more than half of Coloradans lived in child care deserts – a geographic region with three times the number of children per licensed slot. The impact of our state's child care shortage crisis has disproportionately affected working families in rural communities and families of color:

- 60 percent of the Colorado's child care deserts are in rural areas, and
- More than 60 percent of Black and Hispanic Coloradans live in child care deserts compared to 40 percent of white Coloradans who live in child care deserts.

Prior to the pandemic, Colorado's workforce included more than 200,000 working parents with children under age 3 who relied on some form of child care. FCCH is often the preferred option for families with infants and toddlers due to their smaller learning environments, accessibility, and flexibility to accommodate nontraditional schedules. Despite the reliance on FCCH providers the number of licensed child care facilities statewide have declined over the last decade:

- From 2002 to 2018, Colorado lost more than 11,600 FCCH licensed slots
- Based upon the Colorado Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) provider survey, half of the FCCHs (188 homes) had waitlists for infants

Colorado's child care shortage not only affects working parents, but it also has ripple effects on employers, the workforce, and Colorado's economy. According to an analysis by [ReadyNation and Council for Strong America](#), inadequate infant and toddler care costs our economy \$2.2 billion annually in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.

To better understand the child care shortage for infants and toddlers, stakeholders involved in Colorado's [SB19-063](#) process tasked Dr. Ajay Chaudry, a national expert in early childhood, to analyze our current licensed child care capacity and the need for child care. Dr. Chaudry's analysis shows, absent barriers to accessibility and affordability, Colorado would need an additional 16,000 to 22,500 infant slots (13,500 to 18,500 in centers and 2,500 to 4,000 in FCCHs) for families who prefer licensed child care.

The Bell Policy Center supports HB21-1222 because it addresses key barriers to existing and aspiring FCCH providers to build and expand capacity for children in licensed care. By reducing these barriers Colorado will be able to address systemic barriers and help build the capacity of quality child care options to meet the needs of all families.

Should you have any questions, please email me at hasan@bellpolicy.org. Thank you.