

A healthy community educates our children in schools that are effective, involve parents, and respect each child's cultural and social diversity.

Education & Early Childhood Care



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EDUCATION & EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE

Community Vision – Educate our children in schools that are effective, involve parents, and respect each child’s cultural and social diversity.

A high quality and effective education system plays a fundamental role in societal and community health. An educated population leads to innovation, higher levels of productivity, and increased economic growth. Investments in education and early childhood care pay off via a more educated workforce, involved citizens, higher business productivity and profits, as well as increased tax revenues.

Public education is guided by an increasingly complex set of factors such as federal and state policies, funding allocations, community values and mandated standardized testing. Public schools include charter schools, which can be authorized by a school district or a state authorizing agency such as Charter School Institute (CSI). CSI charters Mountain Middle School and Animas High School in La Plata County; and the Battle Rock Charter School, the Southwest Open Charter School, and the Children’s Kiva Montessori Charter School in Montezuma County. Whether authorized by a school district or state authorizing agency, charters are held to the same rigorous academic standards as district schools while operating on less per pupil revenue than district schools (about .75 cents of the dollar).

In 1997, Colorado had 50 charter schools. Today, there are 226. In total, 108,793 students were enrolled in charters during the 2015-16 school year. That’s a 30 percent increase from 2012-13. If you put all the state’s charter schools in one district, that district would be the largest in the state, surpassing the 90,000-student Denver Public Schools.¹ In subsequent editions of this report we look forward to including more statistics specific to the charter schools in this region as they become available.

Key Findings

- During the 2015 school year, Silverton and Dove Creek (Dolores County) held the top two spots for the total **operational expenditures per student** while Cortez and Pagosa Springs spent the least.
- **Pupil-to-teacher ratios** show that every school district in the region is now lower than the state ratio of 17.5.
- **Expulsion rates** are generally decreasing in the region, with the most progress noted in the Cortez RE-1 District.
- **Graduation rates** in all districts, with the exception of Dolores RE-4A, met or exceeded the state average for graduation rates in 2014.
- **Drop-out rates** are decreasing across the region with the exception of Dolores RE-4A, Dolores County RE No. 2, and Durango 9-R.
- In 2016, Bayfield, Durango and Mancos school districts met or exceeded the state **ACT score** average.

¹ <http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2016/07/15/colorados-charter-schools-are-more-diverse-performing-better-and-paying-teachers-less-report-shows/#.V-BE7SgrLIU>

- **CMAS English/Language Arts** scores for 4th and 7th graders exceeded the state average in Bayfield and Durango in 2015, and for Durango 7th graders in 2016.
- None of the schools in the region met the state average for the **CMAS math scores** in 2015 or 2016.
- In Colorado, there are only enough **licensed child care** spots for about 45 percent of kids under age 6 needing care.

Quality Learning Environment

All of the data referenced in this report is drawn from the Colorado Department of Education website <http://www.cde.state.co.us/> unless otherwise noted.

Colorado public schools receive funding from a variety of sources. However, most revenues to Colorado's 178 school districts are provided through the Public School Finance Act of 1994 (as amended). In budget year 2015-16, this legislation provides for over \$6.2 billion of funding to Colorado school districts via state taxes, local specific ownership (vehicle registration) taxes, and local property taxes.

Revenues received by Colorado school districts are a result of Colorado funding formulas related to student enrollment and local school district mill levies. Most school districts also receive money via local, state and/or federal grants for special programs. In addition, some school districts are successful in passing new taxes for capital construction or operations, or for mill-levy overrides.

Smaller, rural school districts receive more funding per student than larger school districts because the expense is higher. During the 2015 school year, Silverton and Dove Creek (Dolores County) held the top two spots for the total expenditures per student.

Operational expenditures include: instruction and support, administration, building maintenance, transportation, food services, community services and adult education programs.

Quality Learning Environment – Total Operational Expenditures per Student										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2012	\$10,250	\$8,905	\$12,966	\$10,706	\$13,727	\$10,324	\$8,608	\$9,483	\$17,781	NA
2013	\$9,510	\$9,017	\$12,940	\$11,794	\$16,754	\$9,878	\$8,529	\$10,317	\$25,176	NA
2014	\$10,350	\$9,614	\$13,591	\$12,078	\$16,635	\$10,817	\$9,041	\$9,331	\$23,251	NA
2015	\$11,512	\$9,951	\$16,486	\$12,153	\$16,574	\$10,557	\$9,554	\$9,394	\$24,328	NA

NA=Not Applicable

Pupil-to-teacher ratios show that every school district in the region is now lower than the state ratio of 17.5. This is a positive trend because a lower ratio is believed to provide more individual attention and instruction per student.

Quality Learning Environment – Pupil to Teacher Ratio										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2011	16.1	16.3	14.0	13.5	16.2	12.3	12.6	16.7	7.5	18.2
2012	16.7	16.5	14.3	13.3	16.0	11.5	14.4	16.2	5.8	18.1
2013	15.7	16.5	14.4	14.0	16.1	12.1	12.6	15.5	5.3	17.7
2014	14.9	16.6	14.0	11.3	16.4	11.9	13.0	15.7	4.9	17.5
2015	14.5	16.4	13.5	12.9	16.1	12.9	13.6	16.3	6.1	17.5

Less than the statewide average.

Decline from preceeding period

Expulsion rates are generally decreasing in the region, with the most progress noted in the Cortez RE-1 District. Statewide, several factors contributed to the years-long declines, beginning with improved CDE data collection and reporting in 2011-12 that revealed high numbers of expulsions and suspensions statewide, particularly among African-American students. The CDE initiated forums and workshops to make districts, administrators, and teachers aware of successful alternatives to suspensions and expulsions, including "restorative justice" programs that help students understand the nature and consequences of their actions. The CDE launched its [Behavioral Intervention Strategies and Supports](#) Web page as an additional resource.

Quality Learning Environment – Number of Expulsions										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2011	3	1	0	11	4	0	27	8	0	NA
2012	0	2	0	10	3	0	35	10	0	NA
2013	2	2	3	7	0	1	17	4	0	NA
2014	0	5	0	4	0	0	13	1	0	NA
2015	1	2	0	6	2	0	5	0	0	NA

NA=Not Applicable

Most expulsions by school year

Highly qualified teachers are measured by each district's percentage of core classes taught by "highly qualified instructors" defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The law requires that all teachers of core subject areas meet the requirements for designation as a highly qualified instructor. Core areas include English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, social studies, visual art, music, and drama. In order to become highly qualified, teachers must obtain a bachelor's degree in the subject area they are teaching or obtain additional college credit in that subject area sufficient to meet NCLB requirements.

Two districts – Dolores and Mancos – met the 100 percent benchmark from 2012 to 2014. Please note, that NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements will no longer be in effect as of July 1, 2016. Upon that date, federal law will defer to State teacher licensure requirements.²

Quality Learning Environment – Percentage of Classrooms taught by Highly Qualified Teachers										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2012	100	100	87.7	98.5	100	98.2	100	100	100	99.7
2013	93.1	100	100.0	99.7	100	81.9	97.6	100.0	97.5	99.5
2014	98.7	100	88.2	100	100	92.3	97.5	98.4	92.7	99.2

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

The **percentage of minority teachers and students** are used to present data about how school districts hire and retain teachers of color, and how many minority students are in enrolled in school. Diverse teaching staff can serve as powerful role models for minority students. From 2011 to 2015, the Ignacio School District was the only one in the region that met or exceeded the state average for minority teachers. That district also has the highest percentage of minority students. The Cortez district also exceeds the state average of percentage of minority students.

Quality Learning Environment – Percentage of Minority Teachers										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2011	1.2	5.9	0.0	7.7	17.7	6.7	10.6	8.0	0.0	11.5
2012	1.1	9.6	0.0	7.5	16.1	3.4	6.5	8.0	0.0	11.6
2013	2.3	8.2	0.0	7.0	17.8	2.4	8.6	7.8	0.0	10.4
2014	1.1	7.5	0.0	7.3	13.6	0.0	9.4	8.0	0.0	11.9
2015	2.1	5.5	0.0	7.2	17.9	5.6	7.0	9.3	0.0	12.0

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

Quality Learning Environment – Percentage of Minority Students										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2011	18.8	14.5	15.4	25.7	65.6	22.5	47.1	29.5	24.6	43.9
2012	19.6	16.2	4.5	26.7	65.9	21.5	49.3	33.6	33.9	44.4
2013	21.8	18.1	4.4	27.3	65.3	25.2	49.9	36.4	26.6	45.0
2014	20.4	18.1	4.8	28.5	64.1	31.4	51.1	37.9	33.9	45.5
2015	21.5	22.4	9.2	28.6	68.0	29.6	50.0	39.0	32.4	45.9

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

² <http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/hqtessatransition>

Effective Learning Environment

The **graduation rates** shown are the percentage of students who received a high school diploma versus those who were enrolled and could have graduated during a four-year period. Enrollment for the graduation rate is calculated by the number of eighth-graders in the district four years earlier and adjusted for transfers in and out of the district during the high school years. In 2014 all districts, with the exception of Dolores RE-4A, met or exceeded the state average.

Effective Learning Environment – Graduation Rate in Percentages										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2011	93.9	57.5	89.5	66.7	69.0	56.1	93.5	81.8	0.0	73.9
2012	90.7	52.1	83.7	85.7	76.6	70.3	91.3	78.3	100	75.4
2013	89.7	52.2	89.7	86.7	71.8	62.7	88.0	83.3	66.7	76.9
2014	90.2	54.9	86.4	82.1	81.8	80.0	85.2	86.3	80.0	77.3

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

Drop-out rates are decreasing across the region with the exception of Dolores RE-4A, Dolores County RE No. 2, and Durango 9-R. Drop-out rates are calculated for students in 7th through 12th grade. All students reported as attending a school in your district (including on-line schools) are included in the dropout rate. A drop-out is a student who leaves school for any reason, except death, expulsion, or transfer, prior to completing a high school diploma. If a student leaves a school district without a request to forward educational records, the student is considered a drop-out, although he or she may have enrolled in another school without the district's knowledge. School districts that have charter schools, after-school tutoring programs, links to Adult Education Programs, "second chance" educational offerings and the like increase their chances of helping *all* students stay in school.

Effective Learning Environment – Drop-Out Rate in Percentages										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2011	0.4	7.6	1.6	0.7	3.8	6.3	1.4	2.0	0.0	3.0
2012	0.4	6.5	1.1	0.8	3.4	0.8	0.0	2.0	2.7	2.9
2013	0.7	5.2	0.8	0.8	2.5	1.4	0.0	1.2	3.4	2.5
2014	1.1	6.9	1.1	1.5	2.7	1.4	0.9	2.0	6.5	2.4
2015	2.0	8.4	3.5	2.5	1.4	1.2	1.4	0.1	0.0	2.5

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

Data on the number of people receiving a **General Equivalency Degree (GED)** gives a more complete picture of the number of people who complete a high school education. For nearly 50 years only one high school equivalency exam existed, the GED. To give students more options to attain a high school equivalency diploma, Colorado has begun offering three different options, including GED, HiSET and TASC. The *Index* will track statistics as that data becomes available.

ACT Average Scores are one form of standardized testing used to measure progress and achievement. The ACT test measures student readiness for college. This data is used because it provides consistent, comparable and available indicators that can be collected for all school districts over time.

The 11th grade ACT assessment, which is more commonly known as the Colorado ACT (CO ACT), is voluntary and is administered once in April and once in May. This assessment is equivalent to all other ACT Assessments administered on national test dates throughout the country. Since this is an actual college entrance exam, results from this assessment can be submitted for college entrance by the student to their college or university of choice.

The CO ACT Assessment consists of two parts which are designed to help students prepare for postsecondary educational opportunities. The first part is a pre-test session which includes an interest inventory, a student profile section, and a course/grade section. The second part is the academic assessment section which includes tests in the areas of English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. From the tests, students receive a composite score along with scores for each of the skill areas. In 2016, Archuleta, Bayfield and Durango school districts met or exceeded the state average.

Effective Learning Environment – Average ACT Scores										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2012	20.0	20.4	NA	20.7	16.9	20.3	17.5	19.6	NA	20.0
2013	20.1	19.4	18.4	21.4	16.7	20.1	17.4	20.0	NA	20.1
2014	21.0	19.8	NA	21.5	17.3	21.8	18.4	19.0	NA	20.3
2015	20.2	19.6	17.7	21.1	16.4	20.9	17.9	20.5	NA	20.2
2016	20.7	19.2	NA	21.2	16.5	20.1	18.6	20.4	NA	20.4

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

Includes all students in the school district

NA - < 16 students tested

This section of the *Index* was last updated in 2008, and a number of the indicators have changed to reflect different standardized testing programs as well as changes in how the Colorado Department of Education reports the statistics that they collect for each school district.

Test scores from the **CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program)** used to be reported by the *Index*, but that measure was replaced by the **Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP)** for 2012 to 2014. The TCAP was discontinued in 2014 and has been replaced by the **Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)** which includes the **Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** assessment, which is a nationally normed assessment and given to students in eight different states. The PARCC assesses English /Language Arts and Math.

Reading Scores: State-wide TDAP test scores for 4th grade reading remained stable from 2012 to 2014. Locally, Bayfield, Durango, and Pagosa Springs exceeded the state average in 2014. At the 7th grade level, reading scores in Bayfield and Durango exceeded the state average in 2014. CMAS scores for 4th and 7th graders exceeded the state average in Bayfield and Durango in 2015, and for Durango 7th graders in 2016. Data for some districts were not available because fewer than 16 students were tested.

4th Grade TCAP Reading Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2012	74.4	81.1	40.0	71.7	55.4	70.3	47.4	54.2	*	67.0
2013	69.6	63.5	68.4	72.6	41.7	60.0	47.0	62.0	*	67.9
2014	71.3	57.7	60.0	74.8	32.7	60.6	42.2	67.8	*	67.5
4th Grade CMAS: PARCC English Language Arts % Met or Exceeded Expectations										
2015	42.0	27.1	*	44.3	14.0	*	22.6	23.9	*	41.7
2016	37.1	24.6	*	32.7	17.2	*	20.8	22.0	*	43.9
7th Grade TCAP Reading Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
2012	77.0	71.1	*	74.5	43.5	74.3	56.5	78.6	*	68.3
2013	81.0	67.9	*	77.1	49.2	64.3	52.8	66.1	*	67.6
2014	77.7	68.4	47.6	75.3	35.6	64.7	61.4	66.1	*	68.7
7th Grade CMAS: PARCC English Language Arts % Met or Exceeded Expectations										
2015	44.3	27.7	*	46.2	17.9	*	16.2	25.7	*	41.0
2016	32.7	6.9	*	47.3	20.3	*	13.1	19.3	*	41.0

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

* Not Available

Writing Scores: Writing scores for 4th graders in Durango, and 7th graders in Bayfield, Durango and Pagosa Springs exceeded the state average in 2014. Summary scores for grades 3-10 in Bayfield and Durango met or exceeded state average. Writing assessment is included in the CMAS English/Language Arts for 2015 and 2016.

Effective Learning Environment – 4th Grade TCAP Writing Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2012	45.4	49.1	30.0	52.8	28.6	40.5	25.6	38.5	*	49.2
2013	46.1	53.8	31.6	57.5	20.0	50.0	25.3	39.0	*	53.2
2014	37.6	46.2	45.0	57.2	23.1	42.4	24.1	40.9	*	51.7
7th Grade TCAP Writing Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
2012	72.0	57.8	*	65.7	30.7	62.9	46.3	58.2	*	61.8
2013	68.0	58.9	*	72.5	36.1	53.6	42.0	60.6	*	61.4
2014	63.4	54.4	42.9	63.9	24.1	38.2	46.0	61.9	*	60.9
Summary - Grades 3-10 TCAP Writing Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
2012	55.2	55.7	38.4	60.2	33.6	51.5	34.6	51.3	41.2	54.0
2013	54.8	55.4	36.4	60.0	32.3	50.8	34.0	46.4	48.8	55.0
2014	55.0	48.8	37.4	59.5	28.7	51.6	34.3	44.8	51.1	54.4

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

* Not Available

Math Scores: Math scores for 4th graders in Dolores, Dove Creek and Durango, and 7th graders in Durango exceeded the state average in 2014. None of the schools in the region met or exceeded the state average for the CMAS math tests in 2015 or 2016.

4th Grade TCAP Math Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
Year	10 JT-R Bayfield	RE-4A Dolores	RE NO.2 Dolores County	9-R Durango	11 JT Ignacio	RE-6 Mancos	RE-1 Montezuma Cortez	50 JT Archuleta	1 Silverton	CO
2012	64.4	75.5	45.0	75.2	57.1	73.0	54.9	59.0	*	71.5
2013	66.1	61.5	52.6	73.5	51.7	66.7	42.1	49.0	*	71.7
2014	68.3	76.9	75.0	78.3	36.5	66.7	48.7	66.1	*	71.6
4th Grade CMAS: PARCC Math % Met or Exceeded Expectations										
2015	25.0	13.0	*	27.4	12.0	*	12.3	17.4	*	30.2
2016	33.0	8.3	*	32.5	6.3	*	9.8	5.5	*	33.3
7th Grade TCAP Math Scores % Proficient and Advanced										
2012	52.0	44.5	NA	59.4	25.8	51.4	42.2	50.0	*	43.1
2013	46.0	53.6	NA	63.2	34.4	50.0	37.5	40.4	*	55.0
2014	41.1	38.6	28.6	57.1	22.4	32.4	41.7	49.5	*	54.6
7th Grade CMAS: PARCC Math % Met or Exceeded Expectations										
2015	19.0	13.3	*	22.4	8.9	*	11.4	17.0	*	27.4
2016	14.3	17.2	*	22.8	9.5	*	11.0	15.8	*	26.2

Met or exceeded the statewide average.

* Not Available

Many rating systems are based solely on academic achievement, or one snapshot in time of student performance. However, **Colorado School Grades (CSG)** is an alternative rating system presented by a coalition of 18 non-profit organizations that believe all children deserve access to a high-performing school. They used data from the Colorado Department of Education to create an A-F grade for every public school in the state. In 2014, of the high schools in this region, the Animas Charter School and Bayfield District received a B- for overall performance; Durango and Animas Charter were graded B's for overall academic proficiency; and Dolores and Silverton schools were awarded high marks for overall academic growth. There were some elementary schools with higher ratings.³

County	School	Overall Performance		Overall Academic Proficiency	Overall Academic Growth
		Grade	Ranking (of 345)		
Archuleta	Pagosa Springs H.S.	C-	279	C	C-
La Plata	Durango H.S.	C	224	B	C
	Bayfield H.S.	B-	104	C+	C
	Ignacio H.S.	D	307	D	C-
	Animas Charter	B-	61	B	C
Dolores	Dove Creek H.S.	C	242	D	C
Montezuma	Cortez H.S.	D+	297	C	C+
	Dolores H.S.	C+	137	C	B
	Mancos H.S.	C+	139	B-	C
San Juan	Silverton H.S.	NA	NA	B-	A+

Source: <http://coloradoschoolgrades.com/>

³ <http://www.coloradoschoolgrades.com/>

Early Childhood Care & Education

Three decades of national research show that quality early childhood care and education contributes to the development of cognitive skills, social-emotional skills and character skills including attentiveness, persistence, motivation, self-control and teamwork. When children and their families have access to quality early care and education, their long-term academic outcomes improve. We know that when children are ready for school before kindergarten, they are more likely to be successful students, read at grade level by the end of third grade and graduate from high school.⁴

The investments we make between birth and age 8 achieve some of the best financial and social returns, including healthier, happier children, a more educated population and, ultimately, a stronger and more stable economy for our state. Early care and education professionals allow families the opportunity to participate in the workforce and achieve self-sufficiency while also providing safe, learning-rich environments that lay the foundation for children's school and life success.

In Colorado, there are only enough licensed child care spots for about 45 percent of kids under age 6 with working parents. In most of our region there is a considerable gap between the number of children under the age of 5 and the number of licensed child care slots that are available to them, based on estimates made by the Early Childhood Council of La Plata County (ECCLPC) in August 2016.

Licensed Child Care Slots for Ages 0 to 5					
County	0 - 12 months	12 - 24 months	2 - 5 years	Total slots 0 - 5 years	2014 Population Under 5*
Archuleta	8	28	204	240	584
Dolores	2	3	37	42	95
La Plata	116	190	787	1,093	2,839
Montezuma	13	55	572	640	1,565
San Juan	5	7	18	30	29
Total	144	283	1,618	2,045	5,112

Source: www.ecclaplata.org

* Colorado Childrens Campaign, Kids Count Data Published 2016

While it may be tempting to extrapolate the exact number of children whose needs are not met, experts caution that it is more complicated than simply subtracting slots from the populations under age five. One reason being that one single slot can often be supporting more than 1 child due to part time care; the second reason being that we can't assume the entire population of children under 5 requires licensed care (parent/relative care could take up a high percentage on its own).

⁴ <http://www.coloradokids.org/issues/earlychildhood/>

Licensed Child Care Programs Per County				
County	Child Care Centers	Child Care Homes	School Age Programs	Total
Archuleta	3	8	1	12
Dolores	3	0	0	3
La Plata	31	15	15	61
Montezuma	9	8	1	18
San Juan	1	0	0	1
Total	47	31	17	95

Source:www.ecclaplata.org

The ECCLPC program analysis also tracks the number and types of licensed providers per county (not including Native American Head Start/Early Head Start programs). There is a general lack of licensed providers offering care outside of normal business hours, i.e. evenings and weekends.

Unlicensed child care is not included in the data, but due to demand for child care is prevalent in our region.

Child care costs can consume a significant portion of a family’s resources. Since almost all working-age families meet their income needs with employment, a crucial question is whether the jobs available provide sufficient wages.

Average Child Care Center Rates for SW Colorado	
Infant - 0 to 12 months	\$38.69 / day
Toddler - 1 to 3 years	\$33.89 / day
Preschooler - 4 to 5 years	\$31.62 / day

Source:www.ecclaplata.org

The most common Colorado occupation is retail and accounts for 3% of all Colorado workers. In 2014, the median hourly earnings of \$10.96 per hour (median annual earnings of \$22,803), retail jobs provided Colorado workers with earnings that were only about 40% of the necessary income to support one adult and a preschooler. In our region this varies by place and occupation according to a recent report by the Region 9 Economic Development District.⁵

There are numerous ways to expand available access to child care but effective solutions take multi-system efforts, public will, heightened community awareness and financial resources. Possible solutions include:

Increasing Capacity – More child care centers are needed to increase the total number of slots. Local governments can help with donations of land and resources, and by relaxing or waiving certain building regulations or development fees. Organized child care coalitions can step up community awareness and education to make the case for action on the local level.

- Business interests, chambers of commerce and economic development groups need to consider child care as a basic infrastructure component similar to schools, roads, and water. Local businesses can also consider establishing on-site child care for employees.
- The ECCLPC has found that staffing those slots is a region-wide challenge, even crisis. Programs can only increase the number of children if they have enough qualified staff to keep the licensing ratio. Even if they do receive the funds and resources to expand slots, they cannot find staff to keep those slots open. This is highlighted as a *state-wide* trend in a recent *Qualistar* report⁶, and may be one of the most critical barriers to early childcare availability.

⁵ http://www.scan.org/uploads/Livable_Wages_2015.pdf

⁶ <http://www.qualistar.org/uploads/LeadingColoradosECEWorkforce.pdf>

Donations – Contributors who make a monetary contribution to promote child care in Colorado may be eligible for a State tax credit called the Child Care Contribution Credit which is valued at 50% of the contribution.⁷

Subsidies and Incentives – Without strong federal and state support for quality early experiences, many working families struggle to afford the high cost of child care. This can put our most vulnerable children further at-risk and creates significant barriers for low-income parents staying at work. There have been a number of recent policy successes in Colorado.⁸ These include:

- **House Bill 14-1317** overhauls Colorado’s Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) to expand access, promote quality, and lower barriers for working parents trying to find child care so they can move toward self-sufficiency. The changes included in HB 1317 will be implemented over several years and advance this program as a two-generation approach to supporting children and families.
- **House Bill 13-1291** expands access to infant and toddler care by supporting counties and early childhood councils to invest in supporting more families while also raising the quality of infant and toddler care.
- **Senate Bill 14-003** builds on SB 12-022 to incentivize counties to participate in a two-year pilot program that extends CCCAP subsidies to families who exceed the income eligibility threshold. Families would continue to take on an increased share of the cost of care as their income increases, but this program allows a more gradual transition for families who otherwise face a dramatic loss in benefits, creating a disincentive to increase their income.
- **House Bill 14-1072** extends the Child Care Expense Tax Credit to families making less than \$25,000 per year. Prior to the legislation, this tax credit which helps families afford the high cost of child care was not available to Colorado’s lowest income families.

⁷ https://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/50897/donate_page/donate-now

⁸ <http://www.coloradokids.org/issues/earlychildhood/ensuring-access/>