



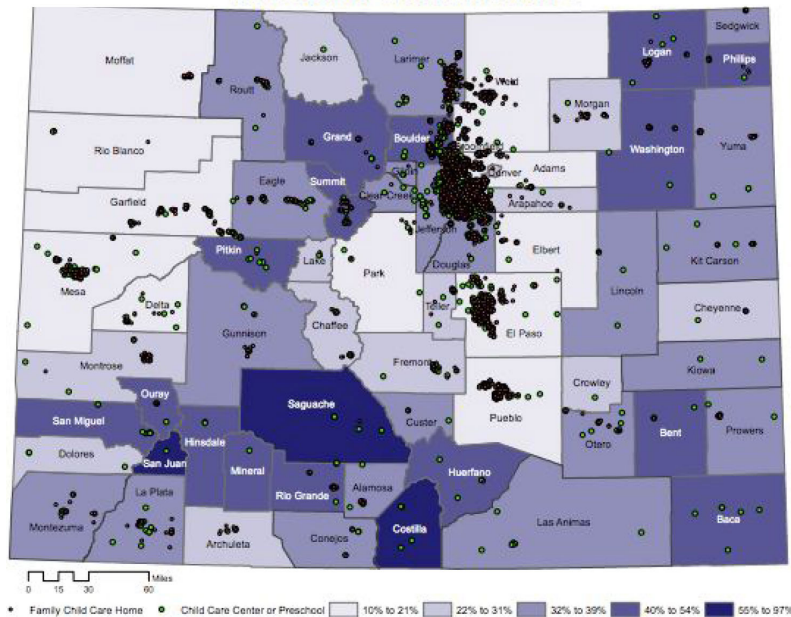
Access to Affordable, High-Quality Childcare

Across the country, about 61 percent of children under age five have one regular source of childcare—42 percent from a relative and 33 percent from a non-relative. In 2011, families with children under age five paid about \$179 per week, more than \$9,300 a year, for childcare. The median income in 2011 was \$50,000, which means childcare for these families took up a large part of their income.^{1,2}

Childcare in Colorado

All types of childcare (such as in a center, in a home, or with a relative) cost much more in Colorado than in most other states. There are not many options for good childcare in rural parts of the state or for families who do not make much money. In 2015, 21 counties had no licensed center-based providers for infants, and three had no licensed infant care in a childcare center or a family childcare home at all. In addition, the number of available slots declined from 2014 to 2015, particularly in rural areas.³

FIGURE 1: LICENSED CHILDCARE SLOTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE SIX



Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, "State of Childcare in Colorado," Essentials for Childhood Project, 2015. Map data from Qualistar Colorado.

In 2015, Colorado, among all states, had the highest cost for care for infants in a childcare center — almost 50 percent of median income for a single parent and 16 percent of income for a family. Colorado did not do well with respect to its childcare center rules and control, rating 35 out of 50 states.⁴ Families in Colorado urban areas tend to pay more for childcare than their non-resort area rural counterparts, largely due to differences in the cost of living. Costs can also vary widely within urban areas; in 2013, childcare prices in downtown Denver were 42 percent higher than in neighborhoods just a few miles away.⁵

¹ Lynda Laughlin, "Who's minding the kids? Childcare arrangements: Spring 2011," U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-135.pdf>.

² "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011," United States Census Bureau, 2012, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb12-172.html.

³ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, "State of Childcare in Colorado," Essentials for Childhood Project, 2015.

⁴ "Kids Count in Colorado," 2016.

⁵ The Women's Foundation, Qualistar Colorado, Colorado Children's Campaign, "Childcare Affordability in Colorado: An investigation into childcare costs and recommended strategies for improving affordability," December 2014. https://www.cpr.org/sites/default/files/colorado_cost_of_child_care_report_2014.pdf



Improving Access to Affordable, High-Quality Childcare: Promising Models and Strategies

There are many ways to build access to low-cost, high-quality childcare—for example, by making it easier to use existing childcare options, adding more childcare slots, and making the quality of childcare better. Colorado uses all these tools. But measuring and improving quality of childcare is still somewhat new, so there is not yet a lot of evidence about what works best.

NATIONAL PROGRAMS	COLORADO PROGRAMS
<p>Childcare and Development Fund: The Childcare and Development Fund (CCDF) is the major federal program that helps to pay for childcare for low-income families, supporting care for 1.4 million children nationally.⁶</p> <p>Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Childcare Partnerships: Early Head Start provides many services and supports for low-income families, including child growth and development programs and childcare. Early Head Start programs and providers in the CCDF overlap in their missions and in the families they serve.</p>	<p>Colorado Childcare Assistance Program: Colorado Childcare Assistance Program (CCCAP), which helps to pay for childcare for low-income families who are homeless, working, looking for work, are in the Colorado Works Program, or are in school.⁷</p> <p>Colorado Shines: In 2013, Colorado got a \$45 million grant to improve early childhood education and link childcare quality ratings to licensing. CCCAP uses the Colorado Shines⁸ Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS), run by the Colorado-based non-profit Qualistar, to help rate childcare providers.</p>

Evidence of Impact on Health and Social Outcomes

Putting money toward helping young children grow and learn is linked to better outcomes for individuals later in life, such as better jobs, higher income, and better health.⁹ The studies of these effects usually focus on income and job outcomes; they do not often look further to measure health and social outcomes or other long-term impacts. But people with better incomes tend to have better health, so because good childcare helps to improve income, it probably also improves health.

⁶ Administration for Children and Families, "Overview of 2016 Childcare and Development Fund Final Rule," US Department of Health and Human Services, 2016, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/ccdf_final_rule_fact_sheet.pdf.

⁷ Colorado Office of Early Childhood, "The Colorado Childcare Assistance Program: Information for Families," Department of Human Services, 2016, <http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/cccap-parents>.

⁸ "Colorado Shines," Colorado Department of Human Services, Colorado Department of Education, 2015, <http://coloradoshines.force.com/ColoradoShines/home>.

⁹ Executive Office of the President, Council of Economic Advisers, "Economic Report of the President: Chapter 4: Inequality in Early Childhood and Effective Public Policy Interventions," 2016, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERP-2016/pdf/ERP-2016-chapter4.pdf>.