

Senate Education

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HB21-1304 Early Childhood System

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Lauren Noser</p> <p>For</p> <p>Children's Hospital Colorado</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 1304. Children’s Hospital Colorado is testifying today in support of House Bill 1304. Here at Children’s Colorado, we know that what happens to children in their early years of life impacts lifelong health and well-being. Throughout our organization, we support and lead a myriad of programs related to child development and infant mental health and family health and well-being through early childhood behavioral health integration, home visiting in the context of the medical home, psychosocial screening for young children and families, and more. All of these efforts promote early childhood development, health, and wellbeing, which are critical elements of ensuring children have the best possible outcomes in health, home, and learning environments. We are particularly excited about the opportunity for the new Department of Early Childhood to enact the vision and mission of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC), which is to improve outcomes for young children birth to age eight and their families by advancing the alignment, coordination and efficiency of programs and services. A new department focused on ensuring young children are valued, healthy and thriving is an incredible opportunity for our state, and we hope that you will vote in support of House Bill 1304 today. Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony.</p>
<p>Elizabeth Szymanski</p> <p>For</p> <p>MyVillage LLC</p>	<p>Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee:</p> <p>As the co-founder of MyVillage, a national network of home-based educators based in Colorado and Montana, I’m intimately familiar with the barriers to helping people start quality home-based child care programs. Most MyVillage members are women, many women of color and many in rural areas with no child care centers that desperately need the option of home-based programs. This important workforce needs a streamlined solution to do the important work of educating our youngest learners.</p> <p>MyVillage strongly supports House Bill 1304 because it would provide greater access to affordable, high quality, home-based child care across Colorado by consolidating the many efforts currently happening around the state. Our state is well-positioned to lead the nation in early childhood</p>

	<p>education, and MyVillage supports HB 1304 and the creation of a cabinet-level office of early childhood education for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The bill ensures Colorado is a place where a supportive array of childhood experiences, across a variety of settings, are available to all families who want them 2. It would improve the experience of ECE providers and help them be more effective in their important work 3. It would ensure a seamless experience for families to get their ECE needs met. 4. It would help properly compensate the early childhood workforce 5. It would end fragmentation and misaligned and duplicative standards and requirements <p>Reduce bureaucracy by reducing the fragmentation and the governance oversight roles that multiple state agencies currently play in the system.</p> <p>Thank you for voting yes on HB 1304, and for your tireless advocacy for early childhood education in Colorado.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Elizabeth Szymanski</p> <p>Co-Founder, CFO</p> <p>MyVillage</p>
<p>Pamela Harris For Mile High Early Learning</p>	<p>My name is Pamela Harris, President & CEO of Mile High Early Learning (MHEL) and Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission.</p> <p>MHEL is Denver’s largest provider of subsidized early care and learning serving more than 600 families annually through its six early learning centers. More than 90% of our families live at or below the federal poverty level, even though two-thirds are working full-time. In order to provide high quality child care to children and families farthest from resources and historically underserved, MHEL seeks multiple funding opportunities to make these services accessible to under-resourced families. We blend and braid funds from: Head Start and Early Head Start, City and County of</p>

	<p>Denver, Denver Preschool Program, Colorado Preschool Program and ECARE, philanthropic grants, and individual donors, as well as generating revenue from our workforce development programs. Eligibility criteria vary for every funding source, and as a provider, we determine every family's eligibility and match them with available funding, which can be from more than 10 different sources.</p> <p>Funding sources require reporting and accountability to their individual program standards. We are navigating Colorado's child care licensing regulations, Head Start Program Performance Standards, Colorado Preschool Program requirements, Denver Preschool Program rules, and other stipulations.</p> <p>We partner closely with Denver Public Schools to provide services to 10% of our enrolled children who have special needs in inclusive classrooms.</p> <p>HB21-1304 provides us with an opportunity to build upon our current successes in early childhood and create an even more effective, comprehensive early care and learning system that provides choice for parents and guardians, is responsive to local communities' unique needs, and ensures that our children thrive.</p> <p>I urge you to support on the Anna Jo Garcia Haynes Early Childhood Act that will help us create such a system.</p> <p>Sincerely, Pamela Harris, PhD</p>
<p>Vail MCCOLE For Self</p>	<p>Last November, I celebrated when Coloradans overwhelmingly passed Proposition-EE to fund universal preschool across our state. As an instructor of early childhood education, and former child care provider, I know that too many Colorado children do not have access preschool.</p> <p>Early childhood is one of the most important periods in life, with nearly 90 percent of brain growth occurring before the age of five. Despite the long-term impacts of the early years, this is a time when families have little support and children are more likely to live in poverty.</p> <p>Voters showed how much they value early learning with the passage of Proposition EE. Now, let us show our youngest children how valuable they</p>

	<p>are by creating a state agency to help ensure equitable, quality, affordable early childhood experiences for all children.</p> <p>I respectfully ask for you to support legislation House Bill 21-1304 to create a new cabinet-level state agency for early childhood in Colorado. This will create a historic change for early childhood by establishing a department to expand access to high quality, voluntary, affordable early childhood opportunities.</p> <p>Thank you, T Vail McCole</p>
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