



Colorado Association of Family Child Care **2020 Policy Priorities**

The Colorado Association of Family Child Care has diligently worked to solicit feedback from its membership on key policy issues that impact businesses throughout the state. Collectively, we provide a valuable service to families in our community by supporting working parents, providing high quality care to our children, and help shape future generations of Colorado residents. It is critical for state and local policymakers enact policies that balance the practical needs of family child care providers with safety and licensing standards, work to provide affordable benefits, and improve the early childhood workforce.

The Colorado Association of Family Child Care has identified the following areas as our focus for 2020:

Provider Licensing and Compliance:

In 2019, the Colorado legislature directed the Office of Early Childhood to do a comprehensive study on the challenges family home providers face, and develop a strategic action plan for addressing our member's barriers to operating a successful business. Among the report findings, licensing and building code issues stand out as the most critical issues CAFCC must address in order to support a vibrant family home child care industry:

- **Building Codes, Zoning, & HOAs:** Local control is a long-held tradition in Colorado. We recognize that our neighbors and friends know what's best for our communities. That said, local control has created confusion, fear, and unpredictability for our members when it comes to zoning and building codes. Our homes cannot be treated the same way as traditional brick and mortar businesses. Additionally, our members often struggle to manage relationships with HOAs that may seek to limit business activities in their area.
 - CAFCC is committed to working with our partners to ensure an even and balanced interpretation of local zoning and building codes. We are also committed to ensuring that HOAs understand our businesses are what make their neighborhoods safe and enjoyable for working families.
- **Licensing:** Our members recognize that state regulations are in place to protect the safety of the children we serve. However, too often those regulations are misinterpreted, poorly communicated, or are enforced inconsistently across jurisdictions. Our members view local licensing specialists, as well as city and county officials, as partners, but we need to ensure those standards promote high-quality care, and not harm our ability to operate businesses.
 - CAFCC is committed to working with the Office of Early Childhood and local partners to review and improve licensing practices in order to ensure our businesses are operating in a high-quality, and safe manner.

Affordable, Accessible, and Adequate Benefits for our Business Owners:

One of the most challenging and expensive aspects of owning any business is accessing benefits. CAFCC recognizes that our members too often cannot gain access to retirement savings or enroll in healthcare plans that meet their needs at a price they can afford. Colorado can do more to help our members. CAFCC will be focused on the following benefit areas in 2020:

- **Healthcare:** Our member engagement shows that the cost of healthcare is a pressing concern for a significant number of our members. High premiums and deductibles, prescription drug costs, and lack on insurance coverage options have an outsized impact on our members' ability to operate their businesses.
 - CAFCC will focus our attention in healthcare on cost containment measures that will maintain quality healthcare options at a price our members can afford.
- **Retirement:** Colorado residents are struggling to save for retirement, and our members are no different. Retirement plans are often difficult to understand, and too many of our members do not have the opportunity to save critically needed money. Our members recognize saving for retirement is important for them and their families' financial health.
 - CAFCC will engage with state policymakers to expand retirement options, and we will work to ensure our members are educated on the benefits of saving for retirement, the options they have available, and policies to expand plan enrollment.

Ensure our voice is heard in other policy conversations:

Although our members did not decisively highlight other areas of policy to focus on, several other items that are expected to be discussed at the Capitol in 2020 are directly relevant to our work:

- **Workforce Development:** Colorado has placed a heavy emphasis on supporting early childhood workforce development. While many of the policies being discussed may not have a large impact on our operations, there are opportunities to support family home providers in several proposed legislative items.
 - CAFCC will work to ensure policymakers give closer attention to family home workforce issues - such as alternative licensing pathways and substitute pool development - that allow our businesses to operate more effectively.
- **Paid Family and Medical Leave:** One of the biggest issues being debated at the Capitol this year will be paid family and medical leave. At a high level, our members like the concept of paid family and medical leave, but creating a program that meets our needs is critical. Many of our members are self-employed, or would struggle to offer leave to employees if we have them.
 - CAFCC will work to balance our business obligations and our values to ensure any program that is put in place recognizes the unique needs of our industry, and strives to accommodate our members.