



Keep the Lights On

Open Child Care = Open Economy

CHILD CARE IS ESSENTIAL. Not only is child care essential to support children's school readiness and future success, but it allows parents to participate in the workforce. As more employees are able to return to work, child care is critical to getting our economy back on track. An estimated **40%** of Colorado families are still in need of child care during the COVID-19 crisis.

The pandemic did, and still does, require a robust essential workforce to support our health care system, public safety professionals, first responders, and countless other parents returning to work. In the healthcare sector alone, it's estimated that 80,000 workers have young children of their own. Without child care, many essential workers are unable to perform the work that is most crucial to supporting the function of our essential services. Child care professionals and business owners are answering this call, and providing a healthy, safe, enriching environment for young children so parents can go to work.

LIKE SO MANY SMALL BUSINESSES, CHILD CARE PROVIDERS FACE ENORMOUS CHALLENGES. COVID-19 shined a spotlight on the fragility of the early care and education sector. Prior to the pandemic, child care providers – the vast majority being women and people of color – operated on razor-thin margins to meet fixed costs like paying staff, rent, mortgage, and utilities. Those challenges have intensified. In the early days of the pandemic, a national survey showed that nearly **90%** of providers expressed doubt in staying operational without any kind of support. With 400,000 children in Colorado under the age of 6 and licensed capacity of 151,000 slots, we need to ensure Colorado child care providers can stabilize during the pandemic and beyond.

In Colorado, of the providers who responded to the national survey reported:

- **33%** say they would not survive closing for more than two weeks without significant public investment and support that would allow them to compensate and retain staff, pay rent, and cover other fixed costs.
- **22%** would not survive a closure of any length of time without these supports
- **29%** do not know how long they would be able to close their doors and be able to reopen without these supports
- **44%** have parents who cannot pay fees or copays
- **29%** have lost income because they are paid by attendance rather than enrollment and **54%** have lost income based on families' own inability to pay.

JOINING FORCES TO LITERALLY "KEEP THE LIGHTS ON." To meet this critical need, a public-private partnership effort was established with the goal of 1) providing cleaning supplies and 2) direct financial assistance to licensed family child care homes, centers, and school-age programs statewide. Generous funding has been provided through the Colorado Department of Human Services, Gary Community Investments, the Buell Foundation, the Women's Foundation of Colorado, Mile High United Way, the Gates Family Foundation, the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA), and Healthy Child Care Colorado to make this possible.

It takes all of us – nonprofits, philanthropy, government, and business leaders – to help stabilize these vital small businesses and reduce further closures.

A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH

1

Bulk purchase of cleaning supplies. Partners pooled funding upwards of **\$230,000** to purchase much-needed supplies such as bleach, paper towels, disinfectant soap, face masks, and hand sanitizer to **1,200 child care providers across Colorado** in June 2020. At a time when these supplies were sold out, unavailable to buy in bulk, or even be delivered, this effective partnership demonstrated our collective buying power on an unprecedented scale. Child care providers were then able to continue to meet health and safety measures or increase likelihood of a successful re-open.

By the Numbers...

35 Regional Drop-Offs
\$230,000 in Pooled Funding
1,200 Child Care Providers Impacted
10,800 Gallons of Disinfectant Soap
2,400 Gallons of Bleach
57,600 Rolls of Toilet Paper
36,000 Rolls of Paper Towels
240,000 Pairs of Gloves
33,000 Masks/Facial Coverings



2

Direct financial assistance to providers. Significant financial investment is necessary for providers to stay viable. Beginning in July/August 2020, a competitive grant process will be launched to ensure child care providers across the state can cover fixed costs like rent, retain staff, pay for additional cleaning supplies, and utilities.

Child Care Centers & School-Age Programs		
Option	Licensed Capacity	Funding Maximum
1	30 children or fewer	Up to \$3,000
2	31-59 children	Up to \$6,000
3	60+ children	Up to \$12,000
Family Child Care Homes		
Up to \$2,500		

Please visit the our [Keep the Lights On Grants page](#) for more information on grant application details and funding priorities.

QUESTIONS?

If you are interested in making a donation to support the Keep the Lights On Fund, please contact Dan Mooney at dan.mooney@unitedwaydenver.org or 303-561-2355. For all other inquiries, please contact Molly Yost (Director of Early Childhood Initiatives, Mile High United Way) at molly.yost@unitedwaydenver.org.