

# HB 17-1210: Addressing Out-of-School Suspension & Expulsion of Young Children

**Reps. Lontine & Buckner/Sens. Priola & Fields**

Co-sponsors: Reps. Arndt, Bridges, Coleman, Hooton, Jackson, Lawrence, Pettersen, Thurlow, & Young

Sens. Cooke, Gardner, Kerr, Martinez Humenik, Tate, & Todd

## THE ISSUE

A high quality, nurturing environment in the early school years unlocks the potential of all of our children to learn about themselves and the world. School success by end of third grade is a powerful predictor of later academic and life outcomes, including graduation.

Currently, too few children, especially Black, Latino, Native American, and children with disabilities, are on track for success by the end of third grade. There are many reasons for this, but one is that **exclusionary school discipline based on infractions often unrelated to safety** push thousands of children, disproportionately boys, Black children, Latino boys, and children with disabilities, out of the building at a time when school can have the greatest impact.

## THE CHALLENGE

We know that investments in early development pay huge dividends in preventing and closing opportunity gaps. Yet research shows that practices like out-of-school suspension and expulsion are currently widening the education equity gap.

In the early years of rapid brain development, we need thoughtful discipline policies that help children unlock their potential. Unfortunately, **in current law the same categories for exclusionary discipline that exist for an 18-year-old also exist for a 5-year-old.**

## THE OPPORTUNITY

HB 17-1210 will update statute to offer better guidance to administrators regarding out-of-school suspensions & expulsions for very young children. For children in publicly-funded preschool classrooms (typically 3- & 4-year olds) and children in grades K, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, the bill:

- **Does not** affect statute governing in-school suspensions or classroom removals.
- **Complies with federal law** related to expulsion, including allowances for local discretion on a case-by-case basis for such violations.
- Ensures that out-of-school suspensions for young children address ongoing **safety concerns and are developmentally appropriate.**
- Reinforces the **partnership between parents and schools** in determining if a child has an unidentified disability when safety or behavioral issues arise.
- Clarifies that eligibility regarding **prevention, early intervention, and support services** for expelled and at-risk students includes the early elementary grades.

By focusing on **alternatives to suspension and expulsion for non-threatening behavior**, we have an opportunity to address the root causes of a child's actions. This is a missed opportunity when a young child is sent out of the school building.

Supporters  
Advocacy Denver  
Denver Affiliate of the National Black Child Development Institute (BCDI)  
Clayton Early Learning  
Colorado Children's Campaign  
Hope Center  
Institute for Racial Equity and Excellence (IREE)  
Padres & Jovenes Unidos  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter  
American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado  
American Federation of Teachers  
The Arc of Aurora  
The Arc of Colorado  
Children's Hospital Colorado  
Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health (CoAIMH)  
Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program (CCHAP)  
Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (CCJRC)  
Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council  
(Supporters continued on next page →)

Supporters (Cont'd)

Colorado Education Association  
 Colorado Head Start Association  
 Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization (CLLARO)  
 Colorado PTA  
 Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition  
 Denver Preschool Program  
 Democrats for Education Reform  
 Denver's Early Childhood Council  
 Education Reform Now  
 The Fields Foundation  
 Junior League of Denver  
 The Kempe Foundation for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect  
 Mile High Early Learning  
 Mile High United Way  
 Qualistar Colorado  
 Stand for Children Colorado  
 Together Colorado  
 Urban League of Metropolitan Denver

## Supporters of HB 17-1210

**ADVOCACY DENVER**

providing active voice and supporting civil rights for people with disabilities



**BCDI**

Black Child Development Institute DENVER



**EDUCATION REFORM NOW**



American Academy of Pediatrics DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Colorado Chapter

