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.

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.

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, 1st, and 2nd, 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 (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

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