



PRESS RELEASE

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COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGER EDUCATION REVERSES 1986 PROHIBITION ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEGREES

DENVER, CO – The Colorado Commission on Higher Education reversed part of a 1986 ruling prohibiting colleges and universities from offering bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education. The Commission’s reversal will allow institutions to offer four-year early childhood education degrees with the goal of improving teacher quality in early childhood settings.

“Opening the door to a four-year bachelor’s degree in early childhood education is a significant step toward elevating Colorado’s early childhood professionals,” said Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia. “We know teachers with the right professional credentials are much more likely to make significant and lasting impact in their classrooms. Effective educators in early childhood settings will help ensure more of Colorado’s children are school-ready when they arrive at kindergarten.”

The decision is a noteworthy step for strengthening Colorado’s early childhood workforce as defined in the state’s early literacy initiative released last month.

While the reversal of the decision does not in itself create an early childhood degree, it creates a pathway for institutions to begin this work. Colleges and universities will now be able to offer a wider range of classes and accept more students transferring from two-year institutions. Under the 1986 ruling, many students transferring from a two-year college to a four-year institution could not receive credit for some courses completed at the two-year or community college.

Today’s decision helps Colorado meet the new federal Head Start regulations requiring that 50% of early childhood teachers nationwide have bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education or a related field by 2013. Colorado follows in the footsteps of other states like Nebraska and Kansas whose higher education programs offer early childhood education bachelor’s programs.

Those four-year institutions currently offering early childhood education programs support the opportunity to offer an early childhood bachelor's degree. The P-3 Professional Development Task Force, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Early Childhood Leadership Commission and the Department of Higher Education also voiced support for the Commission’s decision.

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