



Save the Children
Action Network™



COLORADO VOTERS CARE ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

.....Inside:

An in-depth report proves investing in high-quality early childhood education is a top priority for Colorado voters.



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Current legislators and candidates looking for issues with broad appeal that can meaningfully improve the lives of their constituents should embrace Colorado-specific policies that invest in our youngest learners and early intervention programs.

Our bipartisan polling team of TargetPoint Consulting, led by Michael Meyers, and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, led by David Walker, was commissioned by Save the Children Action Network to conduct survey research among Colorado general election voters to gauge their opinions about early childhood education and early intervention policies. In addition to general election voters, we also conducted interviews among both Democratic and Republican primary voters.

Education is a leading priority among all voters and especially among Independent and Democratic voters. Voters of all partisan stripes understand the critical importance of years zero through five in a child's development and believe public education should start with preschool and be offered to all 4-year-olds.

Seven out of 10 voters in Colorado believe improving our education system, including preschool, K-12, and higher education, should be a top priority.

As important as these results are, two discrete findings really stand out. First, voters are willing to put their money where their mouths are, which is to say, voters support additional investments in early childhood education, even when told it means a slight increase in taxes. Second, when voters are told in state-specific detail about the current inadequate financial support for early childhood education and assistance, they respond with real political urgency.

Huge numbers of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents describe themselves as more likely to support a candidate who advocates for investing in early childhood education and child care. Candidates would be wise to listen to these voters.

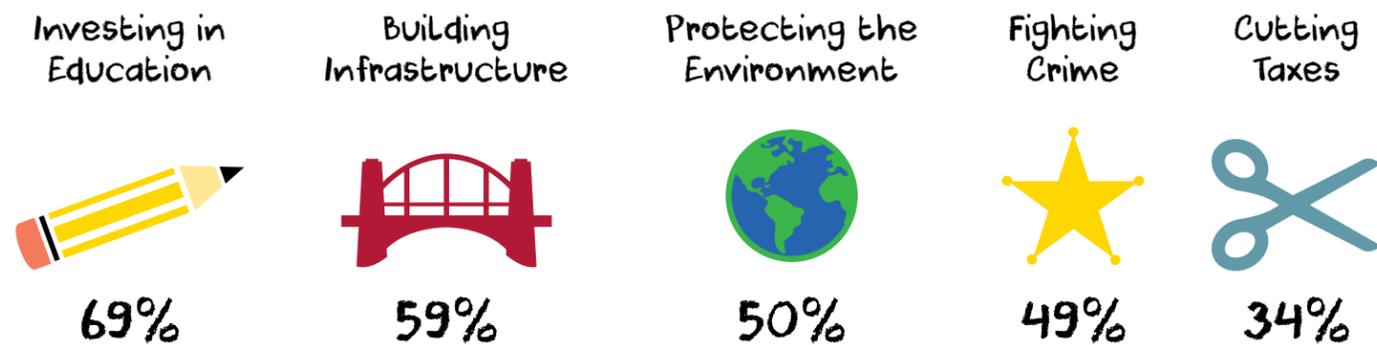
David Walker is a Vice President at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, and 2018 marks his 30th year conducting public opinion research. He has worked on campaigns at every level of government, from national elections to local sheriff. He and his firm have extensive experience working on education and early childhood education issues, including work with the National Education Association, Education Minnesota, Colorado Education Association, Achieve, and D.C. Public Schools.

Michael Meyers is President and partner at TargetPoint Consulting. His two decades of experience bring a deep understanding of the views held by the national electorate. His past clients include the presidential campaigns of President Bush, Senator McCain, and Governor Romney. Numerous clients have benefited from his insights as a public opinion researcher, including the Michigan legislature, local ballot initiatives, and presidential campaigns.

COLORADO VOTER ATTITUDES ON EARLY

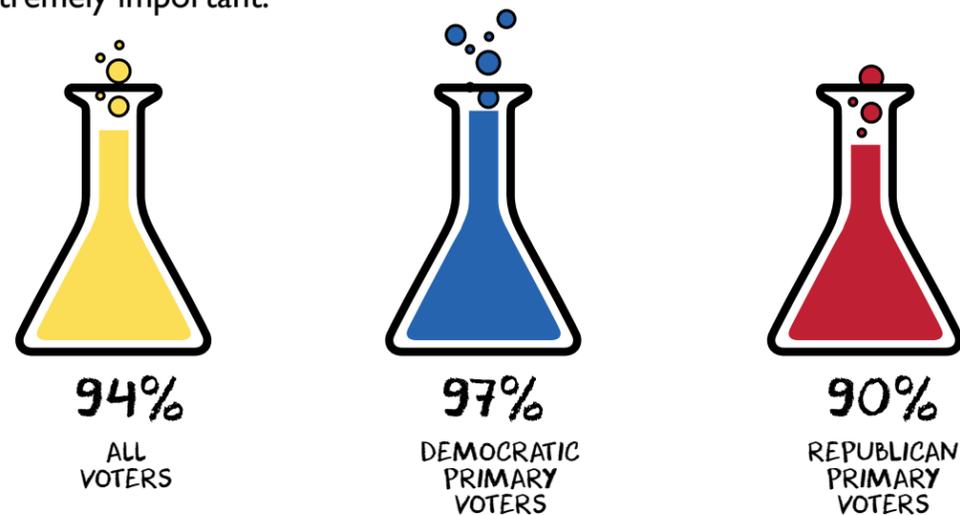
Education, Including Preschool, Is the Leading Issue

Voters rank improving Colorado's education system—including preschool—as an “extremely or very high priority,” EVEN when compared to other popular issues.



Voters Agree: The Early Years Are Important

Voters recognize the vital role education can play in the early years of development, saying ages 0 to 5 are important, with a majority of voters recognizing that these years are “extremely important.”



Voters Support Expanding Preschool

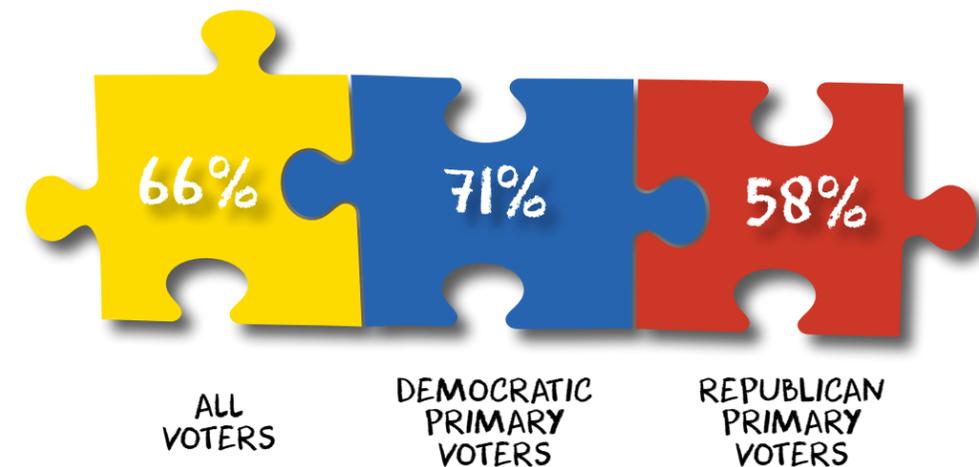


An overwhelming majority of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who said this about preschool: “Only 54 percent of low-income children are being served by preschool programs in Colorado. That means over 29,000 low-income kids who could benefit most from high-quality early education have no access to pre-kindergarten. I want to expand funding so at least the lowest-income 4-year-olds who want to attend preschool have access.”



Child Care: A Bipartisan Issue

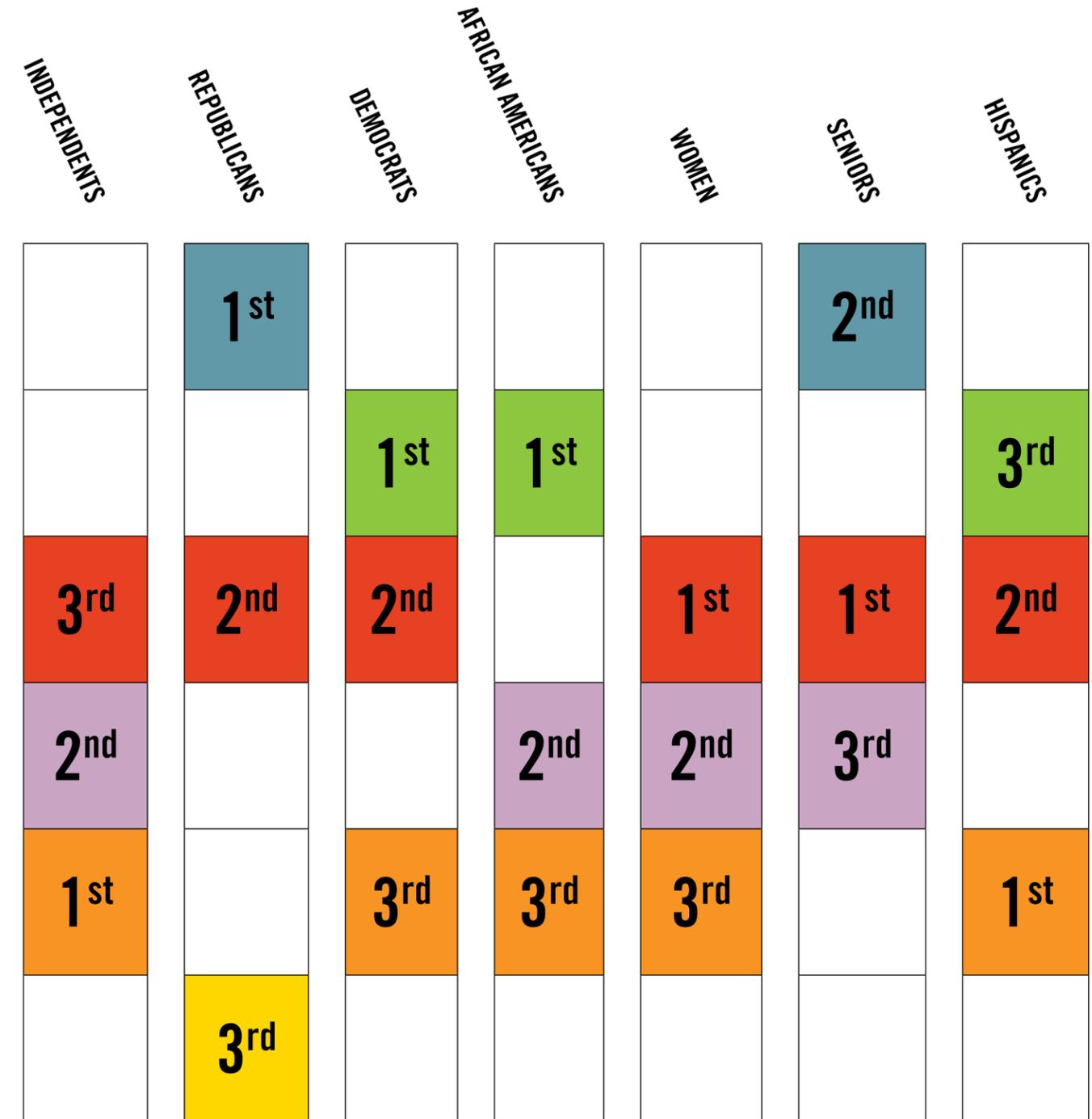
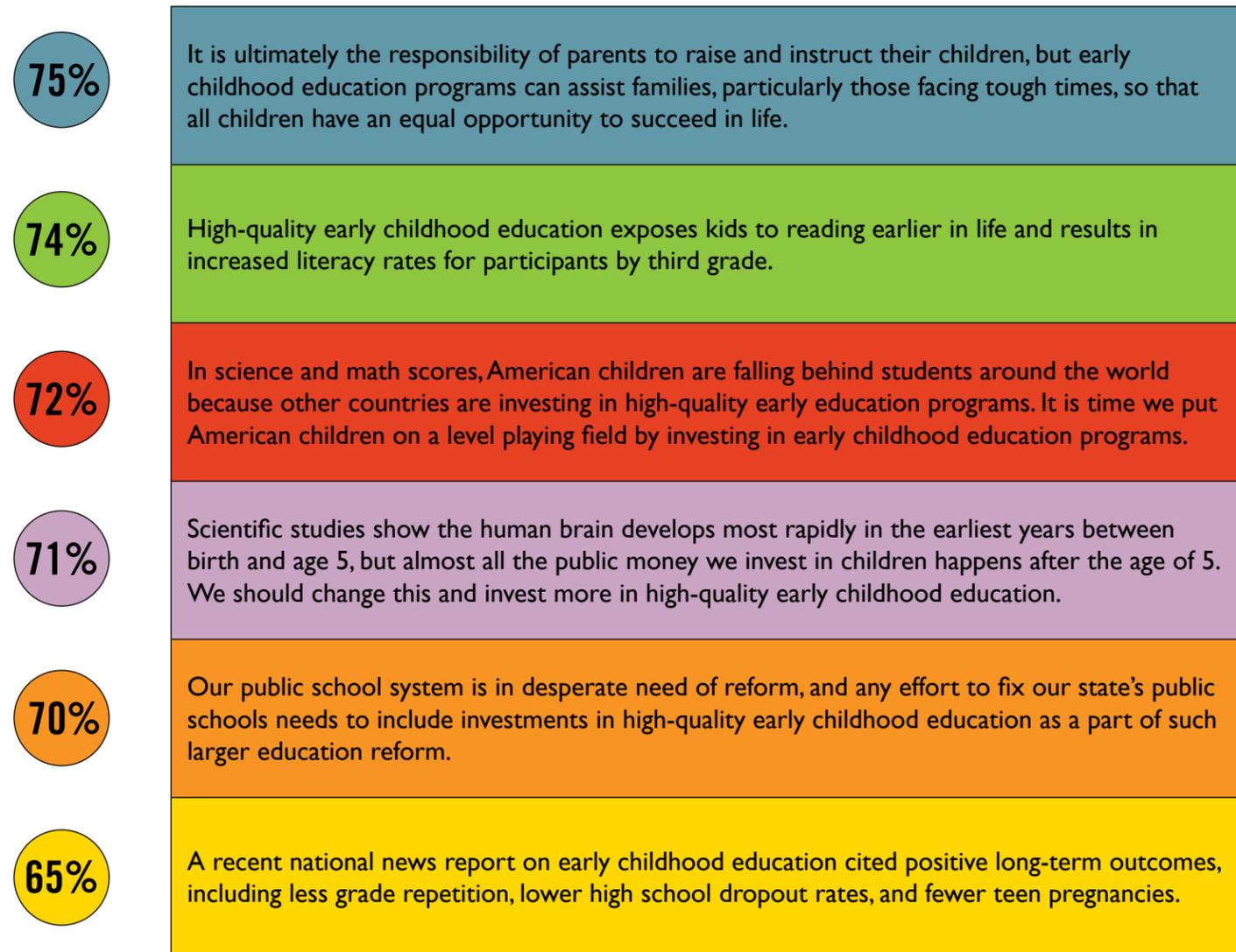
There is strong bipartisan agreement on changing child care assistance. Majorities of both parties agree they'd be more likely to vote for a candidate who would change how state-funded child care assistance works and end the strict income cutoff to benefits.



MESSAGE GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The six statements below are powerful messages that resonate with Colorado voters to support new investments in early childhood education. At least 65 percent of voters say these statements are convincing arguments in favor of early childhood care and education.

Below are the top three messages ranked in order of most powerful for each target audience of voters, color coded to correspond with the message chart on page 6.



POLICY THAT ADVANCES HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

SUMMARY: PRESCHOOL SHOULD BE UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE

A wide majority of Colorado voters want preschool to be accessible to all families and not be a needs-based assistance program. The proof: 58 percent of Colorado voters believe public education should start at pre-K and be offered to all 4-year-olds. Only 8 percent say it should be offered to low-income kids, and just 29 percent think it should not be part of public schools.

The following are policy proposals that Colorado voters overwhelmingly support to expand preschool and invest in early childhood education, ranked in order of popularity. The total percentage is the sum of voters who are "much more" or "somewhat more likely" to vote for a candidate who advocates for these policies during his or her campaign.

VOTERS
69%
APPROVED

Only 54 percent of low-income children are being served by preschool programs in Colorado. That means over 29,000 low-income kids who could benefit most from high-quality early education have no access to pre-kindergarten. I want to expand funding so at least the lowest-income 4-year-olds who want to attend preschool have access.

Families that reach a certain income level get cut off from any child care assistance. I'm committed to ending the cycle of poverty, and as governor, I would change how state-funded child care assistance works. Instead of a strict cutoff, I propose we gradually lower the amount of assistance families get so they still have help with child care costs. In Colorado, it should pay to work hard, and I support changing the way this works to enable families to get out of poverty and move into the middle class.

VOTERS
66%
APPROVED

Less than 2 percent of vulnerable parents in Colorado who need help are getting the services they require. The state of Colorado can assist families and help parents by providing home visiting programs to vulnerable parents in need, such as the Nurse Family Partnership, which connects nurses with first-time, low-income mothers to educate them on parenting, share resources, and perform health checks from pregnancy through the child's second birthday. I support expanding this to reach more families so our children's parents can parent better.

VOTERS
65%
APPROVED

VOTERS
63%
APPROVED

Of Colorado's \$6.4 billion education budget, only 1.6 percent is spent on preschool programs, but studies show that 90 percent of brain development occurs in the first five years. In Denver, they have solved the gap in preschool funding through a city sales tax to help more children attend preschool. I support expanding our funding of preschool programs to double what our state is spending and encourage other cities to use a sales tax to help fund preschool for 4-year-olds around the state and give our children a better start.

DID YOU KNOW?

Voters Want Investments in Early Education, Even if It Means a Slight Tax Increase

Sixty-six percent of voters said they would support a candidate that came out in FAVOR of investing in high-quality early childhood education programs and child care, even if it meant a slight tax increase. Among the 66 percent, Republican primary voters are more likely to support this policy by 37 percent, and Democratic primary voters support it by 83 percent.

WHAT COLORADO VOTERS ARE SAYING

"The benefits are not only to the child themselves but also to the family and for the greater community."

DEMOCRATIC VOTER

"It explores things that maybe the moms can't do at home ... it's opening their minds ... that's the really nice thing about school."

REPUBLICAN VOTER

"Opportunities for preschool ... it's a benefit not only to those kids but also to the rest that are in that classroom and the teacher."

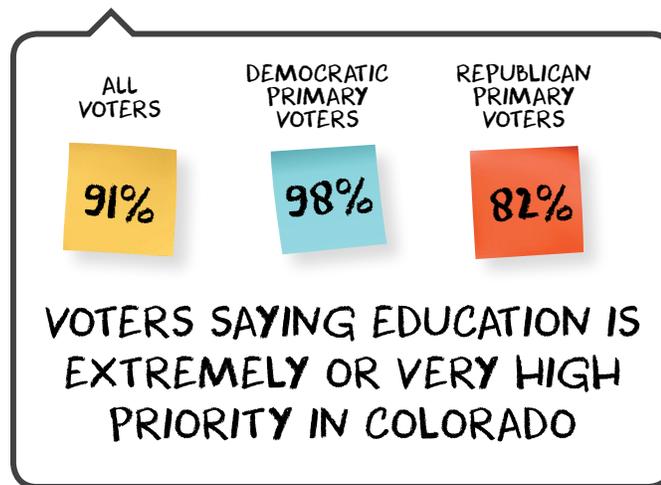
DEMOCRATIC VOTER

"If someone needs help, they should be able to get help."

REPUBLICAN VOTER

Save the Children Action Network supports efforts to invest in children from the beginning. By investing in early childhood education, we ensure a strong start for our children and a better future for us all.

INSIDE: Education and early childhood education is a top priority for Colorado voters across partisan lines.



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