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We can't afford to cut funds for child care

MARCH 19, 2010

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As an early child care professional, I was disturbed by the article, "County to cap child care program's numbers" (Fort Collins Coloradoan, Feb. 4). On March 1, the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program suspended enrollment, putting 356 children on a CCAP waiting list.

The impact of these cuts is huge - both for families and for local agencies such as Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center. Approximately 45 percent of Teaching Tree's families are CCAP recipients. Families receiving this assistance are working toward self-sufficiency while their children receive quality care and education.

Many families losing CCAP assistance will also lose access to affordable child care, and children could be left in unsafe, unlicensed situations that are detrimental to their development and leave them unprepared to enter school.

When children don't do well in kindergarten, they're less likely to ever catch up. They often require special services, repeat a grade, fail to graduate from high school, engage in risky behaviors and wind up on welfare as adults - factors that significantly impact the entire community.

A quality early childhood program, however, provides at-risk infants, toddlers and preschoolers with consistent care and education so they're able to start school on an even level with their more financially advantaged peers - and experience better outcomes throughout their lives.

Without access to quality child care, low-income families will struggle to stay employed, which will also impact employers' ability to maintain a productive work force.

Can our community really afford to pay the price of cutting funds for child care?

Anne Lance,
executive director,

Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center

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