

Let Our Kids Grow: Support Reasonable Childhood Independence

Children need and deserve reasonable independence and parents need freedom to make decisions in the best interests of their children.

How Reasonable Childhood Independence Legislation works

This legislation clarifies that kids and parents have the flexibility to do every day things by tightening the definition of neglect to be more specific, giving families across the state the option, if they so choose, to let children:

- x Travel to and from school, including by walking, running, or bicycling
- x Travel to and from nearby commercial or recreational facilities
- x Engage in outdoor play
- x Be home alone for a reasonable amount of time
- x Remain for less than fifteen (15) minutes in a vehicle if the temperature inside the vehicle is not or will not become dangerously hot or cold
- x Engage in a similar independent activity

This legislation allows parents to make these family decisions and determine when their child is “of sufficient maturity, physical condition, and mental abilities to avoid substantial risk of physical harm.”

It also clarifies that neglect is the denial of “necessary” care to a child and creating an environment that is obviously injurious to his or her welfare.



Why This Law Is Necessary

- Good, caring families can be swept up unnecessarily into the criminal justice and/or child welfare systems for giving their kids—either by choice or necessity—reasonable opportunities for independence
- American families report feeling fearful that authorities will stop them if they let their children walk to school or play outside and want a clearer law that balances their freedom to make decisions for their families and protects all Colorado children
- There is a disproportionate impact from over-broad neglect laws on low-income individuals and communities of color
- Exposing children to manageable, independent experiences helps them develop problem-solving skills, become healthier and happier both physically and mentally, learn responsibility, decision-making and resourcefulness, and eventually become more resilient adults

Together we can fix this for American kids and parents and re-establish the balance between the freedom to be a kid and protecting children