



## Denver Joins UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities Initiative

*The City and County of Denver begins multi-year initiative in partnership with UNICEF USA to create safer, healthier, and more inclusive communities by elevating youth voices*

**DENVER, CO (April 7, 2025)** - The City and County of Denver, led by the Office of Children’s Affairs (OCA), is proud to officially announce its partnership with UNICEF USA by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to begin its estimated three-year journey toward recognition as a [UNICEF Child Friendly City](#). Through the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), Denver will work towards building a roadmap that will strengthen support for children and families across the city. Building on Mayor Mike Johnston’s Family Friendly Citywide Goal, announced in January, this initiative sets Denver on a path to become the best city to raise a family—now and for generations to come.

“Becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City is a promise and a commitment to our children and families to create a place where every child is safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential,” **said Mayor Mike Johnston**. “Aligned with our Family Friendly goal, I am grateful to our partners at UNICEF USA, the Office of Children’s Affairs, and our community leaders for helping make this vision a reality.”

The UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative is rooted in developing policies that protect, support and empower children and young people by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to shape their futures. This multi-year commitment is dedicated to centering the rights, needs, and voices of children and families in decisions made by the City, because when families thrive, the entire community thrives.

“We are excited to welcome the City and County of Denver as it begins its journey toward becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City - and joins our growing cohort of cities across the United States committed to advancing child well-being,” said UNICEF USA Chief Program Officer, Darla Silva. “UNICEF USA is proud to work in partnership with the City to create lasting change by strengthening youth participation and ensuring that their rights, needs, and voices are prioritized in city decision-making processes.”

Through the CFCI Framework for Action, the City will conduct a situation analysis to gather stories, feedback, and perceptions on the state of Denver’s children and families across five CFCI goal areas focusing on supporting children and young people, including: safety and inclusion, children’s participation, equitable social services, safe living environments and play and leisure. This analysis, which will assess child well-being data and engage residents through a series of Community Conversations will guide the creation of a Local Action Plan for Youth, ensuring city leaders and community stakeholders can collaborate on the goals and aspirations identified by the community. Once implemented, an independent third-party evaluation will determine if the City and County of Denver meets the criteria to receive UNICEF Child Friendly City recognition—potentially as early as Spring 2028.

Since its inception in 1996, UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities Initiative has been implemented in more than 3,500 municipalities and over 40 countries. The current United States cohort of recognized UNICEF Child Friendly Cities includes Houston, Texas, Minneapolis, Minnesota and Decatur, Georgia with more cities – including Boulder, Colorado – anticipated to be recognized in the coming years.

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To stay up-to-date on Denver's progress toward recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City and to learn more about how to get involved, please [follow the Office of Children's Affairs on social media](#) and visit the [OCA website](#).

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#### **ABOUT The Office of Children's Affairs**

Since 1995, the Denver Office of Children's Affairs has worked to help young people thrive by coordinating services, fostering community partnerships, and supporting children and youth from prenatal care through age 24, along with their families, community organizations, and service providers. By connecting communities, government agencies, and stakeholders, the office ensures the safety, well-being, and success of young people while removing barriers, expanding opportunities, and supporting innovative, equitable, and effective programs through advocacy, funding, and technical assistance. By amplifying youth voices, assessing community needs, and driving meaningful change, it strengthens the systems that serve Denver's children and youth. For more information head over to <https://denvergov.org/childrensaffairs>

#### **ABOUT UNICEF USA**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to pursue a more equitable world for every child. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization, by providing health care and immunizations, safe water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more.

UNICEF USA advances the global mission of UNICEF by rallying the American public to support the world's most vulnerable children. Together, we are working toward a world that upholds the rights of all children and helps every child thrive. For more information visit [www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org).