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**State Update**

Illinois still does not have a full state budget in place. Services are being paid either under court order/consent decree, through federal funding, or under the terms of the June 30 stopgap budget proposal. While elementary and secondary education funding, including funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant, was granted for the full 2017 fiscal year (through June 30, 2017), many human services programs, including Department of Human Services-funded home visiting, will see appropriation authority for their programs end on December 31, 2016. Although these programs have received contracts running through June 30, 2017, most of them have yet to see any payments for service provided in FY2017 and will not receive payments unless the General Assembly and governor take action.

While the Illinois General Assembly is scheduled to return to its fall veto session today, November 15, it's unlikely that budget or appropriations bills will be taken up. It is important for early childhood advocates to reach back out to their lawmakers to update them on the impact of the ongoing budget impasse on early learning programs, particularly home visiting programs funded by the Department of Human Services.

Last week's general election likely did little to alter the dynamics of the state's ongoing budget impasse. There will be four new members of the Illinois Senate: Cristina Castro (D-22, Elgin), Jil Tracy (R-47, Quincy), Paul Schimpf (R-58, Okawaville), and Dale Fowler (R-59, Benton).

New House members include Theresa Mah (D-2, Chicago), Juliana Stratton (D-5, Chicago), Melissa Conyears (D-10, Chicago), Nick Sauer (R-51, Mundelein), Steven Reick (R-63, Woodstock), Allen Skillicorn (R-66, Crystal Lake), Tony McCombie (R-71, Port Byron), Michael Halpin (D-72, Rock Island), Ryan Spain (R-73, Peoria), Daniel Swanson (R-74, Galesburg), Jerry Long (R-76, Peru), Lindsay Parkhurst (R-79, Kankakee), LaToya Greenwood (D-114, East St. Louis), Dave Severin (R-117, Marion) and Katie Stuart (D-112, Edwardsville).

You can always use our [legislator look-up tool](#) to find your legislative district and current lawmaker. Our tool will be updated with new lawmaker information when those elected to the General Assembly are sworn in on January 11, 2017.

The Ounce is releasing its [summary of legislation](#) passed during the last session that might impact low-income children and their families.

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## Federal Update

The balance of power in Congress did not shift dramatically as a result of the general election. However, any time there is a shift in parties holding power at the presidency, there are often many changes. And as many have already noted, this transition is particularly unprecedented. As we always do, the Ounce will work with elected officials at all levels - federal, state and local - to advance policies that support research-based best practices in early learning.

We will also maintain our focus on serving the children who need it most - including low-income children (who are disproportionately children of color), dual language learners, children with special needs, homeless children and other children who benefit the most from public support. Our commitment to these populations is steadfast and we will continue to educate policymakers about the importance of prioritizing them.

Our partners at the First Five Years Fund (FFYF), who had been engaged with both presidential campaigns over the past year, released their [policy framework recommendations](#) for the new administration and Congress. FFYF also issued a public statement, excerpted below:

"Across the political spectrum, policymakers acknowledge the importance of investing in our children's earliest years. Today, the First Five Years Fund is ready to hit the ground running by working with Congress and engaging the new Trump Administration. Existing bipartisan support provides significant opportunities to advance early childhood education solutions that benefit children most in need...Now more than ever, America's low- and middle-income families need access to high-quality early childhood education for their children. The solution is in our reach and it's time to align policies to public demand."

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## Resources, Reports and Other Publications

### Children's Mental Health

Illinois is partnering with ZERO TO THREE to address and advance state policy related to [improving infant and early childhood mental health](#). Illinois was one of ten states selected through a competitive application process. Participating states have met to identify strategies to align health care finance policy with infant and early childhood mental health practice.

This partnership comes at a time when there is a larger focus on mental health across the nation given that children spend a large portion of their day in early learning and care settings. As an [article](#) from *The Atlantic* notes, children do not widely have access to mental

health consultation and teachers often feel ill-equipped to address children's emotional needs resulting in increased suspension and expulsions.

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### **Prevention Initiative Report**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) issued its FY2014-2015 [Prevention Initiative biennial report](#). The report focuses on the Early Childhood Block Grant program for children birth to 3-year-olds. Among many items, the report includes characteristics of children, parents and families served; types of services delivered; program model used by funded projects to address the needs of those receiving services; unmet needs; and results of the funded programs.

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### **Every Student Succeeds Act: State Draft Plan and Listening Tours**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a new law that takes into effect during the 2017-2018 school year with implementation occurring within the next year and a half. ISBE shared the [first draft of the ESSA state plan](#) and is hosting a [third set of listening tours](#) in late November through early December. ISBE has several [resources](#) to help explain the new law and answer frequently asked questions.

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### **State Plan: Department of Children and Family Services**

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services formally issued the first [strategic state plan](#) for the child welfare system. The state plan will cover 2016-2021 and brought several state agencies to the table to truly collaborate and place children at the forefront.

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### **Segregation at an Early Age**

A new report titled, [Segregation at an Early Age](#), explores data from the Civil Rights Data Collection from 2013-2014 and analyzes nearly 28,000 public schools enrolling over 1.4 million preschool students. The report presents the racial diversity of preschool enrollment, yet found many preschoolers do not experience diversity in schools as Black and Latino students typically attend schools where over half of the students represent their own race. Further, students who are English Language Learners are less likely to attend preschools with native English speakers.

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### **Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the U.S.: 2015**

The U.S. Census Bureau announced the median household income increased by 5.2% between 2014 and 2015 while the poverty rate decreased by 1.2 percentage points. The percentage of people without health insurance also decreased. The results were issued as two reports: [Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015](#) and [Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2015](#). Although strides have been made towards improving the overall health and well-being of children, not every child has equal or equitable access to services.

The Center for Law and Social Policy, or CLASP, created an [analysis](#) along with policy recommendations in response to the U.S. Census reports. In addition, the Urban Institute posted an [article](#) citing several challenges young children in poverty face.

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## News and Announcements

### **Head Start Performance Standards**

The Department of Health and Human Services announced the new [Head Start Performance Standards](#) that will further support the Head Start program. The new standards are the first

comprehensive revision since they were originally published in 1975. The updates include current research, science and best practice.

### **2015 Race to the Top Reports**

The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released the [2015 Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Year 2015 Progress Update](#) and [Individual State Performance Reports](#). The [Illinois report](#) highlights progress in Illinois.

### **1115 Waiver**

Illinois released a draft for public comment of Section 1115 of Medicaid. The 1115 waiver is submitted to the federal government and an approval of the waiver would allow federal dollars to be spent in innovative ways to care for the Medicaid populations. Learn more about the [1115 Waiver](#) and Illinois' [behavioral health transformation](#).

### **ECBG FY2018 Re-Competition Webinar**

ISBE and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development held a [webinar](#) on May 10 to present plans for the FY2018 re-competition of the ECBG. During this webinar, ISBE discussed the ECBG re-competition planning process and the recommendations for redesign that have been made to date through broad stakeholder input from the Early Learning Council.

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## Events

### **ISBE Budget Hearings**

ISBE has begun its annual budget process for FY2018 and is hosting hearings around the state to allow community members the opportunity to influence the Board's budgeting process. Once the Board's recommendations are sent to the governor, they become part of budget discussions in the General Assembly. The Ounce of Prevention Fund has crafted [talking points](#) to help you submit your testimony, whether written or presented at one of the upcoming board meetings. Testimony can be submitted electronically by submitting the [ISBE form](#) to [ISBEFY18@isbe.net](mailto:ISBEFY18@isbe.net).

The upcoming budget hearings will be on Friday, November 18, following the Board Meeting at approximately 1pm at the Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph Street, Conference Room 16-503, Chicago and Monday, November 21 from 4-6pm at the Granite City High School Atrium, 3101 Madison Avenue, Granite City.

### **Excellence in the Early Years Leadership Summit**

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is pleased to announce the [3<sup>rd</sup> annual Excellence in the Early Years: District Leadership Summit](#) on March 22-23, 2017 at the Loews Hotel, Chicago. The summit provides an opportunity for district leaders and experts to come together from around the country to share innovative birth-through-3<sup>rd</sup> grade strategies and local practices that are helping students meet their full potential in the early years and beyond.

Invitation to apply will be coming this fall. If you would like to receive the invitation, [sign up](#) to receive emails from the Ounce District & Community Initiative. *Sponsors to date for the 2017 Excellence in the Early Years: District Leadership Summit include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation.*

### **Health Care Marketplace is now open**

The [2017 Open Enrollment](#) period for health insurance is now open and will continue through January 23, 2017 through the Affordable Care Act. Both new and returning customers either select a plan or make changes to their existing plan.

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## Parent and Teacher Resources

The federal government has released written guidance, policy briefs and policy statements on several topics in the past few months:

- **Early Childhood and Homelessness**  
The Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education issued an [interagency policy statement](#) on early childhood homelessness. The statement recommends ways early childhood, education and housing providers can collaborate to better meet the needs of pregnant women and families with young children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The statement spotlights a collaborative effort between the Ounce of Prevention Fund and Primo Center regarding their demonstration project to bring home visiting services to families in emergency shelters.
- **Technology and Young Children**  
The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a [joint policy brief](#) on the use of technology with young children. The policy brief is meant to help families and early educators implement the use of technology in developmentally appropriate ways.
- **ESSA: Birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**  
The Department of Education created [non-regulatory guidance](#) related to the Every Student Succeeds Act to ensure children from birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade get a strong start in school. The Department of Education is committed to improving health, social-emotional and cognitive outcomes for all children birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through early learning.

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### Professionals Partnering with Newborns and their Families

The Illinois Newborn Practice Roundtable published a new resource, [Professionals Partnering with Newborns and their Families: A Guide for Practitioners from the Illinois Roundtable](#). This guide provides practitioners strategies to support families as they build relationships with and care for their newborn babies. The Illinois Roundtable is a group of over 50 professionals across many disciplines who serve newborns and their families.

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### Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8

[Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8 report](#) represents research on parenting practice and identifies effective practices. The report recommends ways agencies and others can support interventions.

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### Childhood Trauma, Changing Minds website

Futures Without Violence revealed a new website, [Childhood Trauma, Changing Minds](#), which provides videos and resources explaining the science behind childhood trauma. The

site presents individual children's stories, everyday actions to make a positive difference in a child's life, and a list of resources to find help.

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### **Understanding Illinois Early Childhood Systems**

Partner Plan Act announced a series of new [video resources](#) and fact sheets that provide a general overview of early childhood programs in Illinois. The resources are meant to help service providers, staff, and community partners learn more about the programs available for families and their children.

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### **Immunizations through Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)**

Effective October 1, 2016, the Illinois Department of Public Health has changed the way immunizations are handled for kids covered by CHIP. Children in Illinois, up to 313% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), can get health insurance through All Kids. Which is made up of two programs: CHIP and Medicaid. The policy change noted impacts kids covered by CHIP only, specifically those kids who are above 142% FPL and those who are undocumented.

**If a doctor previously provided immunizations to children covered by Medicaid, this change should not impact those children** because this new policy made no changes to doctors' reimbursement for vaccines to these children.

If you encounter any issues or you are aware of any families who were referred out for immunizations, please contact the Illinois Policy Team of the Ounce of Prevention Fund at [advocacy@theOunce.org](mailto:advocacy@theOunce.org). Or complete this [survey to share stories of local impact](#).

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