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Early Edition

August, 2016

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### State Update

On June 30, after 11 months of inaction, the General Assembly passed and the governor signed into law a stopgap budget that includes full fiscal year 2017 funding for preschool, elementary and secondary education, as well as some human services funding intended to cover FY2016 and the first six months of FY2017.

Any items currently paid under court order or consent decrees were not included and will continue to be paid in that same manner. This includes Early Intervention and family child care. While the stopgap budget was passed on June 30, many providers have yet to see any payments and in many cases the agencies haven't completed the process required to even send those bills to the comptroller. While lawmakers are at home and the campaign season is underway, please continue to [reach out to your lawmaker](#), as well as candidates for the Illinois General Assembly. Educate them on how the impasse has affected your community, program and families and ask them to commit to supporting early childhood and raising revenue to fully fund the rest of FY2017 as well as future years.

#### How does early learning fare?

The agreement includes:

- A full-year budget for elementary and secondary education, including \$79 million to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) at the Illinois State Board of Education. This is the largest single-year investment in the history of the ECBG and will restore the ECBG to just over its historically high funding level in FY2009.
- The two home visiting budget lines within the Department of Human Services (DHS), Healthy Families and Parents Too Soon, are funded to cover 12 months of services over an 18-month time period (FY2016 and first half of FY2017). Put another way, SB2047 appropriates 65% of the total funding programs would see during a traditional 18-month timeframe. Most human services grant programs not covered by court order or consent decree were covered in this way.
- The bill also appropriates early childhood federal funds, including home visiting funding, Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds, and child care funds. The federal child care funds are needed to continue payment to child care centers and for Child Care Resources and Referral operations.

Much of the damage done by the budget impasse, unfortunately, will not be undone by the stopgap bill. This budget is merely a short-term solution and does not provide long-term stability to critical human services that children, families and communities need. While we are pleased that the General Assembly and governor worked together to reach this agreement, their work must continue. The only acceptable end to the Illinois budget crisis is a fully

funded, full-year, responsible budget. Such a budget must provide sufficient revenue to avoid unnecessary program closures, restore previous program reductions, and to continue making smart investments. The state legislature is not scheduled to return until its scheduled "veto session," after the November elections.

#### **Other Illinois Updates:**

- On July 21, the governor signed into law SB238, which passed the General Assembly unanimously, revising the infant toddler set-aside. SB238 will ensure that at least 25% of any new early childhood funding at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will be directed toward infant and toddler services, until at least 20% of the total ECBG is dedicated toward infants and toddlers.
- ISBE held a round of listening tours from April through May to provide stakeholders an overview of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and document public priorities and concerns. A report of feedback was compiled and [now available](#). The presentation from the first round of listening tours is also [available](#).
- ISBE has announced a second session of [ESSA listening tours](#) scheduled throughout September. This second round will provide another opportunity for stakeholder engagement and may include the opportunity to provide input on specific portions of the draft plan, expected to be fully implemented by the 2017-2018 school year.
  - The First Five Years Fund (FFYF) has released guidance on how ESSA can be [implemented](#) to advance and increase access to quality early childhood education in districts.
  - The federal government has issued several briefs providing guidance on serving vulnerable populations through ESSA like [homeless children](#) and [foster children](#).
- Illinois was awarded over \$8.6 million in federal funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV). Out of the \$345 million federal grant program, Illinois received the maximum level available. This grant will allow MIECHV to expand voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services to seven new communities across the state. Those communities include the Austin and North Lawndale communities in Chicago, Peoria, Stephenson/Jo Davies counties, Kankakee County, East St. Louis and a cluster of mid-central counties (McLean, Piatt and DeWitt). The funding will also enable innovative and exciting new projects to better serve families such as the Home Visiting-Child Welfare Pilot Project, the Home Visiting for Homeless Families Demonstration Project, the Universal Newborn Support System Pilot Project and expanded infant mental health consultation for programs.

#### **Are you ready for the election?**

November 8 is the general election. Not only is this a presidential year, but Illinois voters will also be choosing a U.S. Senator, voting for members of the U.S. House, many state senators and every member of the Illinois House, among other important offices.

- Are you registered? Check the [Illinois Board of Elections](#).
- [Register to vote](#). Regular voter registration ends on October 11; voters can still register after that date (including on Election Day), but that may only take place at certain locations.
- Early voting begins September 27 and runs through November 7.
- Answers to other questions about the election, registration and voting can be found at the [Illinois Board of Elections](#).

## Preschool Suspension and Expulsion

Illinois has long championed early childhood services for the state's most vulnerable children. Yet, studies have shown that, across the country, suspensions and expulsions are used far too frequently with young children in the very same programs meant to serve them. Research has shown that Illinois preschoolers were expelled at a rate three times higher than their older peers. The rates are even more daunting for boys, especially boys of color. Nationally, boys account for 79% of preschoolers suspended once and 82% of those suspended multiple times. African-American children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschoolers suspended more than once. Other research indicates that while Hispanic and African-American boys (combined) represent only 46% of all boys in preschool, these children represent 66% of preschool boys suspended.

The federal government has proposed new expulsion and suspension policies for Head Start and has asked states to consider an expulsion policy under the Child Care Assistance Program reauthorization. Illinois has already passed Public Act 99-0456 (SB100) to improve suspension and expulsion practices for school districts, which would include a pre-k program located within a school district. Illinois must now do more to ensure policies are expanded to protect the youngest learners. During the next legislative session, the Ounce and our advocacy partners will advocate for improvements to ensure children remain in early childhood settings and are properly referred to appropriate support services.

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## Federal Update

Congress is on its August recess and lawmakers are back at home until after Labor Day. While it is unlikely there will be major actions taken by Congress until after the fall elections, there are a few items still on their agenda. Now is a good time to meet with your [member of Congress](#) and share your thoughts on these issues:

- Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Both House and Senate committees have released their versions of the reauthorization of child nutrition programs, including Women Infants and Children, the school lunch program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All of these programs are essential to ensuring that young children have access to nutritious foods. While the Senate took the important step of restoring an additional snack to the CACFP program, advocates are concerned that the House version contains a proposed block grant pilot of the school lunch program.
- Early childhood appropriations: While the federal appropriations process will likely remain after the election, advocates continue to highlight the need to invest in early childhood. The House Appropriations Committee approved a \$40 million increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and a \$142 million increase for Head Start, while the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a \$25 million increase for CCDBG and a \$35 million increase for Head Start. It is crucial to push for more funding because these amounts will not provide states with adequate resources to implement the proposed CCDBG regulations without children losing child care assistance nor Head Start programs with the funds to implement proposed new regulations which extend the Head Start day.

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## Resources, Reports and Other Publications

### Essential Supports for Improving Early Education

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is excited to announce the release of a series, Essential Supports for Improving Early Education, that explores our field-tested approach to strengthening early education settings and leadership for achieving continuous quality improvement. This series provides a deep dive on what we learned during our Investing in Innovation (i3) work about how to cultivate inclusive and instructional leadership practices and systems of job-embedded professional learning. [Learn more](#).

We are excited to share with you these two new briefs:

- [Reimagining Instructional Leadership and Organizational Conditions for Improvement: Applied Research Transforming Early Education](#) argues that we must broaden our understanding of improvement beyond the field's sole focus on classroom-level processes to the organizational processes that create conditions essential to teaching, learning and improvement.
- [Job-Embedded Professional Learning Essential to Improving Teaching and Learning in Early Education](#) makes the case that the field must abandon traditional professional development and replace it with the organizational and sustained support of job-embedded professional learning (JEPL) and details our recommendations for implementation as well as our policy recommendations.

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### New Survey Development Brief

The Ounce of Prevention Fund, together with the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, is pleased to share with you our co-authored brief, [Essential Organizational Supports for Early Education: The Development of a New Survey Tool to Measure Organizational Conditions](#). This paper briefly introduces the field to the need to broaden our understanding, definition and focus of quality and quality improvement, then chronicles the rigorous survey development methodology and initial pilot results we employed. [Learn more](#).

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### Federal Guidance on Dual Language Learners

The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a [policy statement](#) supporting dual language learners (DLL) in early childhood programs by providing recommendations for promoting the development and learning of young DLL children, birth-to-five.

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### Health and Safety Briefs for CCDBG

The CCDBG Act made significant changes to protect the health and safety of children in early care and education settings. These reforms can also impact the lives of children who receive the child care subsidy, but maybe in the same care. The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance has released nine new briefs addressing the health and safety topics specified in the law available [here](#).

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### Gap in Pay for Early Childhood Teachers

The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services issued a [report](#) showing the gaps in pay for early childhood teachers and the impact that this inequity has on attracting and retaining a highly-qualified staff.

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## NIEER State of Preschool

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) released the [2015 State of Preschool Yearbook](#), the newest edition of an annual report profiling state-funded pre-kindergarten programs in the United States. The latest Yearbook presents data during the 2014-2015 school year as well as documenting more than a decade of change in state pre-kindergarten programs.

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## Kids Count Data Book

The Anne E. Casey Foundation published the [2016 Kids Count Data Book](#). This annual report ranks states on overall child well-being by using an index of key indicators in four domains that children need to thrive: economic well-being, education, health and family and community.

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## Head Start by the Numbers

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) released its annual [Head Start by the Numbers](#) profiles with data on Head Start participants, families, staff and programs for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Using data from the Head Start grantees' Program Information Report, CLASP profiles are a resource for early childhood policymakers, researchers and advocates.

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## Early Intervention Guide for Parents

The Department of Human services has updated its [guide](#) on Illinois Early Intervention (EI). The guide covers topic areas like why EI is important, eligibility, beginning and exiting EI services, legal rights and commonly asked questions.

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## News and Announcements

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### Request for Proposals for FY2017 Prevention Initiative and Preschool for All

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is now accepting Request for Proposals (RFP) for the FY2017 [Prevention Initiative \(PI\) Birth to Age 3-years-old](#) and [Preschool for All \(PFA\) 3 to 5-year-olds](#). Only entities that currently have FY2016 PI and/or PFA program funding are eligible to apply for additional funding for those programs. According to ISBE, the PFA grant application is restricted to those programs who wish to adopt the Preschool Expansion model only. In FY2018, there will be an open, competitive grant opportunity for all eligible applicants.

The RFP for both PI and PFA are due at **4pm on Monday, August 15**. The ISBE RFP is only for applicants proposing services outside of the Chicago city limits.

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### 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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### **A Seat on the Rug: Homelessness in Early Learning webinar recording**

A Seat on the Rug: Enrolling and Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness in Early Learning Programs was held by the Ounce of Prevention Fund on May 25 and the [webinar recording](#) has been posted. The event explored best practices and unique opportunities for serving families experiencing homelessness in early care and education programs. [Resources](#), such as presentations and handouts, are also available.

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### **Transforming School Discipline Collaborative (TSDC) Model Code of Conduct**

The TSDC is a group of advocates that work to meaningfully reduce the high numbers of school days that students lose due to exclusionary discipline policies. The TSDC's [Model Code of Conduct](#) is offered as a best practice of how school administrators can develop a student code of conduct that is compliant with recent changes to Illinois law and advances the goal of fairness and equity in the discipline process.

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### **Inclusion in CCDBG webinar recording**

Inclusion for Young Children with Special Needs in Child Care: What the Field Needs to Know at a Federal, State and Local Level webinar was hosted by the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. The [webinar](#) highlighted opportunities to support all children in high-quality early childhood programs through the reauthorization of the CCDBG. Handouts are also available for [download](#).

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## Events

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### **Removing Barriers, Building Opportunities**

Save the date for Voices for Illinois Children's summit, Removing Barriers, Building Opportunities on Friday, November 18, at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile. The event will explore how state policies can improve the lives of children and families in Illinois. The keynote will be Steve Pemberton, who overcame many obstacles to be coming a Divisional Vice President at Walgreens and the company's first Chief Diversity Officer. For more information, contact Joan Vitale at [vitale@voices4kids.org](mailto:vitale@voices4kids.org).

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### **National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs**

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is hosting the [Sixth National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs](#) in Washington D.C November 15-16, 2016

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## Program, Parent and Teacher Resources

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## Town Square

[Town Square](#) is a resource for family child care professionals where they can learn, share and thrive. Town Square has a wide array of information and tools. There are activities, child development tools and more that allow professionals to share their story with other colleagues.

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## Illinois Early Childhood Community Collaboration Profiles

The [Illinois Early Childhood Community Collaboration Profiles](#), third edition, have been updated. Early childhood advocates are encouraged to utilize the Profiles as an opportunity to connect with and partner on local community systems development and advocacy issues.

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## Excellence in the Early Years and Policy Exchange

The Ounce of Prevention Fund recently held two events, [Excellence in the Early Grades: District Leadership Summit](#) and the [Policy Exchange](#). The Early Grades Summit showcased innovative policies and practices from school districts across the country and the Policy Exchange was a peer learning event designed to provide early childhood leaders and advocates opportunity to connect and collaborate.

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