

Table of Contents

[State Budget Update](#) | [Legislative Highlights](#) | [Resources, Reports and Other Publications](#)
| [News and Announcements](#) | [Events](#) | [Program, Parent and Teacher Resources](#)

State Budget Update

State budget impasse continues

We are entering an unprecedented eighth month with no state budget in Illinois. While some early childhood programs are being paid--either through appropriations, court orders or federal funding--home visiting services funded through the Department of Human Services (DHS), which provide critical supports to more than 5,000 Illinois babies, toddlers and their families, are neither appropriated nor covered by consent decree. Contracted agencies have received no state funding for services provided since July 1. Home visiting programs offer support and coaching to pregnant women, young parents and children birth through age 3. These voluntary, research-based services have a proven track record of improving health outcomes for vulnerable moms and babies and increasing children's school readiness.

Home visiting programs have been scaling back services for months; but that pace has accelerated and will only continue if the governor and General Assembly cannot agree on an FY16 state budget and the revenue needed to actually pay for those investments. Last week, families and staff of home visiting programs, as well as hundreds of others, participated in events led by the Responsible Budget Coalition (of which the Ounce of Prevention Fund is a member) to highlight "The State of our State" in advance of the governor's address last Wednesday. Media highlights include:

- [IL residents have anticipated hopes for Gov. Rauner's State of the State address](#)
- [Rockford-area nonprofits push for 'responsible budget' before State of the State](#)
- [Protesters gather at Rauner's speech](#)

Read the Responsible Budget Coalition's report "[State of our State](#)."

Even as we struggle to find a resolution to the FY16 budget crisis, the governor is preparing his FY17 budget presentation to the General Assembly. The Ounce of Prevention Fund and its advocacy partners continue to fight for increased funding for early learning and to protect home visiting, preschool, Early Intervention and child care services for the children and families who rely on these services. Visit our FY16 [budget action guide](#) to see the latest news coverage, shareable graphics and action updates.

Governor Rauner will make his State of the Budget Address on Wednesday, February 17 at noon. The address will be webcast at <http://www.ilga.gov/house/audvid.asp>. The Ounce will release its analysis of the impact of the governor's proposal on early learning programs.

[Register](#) for the 2016 Legislative Session Kick-Off Conference Call on Wednesday, February 24 at 1:30pm to learn more about the governor's budget address and the 2016 Ounce legislative priorities. During the conference call, find out what to expect from the state and federal legislatures and how you can make sure early childhood is a priority for policymakers.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Legislative Highlights

Federal update

Despite a tough fiscal environment at the federal level, Congress and the president continue to show support for early learning. At the close of 2015, Congress was able to strike two big bipartisan agreements that advance early childhood.

The appropriations bills to fund federal FY 2016, which had begun on October 1, 2015, passed on December 18, 2015. The bill included several highlights for early learning and care programs:

- Increase to funding for Early Head Start and Head Start by \$570 million
- Increase of \$326 million for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to help states implement changes from the recent CCDBG reauthorization
- Level funding for Preschool Development Grants at \$250 million
- Small increases for Part B (\$15 million) and Part C (\$20 million) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which provide special education services for children under the age of 5

Notably, Congress responded to pressure from advocates to increase CCDBG funding and for the inclusion of the Preschool Development Grants, which had been excluded in earlier versions.

In a companion bill regarding tax changes, Congress also made permanent enhancements to the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. These two tax credits are among the most powerful tools to keep low-income working families from falling into poverty or deeper into poverty.

Also in December, Congress finally reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, most recently known as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The ESSA continues a new form of the Preschool Development Grants which will be housed in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). More details still need to be worked out before the program is rolled out. The ESSA also makes more explicit that:

- Title I funds may be used to provide services to preschool children
- Title II funds may be used for the professional development of early childhood educators

[The First Five Years Fund](#) and [New America EdCenter](#) offer further analysis on the early childhood gains. Under the "Events" heading, there are links to upcoming webinars on ESSA.

Finally, the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act is pending as it moves out of the [Senate Agriculture Committee](#). The bipartisan bill included important improvements to the Woman, Infant and Children (WIC) program. The bill will move to the Senate floor for a vote and then to the House in the coming weeks. The Child Nutrition Act would authorize all of the federal child nutrition programs including: the School Breakfast, National School Lunch, Child and Adult Care Food, Summer Food Service, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and WIC program. For more information on Child Nutrition Reauthorization visit the [Food Research and Action Center](#).

Resources, Reports and Other Publications

Voter Registration for Primary Elections

Illinois primary elections will be held on Tuesday, March 15. After February 16, voter registration must be done in person through grace period registration. To learn how to register, visit the [Illinois State Board of Elections](#).

Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: CCDF State Guide & CCDF Self-Assessment

The Ounce of Prevention Fund, together with the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), is pleased to share two new tools to assist states in utilizing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan as a vehicle for advancing access to child care for children and families experiencing homelessness. [Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: CCDF State Guide](#), and its companion piece, the [CCDF Self-Assessment](#), provide useful background information on child and family homelessness as it relates to early care and education, a summary of requirements of the CCDBG Act related to homelessness, and a summary of some of the opportunities available through the state CCDF Plan to improve access to this vital support for families who experience homelessness. The guide is organized according to the CCDF draft preprint that was released on September 14, 2015, and summarizes key policy and practice opportunities.

Continuity of Care Policy Brief

The Ounce of Prevention Fund National Policy Team published [The Importance of Continuity of Care: Policies and Practices in Early Childhood Systems and Programs](#), a policy brief that provides a review of the research that articulates the importance of continuity of care for young children and families. Additionally, it highlights opportunities to support policies and programming that help young children develop secure relationships, including in the context of state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plans.

Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents

[Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents](#) recently accepted public comments for the upcoming fourth edition. These child development guidelines offer guidance to health care providers by offering information on preventative screenings and services to be conducted during well-child visits and is recognized by the Affordable Care Act. A complementary goal is to provide home visitors, public health nurses, early child care and education professionals (including Head Start), school nurses, and nutritionists with an understanding of Bright Futures materials so that they can align their health promotion efforts with the recommendations in the Bright Futures Guidelines.

BUILD Initiative new e-book

[Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families](#), a new e-book by the BUILD Initiative, shares learnings from initial implementation through trends and learnings of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grants. The e-book produced experiences from states through interviews with state leaders. This e-book is beneficial to all fifty states and territories and puts practice

Child Care Aware and the High Cost of Child Care

Child Care Aware of America releases its annual report, [High Cost of Child Care: 2015 Report](#), which profiles the cost of child care across the country and examines the importance of child care as a work support and early learning program. Child Care Aware of America has

also produced an [Interactive Cost of Care Map](#) that allows users to examine the cost of care in all 50 states, including Washington D.C.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

News and Announcements

Public Hearing: Illinois Child Care and Development Fund State Plan (CCDF)

The public hearing for the Illinois Child Care and Development State Plan for FY2016-18 will be on Tuesday, February 9 at Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA), 1226 Towanda Plaza in Bloomington. There will be two sessions: 2 to 4pm or 6 to 7:30pm.

The purpose of the public hearing is to introduce the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) provision for child care services. A draft copy of the State Plan will be available on the IDHS website in early February. Instructions for written comment will be given during the webinar. If you would like to attend the public hearing - either [in person](#) or via [webinar](#) - please register.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Events

Early Childhood Advocacy Day

The Ounce of Prevention Fund annual Early Childhood Advocacy Day (ECAD) will be on Tuesday, April 12. Early childhood champions will go to the capitol to press lawmakers to continue funding programs for Illinois' youngest learners and their families. On Advocacy Day, you have the opportunity to: advocate for early childhood programs and funding at the state capitol, talk directly with your legislators about the importance of ensuring all children have access to the quality early experiences they need to thrive, and learn about current legislative and budget issues involving Preschool for All, home visiting, child care and Early Intervention.

Registration opens in late February. Visit the [ECAD webpage](#) for more information.

ESSA and Early Learning: Policy Opportunities for States

Join the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) on February 4 from 2 to 3pm for a webinar on key ESSA provisions that support quality in early childhood education and their implications for state policymaking in early learning. Drawing from the recent report *From Crawling to Walking: Ranking States on Birth-3rd Grade Policies That Support Strong Readers*, early education experts Laura Bornfreund from New America and Sarah Rittling of the First Five Years Fund will discuss the current landscape of state policies in early literacy and what states can do to boost early learning outcomes under the new law. [Registration](#) is required.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Opportunities for Early Learning

Join BUILD on February 18 from 2 to 3:30pm for a webinar focused on the new federal education law - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - and its new provisions pertaining to early learning, starting with infants and moving through the early elementary grades. The webinar will cover what the new law provides for young children and provide insight on how you might use it in our work within the early childhood system.

Register and submit questions [online](#).

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Program, Parent and Teacher Resources

2016 Illinois Legislative Summary

[The 2016 Legislative Summary](#), a review of legislation passed during the last legislative session that might of interest to those working with low-income families and young children, is now available.

Investing in Tomorrow: Helping Families Build Savings and Assets

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released a new policy brief, [Investing in Tomorrow: Helping Families Build Savings and Assets](#), with four policy recommendations that could narrow the racial wealth gap. Many low-income families struggle to cover basic needs on their wages alone. As a result, many families are left with no savings to cover unexpected costs. Building assets allows families to build financial security necessary to thrive.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Change Your Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
33 West Monroe Street Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60603 · 312.922.3863
©2015 Ounce of Prevention Fund

This email was sent to: %%emailaddr%%

This email was sent by: Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 West Monroe Street Suite 2400 Chicago, IL 60603 US



We respect your right to privacy - [view our policy](#)

[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [One-Click Unsubscribe](#)