

Table of Contents

[State Update](#) | [Federal Update](#) | [Resources, Reports and Other Publications](#) | [News and Announcements](#) | [Events](#) | [Parent and Teacher Resources](#)

State Update

Illinois has gone 19 months without a state budget, as efforts stalled in the state senate on a bipartisan proposal to end the stalemate.

In the midst of this ongoing uncertainty, on February 15, Governor Rauner outlined his budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year.

His FY2018 budget proposal included:

- \$50 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant
- \$151.3 million increase to the Child Care Assistance Program to restore eligibility to families earning up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level and to families participating in non-TANF education and training activities
- Maintain home visiting services at \$16.9 million
- \$4 million increase to funding for Early Intervention
- \$38 million increase to funding for educational supports for English learners to fully fund those payments to school districts

Despite these proposed increases, we know that for Illinois to truly support its most vulnerable children and families, the state must commit to a path toward sustaining its investments. That path includes raising enough revenue for the state to pay its bills and meaningfully make these investments.

Every day that passes costs Illinois money, makes the problem more difficult to solve and further harms programs that help young children and their families thrive. Home visiting programs continue to scale back and close down. Child care providers still cannot enroll many families left out because of the restricted eligibility, and Early Intervention providers wait months to receive payment for the services they've provided to babies and toddlers. Governor Rauner and the Illinois General Assembly must work together to put forth a budget that supports revenue to adequately fund critically important early childhood investments.

In the coming weeks, legislative committees will meet to review the governor's proposal and hear from advocates. The Ounce of Prevention Fund and our partners will continue to advocate for a full-year, fully-funded budget and remind lawmakers of the mounting cost of inaction.

While the state budget impasse will remain the focal point of our advocacy efforts, the Ounce is also leading and supporting other efforts to improve the state's response to young children and their families. Read the Ounce [2017/FY2018 Legislative Agenda](#) to learn more about important legislation before the General Assembly this session. A [Legislative Summary](#) recapping what occurred during the 2016 legislative session is also now available.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Federal Update

We continue to monitor developments related to the new administration and Congress. While the balance of power did not change Congress dramatically, this is the first time in some years that there has been one party control of both Congress and the White House. Key appointments for early childhood in the Trump administration include Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services and Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education.

Among the early pending issues for this Congress is funding the rest of Federal Fiscal Year 2017. The current federal budget is operating on a continuing resolution (CR) through the end of April. Congress will either need to extend the CR or pass a budget for the remainder of the fiscal year, which runs through the end of September.

This week the president released his first "budget blueprint" for the federal fiscal year 2018. As expected, the plan reveals some details about spending priorities including very deep cuts to non-defense discretionary programs while increasing defense spending by \$54 billion. The budget is a blueprint and Congress now takes the next step. If enacted in its current form, this budget would likely result in extraordinarily large cuts to essential supports for families and children such as health care, nutrition, housing, education, transportation, heating and after school care. Meanwhile, the budget identified early care and education as one of the "highest priorities" of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), but it does not address the funding levels for either Early Head Start/Head Start or the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) directly, and cuts the overall HHS budget by \$15.1 billion or 18%. It is important to remember that the president's budget proposal is only the first step in the federal budget process. Early learning advocates will weigh in with members of Congress to make the case for needed investments in young children and their families. See the [full budget proposal](#).

Changes to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) have also been an early issue with the new Congress and administration, following years of calls to repeal the ACA. The Ounce is very concerned about changes to the ACA that would reduce access to and the quality of health insurance. In addition to the access to insurance, the ACA protects mental health services, benefits around maternity care and breastfeeding and dental and vision care for children.

As part of this health care debate, proposals have also emerged to change the way states receive funding for Medicaid. Proposals have been put forth to directly block

grant Medicaid funds to states or to provide a fixed rate for each Medicaid recipient ("per capita cap"). Both of these proposals would limit the amount of funding the states could receive and that amount of funding is likely to decrease over time. Both [CLASP](#) and the [Center of Budget and Policy Priorities](#) have released assessments on how a block grant and per capita cap would affect Medicaid and states.

The Ounce is a part of the [Protect Our Care](#) coalition in Illinois. Protect our Care is a statewide coalition of health-care advocates, providers, consumers and workers, working to prevent the repeal of the ACA, prevent disastrous changes to Medicaid and protect and expand access to quality affordable health care. Please consider joining the coalition.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Resources, Reports and Other Publications

Resources for Early Childhood Programs Serving Immigrant, Refugee, Undocumented or Mixed Status Children and Families

Related to immigration, many early childhood programs have expressed concern about the impact these directives will have on the children and families they serve. The All Families Served subcommittee of the Early Learning Council has created [guidance](#) for early childhood providers to support immigrant and refugee children and families, including families with mixed documentation status. Early childhood programs are encouraged to review and understand [resources](#) and supports, which include [Know Your Rights](#) and legal resources. It is important to remain vigilant and consult with organizations specializing in immigration topics such as the [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#), the [Latino Policy Forum](#) and the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#).

Child Trends Report: Children in Poverty

Child Trends developed a report, [Children in Poverty: Indicators on Children and Youth](#), noting a drop in poverty over the past several years. However, Black and Hispanic children under the age of 5 living in single-mother families are more likely to be poor.

Child and Family Well-Being and Homelessness

The brief, [Child and Family Well-Being and Homelessness: Integrating Research into Practice and Policy](#), highlights several of the most urgent challenges in addressing the needs of families experiencing homelessness and offers a set of strong policy recommendations for assessment, intervention, research and service delivery related to homeless children and their parents. Chapter 5 of the brief, "Access to Early Childhood Services for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness," was co-authored by Carie Bires of the Ounce of Prevention Fund.

50 State Comparison on Kindergarten

The Education Commission of the States issued a new [50 State Review](#) that explores the different methods states use to fund both full-day and half-day kindergarten and examines the spectrum of full-day kindergarten program requirements across the country.

Universal Children's Savings Accounts

The Heartland Alliance has lead an initiative to create universal children's savings accounts that will expand education and economic opportunity for low and moderate income children. The bill, [HB3691 \(Gabel\)](#), is supported by the Ounce and several other organizations.

State Policy Update

The Ounce of Prevention Fund released its semi-annual [State Policy Update: November 2016](#). The report, which includes 23 states, describes the budget and policy changes that have occurred over the recent legislative session and looks toward 2017. It also features state early childhood policy agendas for the upcoming legislative sessions, policy opportunities and policy challenges organized by state.

NIEER Head Start Across States, Territories

The [State\(s\) of Head Start](#) research report includes an analysis of Head Start enrollment, funding, observable classroom quality and duration, staff qualifications and a full range of services to children and families in a state-by-state format for the 2014-2015 program year.

ZERO TO THREE Infant Mental Health and Early Childhood Mental Health Convening

ZERO TO THREE provided a [report](#) highlighting themes and summarizing presentations of a convening in late 2016 related to the advancement of infant and early childhood mental health policies. The convening brought together 10 state teams, including representation from Illinois.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

News and Announcements

Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Intent to Submit Proposal FY2018

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) issued Notices of Intent to Submit Proposals for [Prevention Initiative \(PI\)](#), [Preschool for All \(PFA\)](#) and [PFA Expansion](#) programs for FY2018. There are additional resources on the [Proposals \(RFP\) website](#).

K-3 Policymakers' Guide to Action: Making the Early Years Count

A special report from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), [K-3 Policymakers' Guide to Action: Making the Early Years Count](#), summarizes policy components prioritized for a high-quality K-3 system by 12 of the nation's top content experts. Experts argue that meaningful improvements in student academic outcomes depend on improving the kindergarten- through-3rd grade continuum.

Heckman's Research on Early Childhood Programs Finds Higher Economic Returns

[The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program](#), new research from Nobel Laureate economist James J. Heckman and colleagues, finds that comprehensive, birth-to-age-5 early childhood programs can produce higher economic returns than those previously established for preschool programs serving 3- to 4-year-olds. The latest research shows that high quality birth-to-5 programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% per child, per year return on investment through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors and employment, reducing taxpayer costs down the line and preparing the country's workforce for a competitive future.

Benefits of Early Care and Education in the Child Welfare System

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, an office of the Administration for Children and Families, developed a brief, [Benefits of Early Care and Education in](#)

[the Child Welfare system](#), detailing the benefits of some types of early care and education services to help vulnerable children in the child welfare system experience some child safety and well-being goals. Unfortunately, many children involved in the child welfare system are underutilizing early learning and care programs.

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm and Programmatic Activities

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, revealed a [technical package](#) compiled of strategies based on the best available evidence to help prevent child abuse and neglect. The strategies vary and are meant to help communities and states prioritize prevention activities. The technical package has three components: strategy, approach and evidence. This brief pairs with the [Essentials for Childhood Framework](#).

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Events

Legislative Overview Webinar Recording

A [recording](#) is now available of the Legislative Overview Webinar presented by the Ounce of Prevention Fund on February 24. This webinar provided an overview on federal updates, the state and legislative landscape, Ounce of Prevention Fund 2017 legislative priorities, the governor's budget address, and advocacy.

Child Care Regional Licensing Forums

Throughout March, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Division of Licensing is hosting its second round of [regional licensing update forums](#) across the state. These forums, held twice a year, are an opportunity for licensed child care providers to learn about changes to child care licensing from the Day Care Licensing Representatives (DCLRs) in your area, as well as ask any questions you may have about licensing. Attendance for the forums will be limited to the room's capacity, so RSVP is requested.

MIECHV Webinar

The Ounce of Prevention Fund hosted a webinar on Friday, March 10, about the reauthorization of the federal home visiting program, also known as the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program. A recording of the webinar is [now available](#), the webinar provided an overview of the MIECHV Program and outreach efforts to keep it going. For more information about MIECHV and ways that you can take action visit our [website](#).

Excellence in the Early Years: District Leadership Summit

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is hosting a [two-day summit](#) on best practices and strategies for ensuring a strong continuum of high-quality educational experiences for children from birth through 3rd grade. District leaders and experts from around the country will come together March 22-23, 2017 to share innovative approaches and local examples designed to improve student outcomes right from the start. *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, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation.*

20th Annual Spring Into Action Conference

Illinois Action for Children will host its [annual two-day conference](#) on March 28-29, 2017 at Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. This conference brings together statewide early care and

education providers, educators, parents and advocates. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in timely policy-oriented workshops, networking and visits to the state capitol. Scholarship opportunities are available to help cover the cost of conference registration.

2017 EverThrive Illinois Annual Conference: Uniting Voices, Creating Solutions

The [2017 EverThrive Illinois conference](#) theme explores the importance of uniting voices in order to collectively develop solutions and affect lasting change. This event is a call to action for all those committed to equity, social justice and fair access to quality health care for women, children, and families across Illinois. The conference will be April 5-6, 2017 in Oak Lawn, IL.

Register: Early Childhood Advocacy Day is May 9

The Ounce of Prevention Fund will host its annual [Early Childhood Advocacy Day \(ECAD\)](#) on Tuesday, May 9. During this free event, advocates will go to Springfield for an opportunity to meet with their legislators. There is limited transportation available on a first-come, first-serve basis from Chicago. All advocates interested in early childhood issues are welcome to attend. Registration is now open in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)!

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Parent and Teacher Resources

How to Speak to Children on Post-Election Rhetoric

There have been widespread reports of children experiencing distress, fear and anxiety as a result of campaign rhetoric and the election results. In response, many organizations have released resources for parents, caregivers and other adults to utilize for coping young children and youth.

- Lurie Children's Hospital: [Post-Election Mental Health Resources](#) , available both in English and Spanish
- The Equal Justice Society: [How to Talk with Children about Hate Speech](#)
- Teaching Tolerance: [How to Talk to Students About Immigration Orders and Resource List](#)
- Child Care Aware of America: [Supporting Children Who Are Experiencing Stress](#)

US Departments Release Guidance on Students with Disabilities, Home Visiting and Health

- The US Department of Education released three sets of guidance to describe the policies and enforcement of federal civil rights laws protecting the rights of students with disabilities. Included in this guidance are a [parent educator resource guide](#), a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) on the use of restraint and seclusion and lastly a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) on the rights of students with disabilities in public charter schools.
- The US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services issued a [Joint Statement on Collaboration and Coordination of MIECHV and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C Programs](#). The joint statement sets a vision for stronger partnerships, collaboration, and coordination between awardees of MIECHV and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA Part C Program).

- The US Departments of Health and Human Services and Education developed a [Policy Statement to Support the Alignment of Health and Early Learning Systems](#). The statement is meant to support States and communities in their efforts to better coordinate, align and enhance health and early learning to promote healthy development, early learning and child well-being from birth to kindergarten.

National Database on Child Care Licensing Regulations

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance announced the launch of the fully searchable [National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations](#)--a tool for finding and searching State and Territory licensing regulations and agency contact information. Users can search for child care licensing regulations by State; conduct a keyword search in the regulation documents; and filter search results by child care provider type, document type and date.

Building Bright Futures for All

[Building Bright Futures for All](#) is a resource from the US Department of Education that provides tips for educators on how to facilitate school enrollment for immigrant families, promote healthy child development and encourage caregiver engagement. The second section of the guide offers resources for parents, guardians and families on how to promote children's education from birth and play an active role in their children's schooling.

Illinois Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Reader's Guide for State Draft Plan

Partners for Each and Every Child created an [ESSA State Plan Draft #2-Reader's Guide](#). The Reader's Guide includes changes from Draft Plan #1, importation provisions of ESSA and resources for further exploration. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) also has additional [resources on ESSA](#).

The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Education Reimbursement Opportunity

The [Education Reimbursement Opportunity](#) is offered for a limited time through April 20, 2017 or until funds are no longer available. The funds can be used to support continuing education and working towards a Gateways Credential or an early childhood degree. Any educator working in an Illinois early learning program is eligible to apply regardless of the setting, including Preschool for All, Early Head Start/Head Start, Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes.

Americans with Disability Act (ADA) 25 Literacy Taskforce Recommendations

As the ADA celebrated 25 years since its passage, leaders from across the City of Chicago convened to reflect on the progress towards accessibility and inclusion. Yet, there were several areas where students with disabilities are still experiencing difficulties. The [Chicago ADA 25 literacy Taskforce recommendations](#) addressed priorities and recommendations focused on educational best practices to narrow the achievement gap students with disabilities may experience.

Child Care and Early Education for Children who have Experienced Trauma: Research-to-Policy Resources

Child Care & Early Education Research connections published a [list of resources](#) that examine the role of child care and early education in both preventing traumatic experiencing and in supporting children who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing trauma.

Early Elementary Strategies Preschool-Through-3rd Grade

The US Department of Education has released a report, [Case Studies of Schools Implementing Early Elementary Strategies: Preschool-Through-3rd Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction](#), which explores how educators might build on and sustain the positive effects of preschool. The report details a new case study of five school programs, examining two types of promising strategies to support children's learning in early elementary school: 1) aligning instruction from preschool through 3rd grade and 2) differentiated instruction.

[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