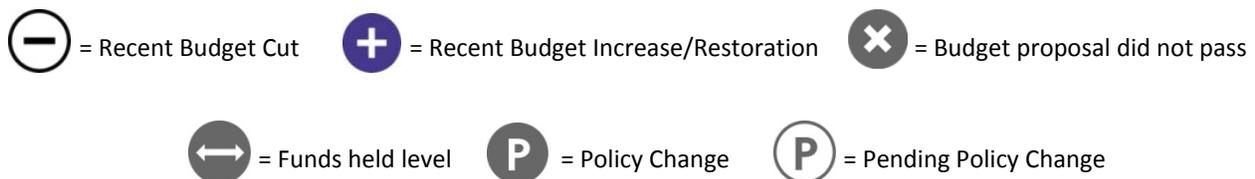




State Policy Mini-Update

July 2014

This report is brought to you by the National Policy Team
at the Ounce of Prevention Fund.



Overview: This mini update provides a snapshot of what has recently happened in each state during the 2014 legislative sessions as of July 2014, along with policy updates since November 2013. In the fall, there will be a state policy update looking forward to the upcoming 2015 state legislative session with corresponding political challenges and opportunities, and other timely topics.

Previous versions of the state policy update can be found on our [webpage](http://www.ounceofprevention.org/advocacy/national-policy.php):
<http://www.ounceofprevention.org/advocacy/national-policy.php>.

The **Ounce of Prevention Fund** gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age 5.

The Ounce National Policy Team partners with and supports early childhood leaders in states as they advance a comprehensive agenda for at-risk children and families. We do this by providing individualized strategy and policy consultation and resources; facilitating peer-to-peer learning and networking across states; and supporting Educare Schools and the Educare Learning Network in the development of their policy and advocacy work.

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Arizona

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Connect families with young children to health coverage in Medicaid and the Marketplace.
- Draw down Medicaid funding for home visiting.
- Restore general fund match to Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).
- Align subsidy policy with quality rating system.
- Implement statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment.
- Implement statewide, connected data system.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Align school district third grade reading plans to early literacy and early education.
- Evolve child care subsidies to be tied to early literacy.
- Brief gubernatorial candidates on early childhood issues.
- Expand access to preschool, full-day kindergarten, and home visiting through the BUILD Arizona Initiative.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  The State passed two laws to create and fund a stand-alone Department of Child Safety to reduce child abuse and neglect. The new budget includes \$23 million to address the backlog of 14,000+ inactive cases, and \$11 million to hire additional child safety staff.
-  The budget reallocated \$4 million to the child care subsidy program to lift the enrollment freeze in child care, provide child care assistance to 1,000 more children, and re-design the waiting list so children can participate when a spot opens up.
-  The HB 2703 Amendments would have restored between \$25-50 million to child care in the FY2015 budget. Neither the House nor Senate passed the amendments.
-  The SB 1002 Amendment would have added \$3 million to the Department of Child Safety budget for a variety of preventative services, stipends for grandparents raising their grandchildren, substance abuse treatment and child care assistance for working families, but was not adopted.

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California

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Restore and reinvest \$544 million in early childhood education programs.
- Increase access to quality early care and education (ECE) programs for infants, toddlers and preschool aged children starting with children who need it the most.
- Increase reimbursement rates for all ECE programs and providers
- Increase funding for ECE facilities.
- Eliminate part day preschool fees.
- Increase the frequency of state licensing inspections from every five years to annually.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Continue advocating for higher investments for infant and toddler programs.
- Create strategies for on-going, permanent, and stable investments for ECE programs.
- Monitor on-going ECE investments that have been included in the signed 2014-15 budget.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$264 million total increase for early care and education:

Quality

- \$50 million increase in ongoing funds for the QRIS.
- \$25 million in one time funds for California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teacher training in early childhood development.
- \$10 million increase in funds for state preschool facility expansion.

Access

- \$87 million increase in funds for an additional 1,500 general child care slots and 14,500 state preschool slots.
- An additional 8,000 state preschool slots to be available in 2015-16.
- A long term commitment to getting all low-income 4 year olds in high quality programs in the future years. Increase access to pre-K opportunities for an additional 31,500 low income 4-year-olds.
- \$15 million to repeal the part day preschool fees.

Rates

- \$49 million in additional funds to increase the standard reimbursement rate (SRR) for state contracted providers.
- \$19 million in additional funding to raise the regional market rate (RMR) for voucher based providers.



A proposal to increase the frequency of state licensing inspections from every five years to annually was not adopted.



Higher proposals to restore and reinvest in quality preschool programs and infant toddler programs did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES



Infant Toddler: SB 1123 proposes establishing a new section in the law for children age birth to three called the California Strong Start services. It would require children in this age group have access to parent engagement and support services; part day, full day; voluntary home visitation; nutrition services, along with referrals to health and dental care, child abuse prevention, house, and early childhood mental health.



Professional Development: SB 837 proposes specific legislative direction on how the \$25 million appropriated for the professional development of TK and CSPP teachers should be spent.



Standards: SB 192 proposes reorganizing provisions of Child Care and Development Services Act into the Early Learning and Educational Support Services Act, which will also require the state superintendent to develop standards for the implementation of high-quality early learning and educational support programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Colorado

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Increase access to high quality, affordable early childhood programs.
- Mitigate the “cliff effect” in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and support other two-generation strategies to move children and their parents beyond poverty.
- Overhaul CCCAP to ensure high-quality child care is more affordable for low-income families, reduce barriers for working parents, and cut red tape for small business child care providers.
- Support efforts to connect early childhood and K-12 data.
- Advocate for legislation, budget requests, and regulations that support the health, quality, and safety of child care environments.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Provide content expertise to inform the work of Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission and related work groups regarding Early Childhood Mental Health and Wellness, Early Childhood Funding, Kindergarten and School Readiness, Family Support, and Quality Workforce.
- Inform the rule writing process and implementation of CCCAP-related legislation from the 2014 session: HB14-1317, HB14-1022, and SB14-003 (please see descriptions of these bills below).
- Support the Colorado Department of Human Services and Colorado Department of Education in federal grant opportunities such as Preschool Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.
- Continue to explore innovative financing mechanisms to support effective early childhood programs for children birth to eight.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

Child Care Budget Items:



- \$9.9 million in expanding access to quality in CCCAP through HB14-1317 (further description in policy update).
- \$2.2 million in quality improvement grants and technical assistance for providers with a priority for those who enroll CCCAP-subsidized children.
- \$1.3 million to increase licensing staff to improve site monitoring frequency.
- \$1.9 million increase to improve CCCAP community provider rates.

The annual School Finance Act HB14-1298 and the Student Success Act HB14-1292 provides significant investments in education in a way that balances district flexibility with targeted support for our most at-risk students.



- \$20 million increase for English Language Learners for a total of \$27 million.
- \$18 million increase for students struggling to read (K-Grade 3) for a total of \$38 million.
- \$17 million new investment in 5,000 new high quality early learning slots for at-risk preschoolers or kindergarteners via the innovative Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement Program (ECARE).
- \$3 million new investment to build a budget transparency website.

- \$3 million increase for the Counselor Corps Grant program for a total of \$8 million.
- +** \$100,000 to support literacy programs during well-child visits with pediatricians.
- +** \$298,000 for early childhood and K-12 data linkage.

POLICY UPDATES

Child Care Subsidy: HB14-1317 modernizes the CCCAP program and invests \$9.9 million in expanding access to quality care.

- P**
- Increases eligibility to 165% FPL as the statewide floor.
 - Implements presumptive eligibility for at least 30 days.
 - Sets exit income eligibility threshold at a higher level than the entry eligibility.
 - Caps copays for low-income families at no more than 1% of annual income; establishes a tiered copay structure to offset the "cliff effect."
 - Requires the approved hours for child care not to be linked to parents' employment, education, or training schedules.
 - Increases job search to 60 days.
 - Allows contracting of slots or grants to meet the rising need of child care, improve the quality of infant and toddler care, improve care to children with disabilities, or provide after-hours or child care in underserved neighborhoods.
 - Aligns the CO CCAP with other public benefit programs.

Child Care 12-month authorization: HB14-1022 minimizes disruptions in child care for low-income families by ensuring that, except in very limited cases, CCCAP-eligible families are authorized for child care assistance for at least 12 months.

- P**
- Child Care Tax Benefit:** HB14-1072 provides \$5.4 million to ensure that working families earning less than \$25,000 who have child care expenses are able to receive the same tax benefit that higher income families receive.

- P**
- Cliff Effect:** SB14-003 provides \$1.2 million to help counties launch pilot programs to mitigate the impact of the "cliff effect," when families lose child care support due to a modest increase in salary.

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Florida

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Amend Florida's early learning statute to include health and safety standards, as well as program quality benchmarks, including teacher training and qualifications.
- Increase funding for School Readiness (Florida's subsidized child care) and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) programs.
- Expand eligibility for Florida KidCare, the state's children's health insurance program, by removing the five year wait for children of lawfully residing immigrants.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Implement tiered reimbursement for subsidized childcare with parent engagement and professional development components.
- Expand developmental screening information and referral system (Help Me Grow funded in several counties; statewide expansion under development).

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  \$3 million for additional School Readiness slots (Florida's subsidized child care).
-  \$10.5 million was allocated for a School Readiness Performance Funding Pilot.
-  \$8.8 million for VPK, which will result in a \$54 per student increase.
-  \$2.5 million increase for HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters).
-  \$2 million for early learning professional development.
-  \$2 million for the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's Help Me Grow Network.
-  \$600,000 for newborn screening and hearing testing.
-  A proposed \$12 million increase in School Readiness slots did not pass.
-  A proposed \$30 million to implement a School Readiness Performance Funding tiered reimbursement model statewide did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Tiered Reimbursement:** A tiered reimbursement model for subsidized child care was included in the 2014-15 state budget as a pilot program.



Developmental Screening: Help Me Grow, a developmental screening information and referral system, was funded in several counties.



Child Welfare: Several child welfare reforms that passed this session will affect young children, especially a new child find policy that requires developmental screenings for all children birth to age five deemed at risk of abuse or neglect

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Georgia

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Increase the quality of and access to Georgia’s universal pre-K program.
 - Reduce class size from 22 students to 20 students per classroom in accordance with national quality standards.
 - Add slots to ensure all four year-olds have an opportunity to participate in Georgia Pre-K.
- Support Quality Rated (Georgia’s QRIS), which incentivizes quality and helps parents easily identify the quality level of a given provider.
 - Leverage funding from the private community for incentives.
 - Ensure that there is adequate technical assistance and support from the Department of Early Care and Education (DECAL) to assist all licensed programs in participating in Quality Rated, receiving a rating within reasonable times, and improving quality so that they can attain higher rating levels after making suggested improvements.
- Ensure that hard working, low-income families can access and afford high quality care.
 - Increase Georgia’s child care subsidy level which is currently far below market rates.
 - Provide higher levels of subsidies for parents who choose higher rated centers.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Continue partnership with the Harvard Center on the Developing Child to explore new strategies to address Social Emotional Development and Learning.
- Implement Early Learning Challenge Grant, with the locations of Early Education Empowerment Zones to be announced in September.
- Convene workgroups on assessments that may include work on: timely, appropriate behavioral and mental health identification and intervention including the needs of children who come to the attention of the child welfare system; Creating and implementing a system of developmental assessments and interventions for children with potential learning differences.
- Advance development of statewide kindergarten entry assessment to assess readiness and inform initial instruction by 2017.
- Continue brainstorming ways to articulate and implement two generation strategies to impact young children, their parents and families, and their communities.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The state budget for children ages birth to five has not changed since November 2013- new funding has been federal, i.e. Early Learning Challenge.

POLICY UPDATES



Tiered Reimbursement: A tiered reimbursement for Quality Rated providers is being implemented.



Degrees and Credentials: The governor approved new, one time bonuses for early childhood educators to further their education and higher credentials funded through the Early Learning Challenge Grant.



Child Welfare: State is focusing, with urgency, on child welfare issues and a new Acting Commissioner of the Department of Child and Family Services was appointed who will answer directly to the Governor instead of to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services. The Acting Commissioner will be issuing system recommendations and address a proposal to privatize services prior to the 2015 legislative session.



Drug Testing: The legislature passed a bill to require drug testing of SNAP recipients. Governor Deal signed the legislation in April 2014; however, in June 2014 he announced that he would not implement the law until the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit rules on the constitutionality of a similar Florida law.

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Illinois

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Protect early childhood funding in the FY15 budget and fight for restoration of previous cuts.
- Fight for stable, adequate funding for early childhood, including involvement in discussions on addressing Illinois' revenue situation.
- Participate in the launch of ExceleRate (Illinois' QRIS) and the development and implementation of quality improvement strategies.
- Advocate for increased quality improvement utilizing embedded coaching and mentoring.
- Advocate for changes that support increased access to high quality programs for most at-risk children and families.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Improve linkages between new health insurance entities and the early childhood systems by utilizing a major shift to care coordination in Medicaid. Specific focus will be on connections between primary health and home visiting. The state has a statutory requirement to have 50% of Medicaid recipients in a care coordination plan by January 1, 2015.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



Early Childhood Block Grant, home visiting, Early Intervention and bilingual funding were held level in FY15 budget. Early Intervention also received supplemental FY14 funding of \$8 million which was not annualized into its FY15 base.



\$24 million cut to Child Care Assistance Program. Child care received \$60 million in FY14 supplemental funding, but this amount was not annualized into the FY15 budget – effectively making the cut \$84 million. However, due to the way in which the budget is funded, no actual program cuts have yet been announced.



Supported a measure to maintain current income tax rates scheduled to expire in January 2015, which will create a \$2 billion loss of revenue in FY15. The measure was not called for a vote during regular session. Efforts will continue with a focus on fall veto session and January lame duck session.

POLICY UPDATES



Infant Toddler Education Funding: The minimum Birth-to-Three set-aside in the Early Childhood Block Grant was increased by legislation to 14%, and the ramp-up to 20% now has a completion goal of 2016.



Early Intervention: Legislation created “stay put” provisions in Early Intervention (Part C), which allows children to stay enrolled in services while any dispute in those services are being resolved. During negotiations on the legislation, the IL Department of Human Services agreed to improve its data collection to better track when each service in an IFSP is initiated. There is further agreement to discuss parent notice procedures.

- P** **Bilingual:** The Illinois State Board of Education has proposed rules for public comment to delay implementation of bilingual education for preschool children until July 1, 2016.
- P** **Child Care:** Co-payment reductions and home-based provider rate increases occurred as scheduled in January and July.
- P** **QRIS:** ExceleRate (IL QRIS) was launched online July 1. The Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development released a RFP for technical assistance providers that would support programs to reach Gold level and Awards of Excellence, which are ExceleRate’s highest quality level ratings.
- P** **Dental:** Dental treatment services for adults on Medicaid that were cut two years ago were restored. With this restoration, the IL Department of Healthcare and Family Services can begin to effectively implement policy changes passed last year to provide not only dental treatments to pregnant women, but, for the first time, preventative dental care to pregnant women.
- P** **Special Education:** Advocates joined together to halt a proposal to repeal a critical special education rule that sets child-staff ratios, class size limits, and requires that no more than 30% of students in a general education classroom have individualized education plans (beyond speech-only). This rule has served as an important safeguard – particularly for our youngest learners in preschool programs and 3-5-year-olds in self-contained special education classrooms, who require significant attention in order to maximize their learning and development.

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Iowa

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Strengthen the availability of evidence-based preschool programs for low-income children and support targeted outreach efforts to increase their participation.
- Promote additional policies, including addressing chronic elementary absenteeism, to increase the proportion of Iowa children reading proficiently by the end of third grade.
- Continue to develop and expand programs, practices and systems that improve healthy development and children's mental health, drawing on current exemplary work on 1st Five, Project LAUNCH, and ACEs.
- Improve child safety and well-being through youth, family, and community involvement in child safety, permanence, and well-being efforts.
- Increase access to affordable and quality child care through the state child care assistance program.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Expand access to child nutrition programs for school-aged children.
- Work with gubernatorial and congressional campaigns on completion of an election year survey with questions related to children and their families.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  \$1.6 million for 1st Five, the children's healthy mental development initiative.
-  \$200,000 increase for Early Head Start state funded grants.
-  \$500,000 for an attendance and data center.
-  \$500,000 for an English Language Learners grant
-  \$50,000 to conduct an ACES survey.
-  A new \$2,500 tax credit to help defray costs of adoption expenses
-  Proposal to expand access to the statewide 4-year-old preschool program for low income children did not pass.
-  Proposal to increase the eligibility level and reimbursement rates for child care assistance did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Child Welfare:** The Child Welfare Services Committee was created with the Child and Family Policy Center named as a member in the legislation.

- P** **Tax Credit:** Legislation was passed that improved the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.
- P** **Child Care Assistance:** Families will be able to combine work and school hours to qualify for child care assistance. Previously, individuals had to work full time or go to school full time.
- P** **Human Trafficking:** New regulations will allow the county attorney to refer minor victims of human trafficking to DHS for child in need of assistance (CINA) proceedings, which will open up a wide array of important services to victims, and allow for expungement of a prostitution record when the person is under 18 and if there are no additional crimes for two years. Regulations will expand the definition of “enticement” of a minor to include enticement through mail, telephone, internet, or any social media. New policies will also add a \$1,000 surcharge, beginning January 1, 2015, for persons convicted of human trafficking, or persons convicted as johns, pimps and panderers. The surcharge will fund a newly created human trafficking victim fund that will be used for services for victims of human trafficking as well as public awareness.

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Kansas

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Maintain funding for early childhood programs financed through the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) and retain the state’s portion of tobacco settlement dollars for funding children’s programs.
- Increase the number of children reading at grade level by third grade by identifying and advancing policy options to enhance early literacy opportunities.
- Protect the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Increase funding for early care and education programs: Ensure that all tobacco settlement dollars are directed to early care and education (ECE) and that money previously directed to other purposes is redirected back to ECE in order to provide an across the board increase to strengthen existing ECE programs. There are also plans to gather data on the negative impact of flat funding for programs over multiple budget cycles as well as preparing grassroots advocates for the 2015 Legislative Session.
- Develop a joint professional development initiative to enhance teacher training and to encourage collaboration between preschool and K-3 teachers at the local level. Advocates will work with the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust fund to include an emphasis on literacy professional development in the Early Childhood Block Grant as well.
- Explore strategies that will improve state child care assistance policy, including using unspent TANF dollars and increasing reimbursement rates for childcare. Early childhood advocates will convene a group of key stakeholders in the fall to assess the greatest needs in the area of child care assistance, and the most promising means of addressing those needs in the current policy environment.
- Convene the first annual meeting of the Partnership for Early Success in November to finalize upcoming policy priorities and energize advocates for the 2015 Legislative Session.
- Convene a new signature luncheon in February that will highlight the importance of the early years on adult health for policymakers, the community and the media.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The 2014 Legislature maintained \$55 million in flat funding for early care and education programs as set in the 2013-2015 biennial budget.



The state received \$7.2 million, in addition to the anticipated \$55 million in tobacco Master Settlement Agreement payments to support children’s programs. Although lawmakers attempted to capture \$5 million of this money for economic development in the budget, the Governor responded to pressure from ECE advocates and vetoed it. As a result, the full \$7.2 million is set aside for future use in the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Fund.



The Governor proposed phasing-in funding for full-day kindergarten as opposed to the half-day funding currently in the Kansas school finance formula. In spite of support from the Governor and the early childhood and education communities, this legislation failed to receive a hearing in the Senate.

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Louisiana

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Monitor implementation of Act 3, the Early Childhood Education Act from the 2012 legislative session. Under this Act, the state Board of Education must create “a comprehensive and integrated network through which to manage and oversee all programs funded through state or federal resources that provide early childhood care and educational services” by the 2015-2016 school year. This implementation includes rewriting the child care licensing regulations, restructuring and expanding the current quality rating and improvement system, and moving the CCDF Block Grant and licensure of child care from the Department of Children and Family Services to the Department of Education.
- Conduct an advocacy campaign to impact the Act 3 implementation plan, which will focus on increasing the child care assistance rate ceiling to cover actual costs as determined by cost modeling. Current rate ceiling is set at the 10th percentile of the LA market rate survey.
 - Set floor of the publicly funded portion of child care assistance at 100% for families in poverty and at 80% for at-risk families. Currently, the state pays only 80% of the rate ceiling for families in poverty and 60%-40% for other at-risk families;
 - Pilot contracting child care assistance slots in blocks in 2014 to facilitate an adequate supply of high quality care.
- Respond to the draft of new child care licensing regulations to ensure that the proposed regulations protect the health, safety, and quality of care for young children.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Increase funding for child care assistance given that it has decreased by 58% in five years.
- Create an enduring formal mechanism for ongoing stakeholder input and advance public notice with the opportunity for comment before policy changes are implemented.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  Entire \$75.9 million for the LA 4 Pre-K program was preserved for the 2015 fiscal year, with \$37 million paid from State General Funds (SGF) and \$38.6 million paid from TANF, which represented a \$2.2 million shift from SGF to TANF.
-  Entire \$7.3 million for the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program, a public pre-k program for child care centers and private schools, was preserved for the 2015 fiscal year, all from State General Funds.
-  Entire Child Care Assistance Program funding was sustained for the 2015 fiscal year, despite substantial cuts in previous years.
-  Entire \$18.8 million for Nurse-Family Partnership was sustained for the 2015 fiscal year.
-  A proposal to increase the amount of funding for the Child Care Assistance Program through the addition of either TANF or State General Funds was not passed.

POLICY UPDATES

- ECE Funding Model:** The 2014 legislature passed a resolution requesting that the state Board of Education develop a statewide model for the funding and the equitable distribution of public funds for quality early childhood care and education for Louisiana children, ages birth to five, and to submit a report with recommendations to the legislature no later than sixty days prior to the 2015 Session.
- Advisory Council & Governance:** Act 868 provides for the move of the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant and the licensure of child care from the Department of Children and Family Services to the Department of Education. The Act tightens the state central registry and criminal background check requirements and codifies an Advisory Council on Early Childhood Care and Education that will advise the State Board of Education. All regulations, standards, the state plan for the CCDF Block Grant and other matters related to early care and education must be presented to this Council before they are considered by the Board. The Act also specifies a list of data and information that must be reported to the Council each year, and it mandates that specific data on child care assistance participation and on child care centers' licensing-visit history must be posted on the Department of Education's website.
- Pre-kindergarten:** Act 644 repeals the current pre-kindergarten statute and re-establishes the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program, providing greater flexibility to the State Board of Education to allocate funding based on demand. The high quality standards of the current LA 4 program remain mandated by law, including the requirements for a certified lead teacher, a full-day program, and specific low adult to child ratios, as well as statutory requirements for professional development, technical assistance, and an evaluation of the long-term effects of the program on the school success of the children served.
- Local Coordination:** Act 717 created a coordinated local enrollment process for publicly funded early care and education programs. It also requires the State Board of Education to authorize entities as local enrollment coordinators that will conduct a process for informing families about early childhood care and education programs, collect family preferences, use a common application process to determine demand, and make recommendations to the state Department of Education (DOE) to enroll children for all publicly funded early care and education programs in that community.
- Child Care and Homelessness:** Act 787 addresses eligibility factors for the Child Care Assistance Program that may be a barrier for homeless families trying to access child care. It requires a defined grace period for a homeless family to be authorized to receive child care assistance pending submission of birth certificates and immunization records. It also provides that the state shall waive work and school requirements, for a specified period, for homeless families who demonstrate that they are seeking employment or participating in a transitional living program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Maine

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Participate in stakeholder group for planning and research of P.L. 2014, c. 581, [An Act To Establish a Process for the Implementation of Universal Voluntary Public Preschool Programs for Children 4 Years of Age](#).
- Ensure that the Maine Department of Education will adopt rules for the implementation and expansion of public preschool that will emphasize high quality care and coordination with Head Start and existing providers.
- Sponsor a Convention for Maine's Children at Educare Central Maine. A platform for Maine's Children will be developed and distributed at the Convention. The platform and convention will be used to energize and organize advocates in the upcoming general election. Those advocates will then educate candidates for state legislature, governor, and the U.S. Senate regarding the benefits and importance of early childhood education.
- Ensure \$2 million for Head Start services to children in poverty and their parents.
- Draw down \$3 million in federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) moneys to provide child care vouchers to low-income families
- Provide information for policy makers regarding benefits of home visiting and public health nursing and prevent further cuts to programs.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Monitor possible changes to school funding formula regarding impacts to low-income children and preschool programs.
- Work with partners, providers and state leaders on the development and creation of policies that provide child care workers, educators, and parents with mental health/behavior consultations for young children, particularly those at risk for expulsion.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$4 million of casino revenue to fund start-up costs for preschool programs in districts that do not have preschool or those districts that wish to expand existing preschool programs. Funding will be available for school year 2015-2016 with the goal of having programs operating in all school districts by 2018-2019.



\$750,000 appropriated in FY15 for Head Start.

POLICY UPDATES



Legislation made changes so that child care providers at Tier 2 and 3 in the QRIS will continue to receive quality payments for meeting increased standards.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Massachusetts

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Continue momentum from the FY14 legislative session and secure another year of budget increases, building on the 2013 budget that saw the first budget increase for early education and care after being cut for the past four years. Chief contributor to the increase was a new \$15 million line item devoted solely to serving children on the state's Income Eligible waiting list.
- Support the Department of Early Education and Care through its leadership transition-Commissioner Thomas Weber was appointed in September 2013.
- Promote a Birth – Third Grade agenda, most notably through participating with state administrators in the National Governor's Association policy academy and co-sponsoring Birth-Third Grade conference in May 2014.
- Assist with staffing and implementation of the Early Literacy Expert Panel, a state advisory established in law through An Act Relative to Third Grade Reading Proficiency (2012).

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Promote high-quality early education as a marquee issue in the 2014 gubernatorial race, including hosting a [forum for gubernatorial candidates](#) in June 2014.
- Co-sponsored "[Conversation with the Boston Mayoral Candidates – Early Childhood and Education](#)" with participation by final two gubernatorial candidates John Connolly and Marty Walsh, and more than 200 attendees in October 2013.
- Contribute local birth to eight policy work, through technical assistance via the [Massachusetts Third Grade Reading Proficiency Learning Network](#), and ad hoc assistance with additional communities. Using lessons learned to inform state policy, including the need for flexible pre-k dollars at the community level. Plan to highlight best practices by topic at statewide convenings.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$15 million for a second year of Income Eligible waitlist funding will help the state serve an estimated 1,800 children currently on the waiting list for an early education and care subsidy.



A rate reserve for early educator salaries and benefits was funded at \$6.57 million, which will provide across the board raises for all center-based educators.



A new K1 classroom grant program funded at \$1 million provided pre-k grants to high-needs communities and districts, with funding guidelines to be crafted jointly by the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



Cap lifted for districts counting enrolled pre-k students towards their foundation budgets. Previously, districts could only count twice as many regular education students as special education students. Cap lift would result in an estimated \$2 million in additional state education aid for districts in FY15.



Proposed funding for technology associated with state QRIS implementation did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES



Report Recommendations: The [Special Commission on Early Education Services](#), established in the FY14 budget, released a report in December 2013 which included 18 recommendations across topics of health and safety, access and quality, program reimbursement rates and workforce.



Education Finance Formula: The Foundation Budget Review Commission, established in the FY15 budget language, will examine the state's K-12 funding formula, with implications for how K-12 state aid supports pre-k and full-day kindergarten.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Michigan

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Expand publicly funded pre-school: Our effort to expand the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), Michigan's high-quality public pre-K initiative continued in this grant year. Advocates worked with the governor's office and the Office of Great Start to determine the best use of expanded pre-school funding, likely a combination of more slots for eligible four-year-olds, having more children attend for a full day rather than a half day, and linking GSRP and Head Start for a full-day of preschool for low-income students.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Strengthen efforts to assure the healthy growth of birth to 3-year-olds: Support expansion of evidence-based programs for birth to 3-year-olds and their families, including prenatal care. There will be a focus on specific birth to 3-year-old initiatives with demonstrable value to children, families, businesses, and taxpayers and a practical policy proposal grounded in the research will be developed.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$65 million increase for GSRP, creating an additional 16,000 half-day slots for four-year-old pre-k. GSRP now has a total of \$239.6 million.

POLICY UPDATES

Four-Year-Old Pre-K: The expansion of GSRP included the following policy changes.



- Requires that participating children are living in households with incomes at 250% FPL or below.
- Deems any child as meeting the 250% of FPL requirement if they are in foster care, homeless, or have an individual education plan (IEP) recommending placement in a preschool program.
- Earmarks \$10 million of the new \$65 million for reimbursement to programs for transportation costs - up to \$150/slot.
- Requires GSRP sites to participate in Great Start to Quality (Michigan's QRIS) and have a minimum of a three-star quality rating.
- Requires intermediate school districts (ISDs) to contract at least 30% of its total slot allocation with interested and eligible private community-based providers.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Nebraska

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Promoted the following pieces of legislations:
 - LBs864, 967, and 984 – a trio of bills introduced this legislative session concerning lottery funding for early childhood education. LB967 allows unspent lottery allocations to remain with the Early Childhood Education Endowment Cash Fund (Sixpence), the Nebraska Department of Education early childhood preschool grant program, and the School District Reorganization Fund after August 1, 2016. LB967 also directs the Early Childhood Training Center, in consultation with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, to approve training used to satisfy child care licensing criteria and participation in Step Up to Quality (QRIS). In addition, \$3.2 million (of the \$4.6 million proposed in LB984) for the Nebraska Department of Education preschool grant program was included in LB905, the mainline budget bill.
 - LB944 provides resources for parents and early education providers to support healthy social-emotional development in young children. Funding for LB944 was included in LB905, the mainline budget bill.
 - LB1050 changes the licensing process for Family Child Care Home I providers, requiring a health and safety inspection prior to licensure.
 - LB1103 provides a statewide visioning process for education that includes early childhood.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Continue relationship between First Five Nebraska the Nebraska Department of Education and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute to identify the gap in Nebraska’s early childhood workforce, as well as secure additional resources for early childhood workforce development.
- Seek additional Sixpence services in the state, particularly in rural areas.
- Implement candidate visits between First Five Nebraska representatives and legislative and gubernatorial candidates given term limits and as a strategy to generate early support and build effective relationships with potential future office holders. Strategic messengers (Business Roundtable, Fight Crime Invest in Kids, and Mission Readiness) are utilized in follow-up with candidates.
- Maintain relationship building efforts between First Five Nebraska and public school superintendents on issues of common interest related to birth to eight.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

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\$3.2 million for Nebraska Department of Education preschool grant program, serving children 3-5-years-old.
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\$400,000 increase for Nurturing Healthy Behaviors, a program that helps parents and early childhood providers support social and emotional development in children, especially those exhibiting challenging behaviors.

POLICY UPDATES

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Medicaid: LB276 allows schools to be reimbursed for health care services directly through Medicaid. Previously, Medicaid only directly reimbursed schools for physical

therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. The additional services include mental health services, nursing services, rehabilitation services, hearing and language disorder services and vision related services. While this change mostly impacts school age children, it will be an important aspect of future birth to eight work.

- P** **Child Care Eligibility:** [LB359](#) changes eligibility requirements for child care subsidy, allowing 10% of a recipient's gross income to be disregarded in determining ongoing eligibility. It also changes asset limitations for subsidy, medical assistance, Aid to Dependent Children and the SNAP, allowing families who receive these supports greater opportunity to pursue higher education in their attempt to work toward self-sufficiency. When coupled with Step Up to Quality (Nebraska's new QRIS), LB359 will allow more families climbing the economic ladder to find and afford quality child care.
- P** **Child care Training:** Licensing trainings for Step Up to Quality will now be approved by the Early Childhood Training Center within the DOE as a result of [LB967](#). This policy ensures child care provider trainings meet a basic level of rigor.
- P** **Licensing Inspections:** LB1050 closed the loophole that allowed Family Child Care Home I providers to obtain a license without undergoing an inspection. Previously, the Department of Health and Human Services had 60 days to complete the inspection after the license was granted.
- P** **Early Childhood in State Vision for Education:** [LB1103](#) directs the Legislature's Education Committee to conduct a strategic planning process to develop a statewide vision for education in Nebraska. The vision must contain aspirational goals, visionary objectives, meaningful priorities and practical strategies. The process offers an opportunity for Nebraska to recognize how early childhood education contributes to school readiness and reduces the achievement gap, and consider early childhood among the state's strategic investments in education.
- P** **QRIS:** [Step Up to Quality](#) began on July 1, 2014, and includes quality bonuses when moving from Step 2 or higher, as well as tiered reimbursement in child care subsidy for Steps 3 and higher. During FY15, participation is required for providers who receive \$500,000 in child care subsidies. In FY16, participation is required for providers who receive \$250,000 in child care subsidies. Participation is voluntary for all other early childhood providers.

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New Mexico

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 DRAFT Agenda

- Continue using the *Early Childhood Care and Education Cost Analysis & Recommendations* research to support a General Fund appropriation increase to funding of high quality early childhood care and education programs and services.
- Engage with a variety of stakeholders about the true cost of providing quality early care and education by using the *New Mexico Early Care and Education Cost Model*.
- Use the *Early Childhood Education Revenue Option* research to engage a variety of stakeholders in a review of revenue options to develop recommendations.
- Assist in the implementation of the Home Visiting Accountability Act.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Advance the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care and education based on policy recommendations developed by a child care and education task force.
- Continue efforts to advance professional development and wage supplements for the early childhood care and education workforce, including those who provide care in a home.
- Continue analysis of early childhood education and care revenue options and the development of policy recommendations.
- Use the [Wonder of Learning](#) exhibit to promote awareness of the importance of high-quality early childhood care and education and to build momentum to support increased state funding of early childhood care and education programs and services.
- Continue development and distribution of the early childhood listserve to share public policy updates, reports on legislative committees, and distribute action alerts.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

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- \$2.5 million to support home visiting programs.
- \$5.6 million to support FIT program (New Mexico's Part C program), including \$500,000 to support reimbursement increases for providers.
- \$6.2 million to support the existing half-day New Mexico PreK program. This includes a \$3.5 million appropriation to support a full-day pilot program. New Mexico PreK is jointly administered by the Children, Youth and Families Department (for community-based pre-k programs) and the Public Education Department (for school-based pre-k programs). Since the development of New Mexico PreK, funds were distributed equally among both departments. For the first time, additional funding was appropriated to the Public Education Department.
- \$5.3 million was appropriated to support the K-3 Plus program which provides additional educational time (extending the school year for K-3 by 25 instructional days beginning before the school year) for students in high-poverty public schools.
- \$3.0 million was appropriated to support New Mexico Reads to Lead!, which funds a K-3 formative reading assessment system to local school districts at no cost. Regional and

district reading coaches, and other supports for intervention and professional development are provided for parents, teachers, parents, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders.

-  \$600,000 was appropriated for training, technical assistance and professional development for child care assistance programs.
-  \$450,000 was appropriated to support high-quality early childhood development center planning grants. These funds will be administered by Children, Youth, and Families Department.
-  \$1.3 million to increase child care subsidy rates for infants, and an additional \$1 million to sustain a 4% increase in rates that went into effect in the fall of 2013.
-  Significant increases for high-quality EC services were proposed, but did not pass.
-  A proposal to exempt gross receipts tax for for-profit kindergarten providers who offer New Mexico Pre-K failed to pass, but is likely to be introduced next year.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Child Care Regulations:** CYFD is implementing child care regulations designed to raise standards and improve the delivery of early childhood care and education. The proposed regulations are focused on smaller group sizes; smaller teacher-to-child ratios; increased education and training requirements; and accreditation based on the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The state also proposes an increase in reimbursement for providers who have reached the QRIS five star designation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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New York

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Invest at least \$225 million for high-quality, full-day pre-k opportunities and fully fund the expansion of UPK and after-school in NYC as currently proposed in the Assembly and Senate budget proposals.
 - Prioritize funding for high-needs districts first, provide additional funds for professional development, and avoid the use of competitive grants, and provides additional funds for professional development and quality.
- Invest at least an additional \$182 million in child care subsidies to serve more than 25,000 additional children.
- Invest at least \$160 million for access to afterschool statewide, in addition to the Senate and Assembly's commitment to afterschool programs for NYC, along with language that establishes the statewide afterschool programs through collaborations between school districts and community-based organizations and/or youth development programs.
- Ensure that Early Intervention providers are paid in a timely manner through legislative advocacy on related bills.
 - Make the State's fiscal agent responsible for seeking reimbursement from health insurance for EI claims and filing appeals of denials of claims.
- Restore \$3.5 million for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) and invest \$4 million for Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP).

Ideas or Topics in Development

- A survey is being developed that will be used as a tool for advocacy and education on importance of workforce issues.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  \$340 million for full-day pre-k; \$300 million for NYC and \$40 million for the rest of the state.
-  \$34 million for child care subsidies and \$7.2 million for facilitated enrollment.
-  \$1 million in funds restored to NFP; however, overall investment in NFP is still \$2 million down from previous cuts.
-  \$160 million proposal for afterschool starting 2015-2016 did not pass.
-  Proposal for EI providers receiving timely payments or paid family leave did not pass.
-  Proposal to require child care subsidy reimbursement when children are absent to ensure quality care did not pass. Currently local social services districts are authorized to reimburse for absences at their discretion.
-  Proposal to align reimbursement rates with current licensing standards for children up to 2-years-old did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES



Child Care Financial Eligibility: Effective July 1, 2014, the earned income of a dependent child under the age of 18 who is not legally responsible for the child or children for whom child care assistance is sought must be disregarded when determining financial eligibility of a new application for a child care subsidy.



Early Learning Council: Proposal introduced to create an Early Learning Council.



Changes in Child Care Eligibility: Legislation introduced to require a county social services district to notify the Office of Children and Family Services 60 days prior to a proposed reduction in the financial eligibility level for child care assistance or an increase in the parental co-payment.



Child Care Taskforce: Legislation introduced to create a child care regulatory review task force to relieve unnecessary burdens on child day care providers so that they are better able to maintain a stable, quality program.

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Oklahoma

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Support home visitation legislation to require a specific level of quality and data collection across all programs.
- Infuse the Strengthening Families framework into early childhood systems through quality standards, professional development, and early learning guidelines.
- Align the early childhood education competencies for licensure and certification with college curriculum for early childhood professionals.
- Support child care subsidy rate increases and other policy changes to improve access to and length of participation in high quality care and education programs.
- Implement a pilot early literacy assessment that informs teachers' instruction to improve literacy outcomes and release an evaluation report in fall of 2014.
- Expand the Child Care Professional Development Registry to home-based providers to improve coordination and cross-sector training opportunities.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Develop a governance policy to facilitate data sharing and connection of early childhood data currently being collected by child serving state agencies.
- Develop a sustainable network to increase and enhance family participation in early childhood policy discussions and in the development of early childhood policies and procedures.
- Use cost modeling to determine the costs and impacts of policy options to improve early care and education programming.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



Several state agencies received reductions in their state appropriations. It is unclear the impact on early childhood programs and services at this time.



Increase in funding through the school funding formula to add approximately 700 children during the 2013-2014 school year in Oklahoma Pre-K, for a total of 40,823 four-year-olds enrolled.

POLICY UPDATES



Repealed Third Grade Retention: The portion of the Reading Sufficiency Act that required children in the third-grade be retained for not passing end of the year reading tests effective during the 2013-2014 school year was repealed.



Child Care Rates: Provider rates increases were increased effective November 2013 with higher rate increases implemented for higher quality rated centers. Funding was identified within the existing budget.



Child Care Registry: In an effort to expand the Child Care Professional Development Registry to home-based providers in order to improve coordination and cross-sector training opportunities, a first round of modifications will be reviewed by program administrators in August, 2014



Standards: Pre-K Language, Literacy and Math standards were developed through a collaborative process involving the public schools and the early childhood network. These have not been approved by the State Board of Education Oklahoma reversing legislation to implement the Common Core.



Home Visiting: Development of home visiting accountability legislation is still under development. Legislation was introduced to relocate administration of home visiting programs did not pass this session.



Strengthening Families: Strengthening Families efforts to infuse the framework into early childhood systems through quality standards, professional development, and early learning guidelines have been decreased due to shifts in priorities with funding; however, family engagement efforts continue to be a focus across the system.



Educator Competencies: Momentum has decreased to align the early childhood education competencies for licensure and certification with college curriculum for early childhood professionals with the recent resignation of the Secretary of Education.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Oregon

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Interim session only, no legislative agenda.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Increase the number of children with access to high quality early learning birth to five services.
 - Expand ERDC access (Oregon's child care assistance) to 2500 additional families and expand quality initiatives including tiered reimbursement and contracted slots.
 - Increase state capacity to respond to developmental screenings with an increase in funding for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education.
 - Expand access to home visiting services.
 - Pilot a mixed delivery preschool program.
- Strengthen the early grades to ensure more children are reading by third grade.
 - Fund and roll out full-day kindergarten and address chronic absenteeism in kindergarten.
 - Initiate a statewide K-3 Response to Intervention initiative.
- Continue to build statewide early learning system infrastructure.
 - Ensure efforts to build an early learning infrastructure through RTT are maintained.
 - Commit dedicated funding to recently implemented Early Learning Hubs.
- Use the two Early Works sites that focus on linking health and family engagement to identify challenges and solutions to inform communities and state policy.
- Pilot additional birth to third grade partnerships through the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Fund, Oregon Community Foundation P-3 grants, and Grade Level Reading Campaign communities.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



Successful in restoring the 2% cuts proposed to early learning, which included:

- \$2,548,483 to the Oregon Pre-K/Head Start program;
- \$673,910 towards Early Learning Hub funding, Health Families Oregon, Relief Nurseries, and Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness grants;
- \$436,976 to strategic education initiatives;
- \$1,080,405 for Early Childhood Special Education and;
- \$562,775 for Early Intervention.

POLICY UPDATES



State adopted rule, RFP process, and awarded grants for the Kindergarten Readiness Innovation and Partnership Fund and the Early Literacy Grant Program.



State adopted administrative rules for Early Learning Hubs, approved six hubs, and gave preliminary approval to eight. Final two hubs will likely be approved by early 2015.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Pennsylvania

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Increase availability of evidence-based home visiting and expand funding over the next five years through advocacy of Early Learning PA.
- Monitor investments and policies that support the inclusion of children with developmental delays and disabilities in high-quality early learning programs and provide ongoing supports to parents and providers.
- Ensure the availability of high-quality child care for working parents with at-risk children.
- Support the Rising STARS Initiative, which rewards higher quality child care programs by reimbursing them closer to the full cost of quality care.
- Ensure the health and safety of children in child care settings and improve child care quality.
- Increase the number of children enrolled in high-quality pre-k.
- Use Pre-K for PA to advocate major increases in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance and encourage candidates in the fall gubernatorial election to support universal pre-k, beginning with access for the most vulnerable children.
- Ensure the use of data to manage and evaluate early learning programs.
- Ensure implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Inventory, which will become mandatory in low-performing schools in 2014 as part of the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge.
- Connect early learning and health care.
- Promote white paper that was provided to the state Office of Child Development and Early Learning with recommendations to link children and families to health coverage through early learning programs.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Initiate a number of reforms to Keystone STARS (state QRIS). Research is being conducted on second-generation QRIS systems to develop proposals to stimulate greater access to the program and ensure more programs reach the highest levels of quality. Reimbursing providers for the actual cost of quality will be a key component of these proposals.
- Highlight best practices observed through RTT-ELC grant implementation at the community level and develop the means to replicate successful models.
- Monitor the rollout of the Kindergarten Entry Inventory to targeted schools and seek opportunities to promote its use.
- Explore strategies to increase funding for home visiting programs.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$10 million increase of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which will allow 1,670 additional children to participate in the program. Pre-K Counts, operated by a mixed delivery system of providers, is a high-quality pre-k program benefitting 3- and 4-year-olds at risk of academic failure, serving children in families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level.



\$15 million increase in CCDBG to serve 2,895 children on the child care subsidy waiting list. The increase came from unspent federal TANF dollars.

-  \$18,000 increase in Child Care Services to help cover the cost of subsidies for low-income families and Keystone STARS.
-  Early Intervention received an increase to serve 1,500 more children in the program.
-  An increase to PA Pre-K Counts to serve an additional 4,176 full-time students and increase funding for the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program to serve an additional 1,647 full time students was proposed and did not pass.
-  \$14.4 million to reinstate child care rates was proposed and did not pass.
-  \$9 million increase for Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Programs to support early childhood workforce in gaining education and credentials did not pass.
-  \$11.4 million increase for tiered reimbursement rates for STARS 3 and 4 providers was proposed and did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Kindergarten Entry Assessment:** The RTT-ELC grant awarded in early 2014 has accelerated the adoption of the state’s Kindergarten Entry Inventory by elementary schools that fall within the lowest-performing 15% and will begin fall 2014.
-  **Tuition Assistance:** In response to requests after TEACH scholarships were eliminated, the administration introduced a \$3.5 million scholarship program for the early childhood workforce. It will enable almost 2,000 teachers and staff to obtain their degrees. They will receive 95% of tuition up-front.
-  **Poverty Initiatives:** Both legislative chambers are taking steps to address poverty and early learning has been front and center in the discussions. The state House Republican Policy Committee announced its “Empowering Opportunities: Gateways out of Poverty” initiative; PPC provided data and research on the importance of high-quality early learning programs. The committee released a report which identified solutions to poverty, including early learning. The next step is for individual House members to delve deeper into specific issues to develop recommendations in late 2014. PPC was called upon to provide a briefing on early learning in July. The Senate passed a resolution requiring Pennsylvania’s Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study “cliff effects” in state programs, including child care.
-  **Homelessness and Early Intervention:** A proposal for homeless infants and toddlers to be automatically screened for delays and disabilities in Early Intervention only passed the PA House.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Rhode Island

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Improve access for young children in child welfare to receive critical early childhood services.
- Increase quality of infant/toddler child care by requiring all programs to participate in QRIS.
- Rebuild investment in child care that would reduce the “cliff effect” by allowing families to remain eligible for child care as their incomes grow beyond the current eligibility ceiling.
- Ensure that the plan for pre-k expansion through the education funding formula stays on track.
- Increase access to evidence-based home visiting programs for at risk families.
- Develop policies to link early years to early grades including longitudinal data systems.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Implement comprehensive developmental screenings.
- Connect children’s health and development data system to longitudinal data system.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  \$1 million increase in state funding for pre-k expansion.
-  \$750,000 for full-day kindergarten expansion for one-time start-up costs.
-  Child care cliff effect policy pilot extended through September 2016, which allows families to retain child care assistance as their incomes increase up to 225% of FPL. Proposal to make child care “cliff effect” policy permanent did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **QRIS:** All Child Care Assistance providers must have a BrightStars rating by October 2014. State pre-k programs must also participate, while public schools are encouraged.
-  **Early Intervention:** Part C eliminated the “multiple established conditions” eligibility but added new language under “developmental delay” to make families who have “significant circumstances impacting child and/or family functioning” be eligible.
-  **Home Visiting:** 400 new slots for Healthy Families home visiting program.
-  **Full Day K:** Renewed funding for Full-Day Kindergarten Incentive Fund, with a formula adjustment to support full-day kindergarten to begin in fall 2016.
-  **Paid Family Leave:** Began implementation of paid family leave in January 2014.

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Washington

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2013 DRAFT Agenda

- Implement state-funded preschool expansion in a mixed delivery early learning system, including licensed child care centers and family child care homes, to improve quality overall and the availability of comprehensive, high-quality, culturally competent program options.
- Integrate early learning funding streams and programmatic congruence at the state level to create Early Start, a single high-quality continuum of early learning services.
- Secure new revenue to fund a continuum of early learning from birth through age five.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Promote 12-month child care authorization regardless of change in circumstances when the RTTT- Early Learning Challenge grant ends.
- Expand the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), the state preschool program, to meet entitlement by 2018-2019.
- Promote racial equity in legislative and administrative policy.
- Frame early learning in the context of court mandated education reform.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$23.418 million was provided to increase the base rate for child care subsidies by 8% and implement a tiered reimbursement pilot. \$3.018 million was provided to replace disallowed federal Medicaid dollars for Medicaid Treatment Child Care program.



\$28 million was proposed in House Bill 2377, the Early Start Act, for FY15, \$96 million in FY15-17, and \$127 million in FY17-19 and did not pass.

POLICY UPDATES



Preschool Expansion: The application process for 1,350 new slots in Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), the state preschool program, included prioritization of rural, tribal, and mixed service delivery. The new slots will be for six hour, full day services of 6- to 12-hour extended full-day programs. Current contractors were given the option to apply to convert existing part-day to full-day slots. Contractors will be given a single contract for ECEAP and Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy dollars braided at the state level. Contracts will be awarded this summer.



Child Care: Within existing WCCC appropriations, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is authorized to serve up to 20% of WCCC families through contracted slots. DEL may achieve this through contracting with ECEAP providers to braid ECEAP and WCCC funding to support full day preschool for eligible children.



Child Welfare: House Bill 2519 requires Family Assessment Response workers to assess for child safety and well-being. They must discuss child care and early learning services with families and refer them to programs rated at level 3 or above in Early Achievers. The bill also makes children receiving child protective services or family assessment response eligible for ECEAP.

Child Care Subsidy: Early Start Act did not pass in 2014 but will be reintroduced in 2015. The omnibus bill includes a variety of incentives and accountability measures aimed at producing positive outcomes for kids.



- Requires child care providers serving non-school age children and receiving state subsidy to rate at a level 2 in Early Achievers by July 2017 and a level 3 by July 2019. Extensions may be granted due to unexpected life circumstances.
- DEL must create professional development pathways for providers that are culturally and linguistically reflective of their needs and demographics.
- Creation of a substitute pool and needs-based grants for providers at level 2 in Early Achievers to assist with purchasing curriculum, instructional materials, supplies and equipment to improve quality
- Implementation of a 12-month enrollment period, regardless of changes in circumstances.
- Requires DEL to contract at least 20% of Working Connections Child Care slots by January 2016.
- Requires ECEAP providers to rate at a level 3 in Early Achievers by July 2015 and a level 4 by July 2019. Also requires ECEAP programs to institute a Working Connections Child Care program and maintain an optional full workday program by July 2017.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Wisconsin

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Increase child care subsidy payment rates, improve continuity of care, and pay based on enrollment.
- Show progress in YoungStar (state QRIS) to increase quality early learning for children.
- Continue to build a statewide system for early learning and development.
- Improve professional development possibilities, for early learning and improving children's physical activity and nutrition.
- Move toward sustainable public-private partnerships for early childhood.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Develop improved messaging to frame birth to eight issues.
- Demonstrate the need for sustainable financing for high quality early learning, using cost modeling data.
- Work with a broad-based work group to develop infant-toddler policy recommendations.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The biennial budget was finalized in June 2013 and mostly minor adjustments to the budget were made. The next budget will be under consideration in the first half of 2015.



\$20 million approved by the Joint Finance Committee for a proposal by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to increase child care subsidy rates using unspent funds.



Bills to increase children's access to mental health services passed with strong bipartisan support.

POLICY UPDATES



The legislature unanimously passed a resolution that policy decisions enacted by the state legislature will acknowledge and take into account the principles of early childhood brain development.



The Legislative Council Symposia was created to promote healthy brain development, with an emphasis on addressing toxic stress in children birth to three.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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