



STATE POLICY UPDATE AS OF NOVEMBER 2013

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



Overview: This update asked states to look forward to the upcoming 2014 state legislative session and share their policy priorities, political challenges and opportunities. Also included in each state summary are some of the key legislative and policy outcomes reported in the July 2013 update to provide additional context.

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.

Table of Contents

Arizona	3
California.....	5
Colorado	7
Florida.....	9
Georgia	11
Illinois.....	13
Kansas.....	15
Louisiana	17
Maine.....	19
Michigan.....	21
Mississippi.....	23
Nebraska	24
New Mexico	26
Oklahoma	27
Oregon	29
Washington.....	31
Wisconsin	33

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.
- Evolution of child care subsidies to be tied to early literacy.
- Brief gubernatorial candidates on early childhood issues.
- BUILD Arizona initiative to expand access to preschool, full-day Kindergarten, and home visiting.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The FY 2014 Arizona budget includes increased funding for Child Protective Services (CPS) staffing and Children Support Services. These include:

- \$12.9 million increase to hire 150 child protective caseworkers and related staff.
- \$4 million increase of the \$10 million proposed for Children Support Services for children in CPS.
- \$9 million increase for Child Care to fund the increase in child care needed for children in the Child Protective Services system.



\$1 million for Grandparents Stipend that establishes a \$75 monthly stipend for qualified grandparents raising their grandchildren.



\$5 million for Intensive Family Services – creates a new line item for services to help parents keep children safely at home.



\$5.4 million for the Education Learning and Accountability System.

POLICY UPDATES



HB 2425 English Language Learners Task Force Replacement authorizes the State Board of Education to replace the English and Math AIMS with an improved performance assessment aligned with the Arizona Common Core Standards.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system.
- Implementing a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Restoration of general fund match to child care subsidy.
- Implementing policy so that a higher percentage of children attend preschool.
- Promoting a public will that considers early education as part of the education continuum.

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California

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- State budget advocacy with a focus on reinvestment in early childhood education, which has lost more than \$1 billion and 110,000 seats since 2008.
- Increase the frequency of state licensing inspections from every five years to annually.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Create strategic messaging for budget season to advocate for ECE, reinvestment, and quality.
- Strategize the policy mechanism to increase the frequency of licensing inspections.
- Closely monitor and activate advocates around the positive developments for ECE at the federal level.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

Early Childhood Education received a small down payment to restore funds lost in previous years:

-  \$25 million increase for the state preschool to increase the number of children served.
-  \$10 million in unspent child care funds redirected to expand non-CalWORKs child care.
-  \$15.8 million to backfill federal sequester cuts that would have eliminated slots for thousands of children in child care.
-  The budget also included the new Local Control Funding Formula, which allows local districts control over how their funds are spent for K-12. This is significant to ECE because it allows districts to utilize their discretionary funding for ECE services.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **CA Comprehensive Early Learning Plan:** the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care approved the plan and it can be accessed: <http://glenpricegroup.com/ccelp/>.
-  **QRIS:** California's 17 regional leadership consortia are hard at work on QRIS implementation as a part of the RTT-ELC grant.
- Child Care bills that passed included:**
 - AB 260: Continues San Mateo and San Francisco County's individualized count child care subsidy plans as pilot projects.
 -  • AB 274: Makes several changes to the Child Care and Development Services Act (CCDSA) as it pertains to the Alternate Payment Program (APP) for greater efficiencies. AAP is the child care program for families receiving CalWORKs cash aid.
 - AB 290: Requires training in childhood nutrition for providers.
-  ACR 45: Urges the legislature and Governor to restore budget funds to ECE programs and to support efforts to fund and implement a QRIS.
-  AJR 16: Urges Congress to enact President Obama's proposal to increase funding for ECE.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding early childhood education through the new K-12 funding mechanism, the Local Control Funding Formula. The Local Control Funding Formula included in the state budget is a new, streamlined school funding system that will direct more funds to high needs students – those in lower-income households, English learners and students in foster care – and give educators, parents and community members a greater voice in how resources are invested locally. In addition to changing how schools are funded and who gets to decide, LCFF also ensures that a holistic set of student outcomes are used to hold schools accountable.
- President Obama’s proposal and the exciting movement on the federal front.
- The improving fiscal climate in CA.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Achieving re-investment in ECE programs, particularly infant-toddler care. The administration continues to present challenges to achieving reinvestment.
- Maintaining/increasing funding for other programs that support young children and their families, such as Early Start (California’s early intervention program).
- Changes in legislative leadership have the potential to prove challenging, and will require additional outreach and education.

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Colorado

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Support programs for infants/toddlers and their caregivers by maintaining or increasing funding through the Infant and Toddler Quality and Availability Grant Program within CDHS.
- Support the passage of Amendment 66, which is a ballot measure that would raise revenue to implement K-12 reforms, and expand the Colorado Preschool Program.
- Support a proposal, which would allow eligible school districts to obtain a quality rating and quality improvement grants. It would also institute tiered reimbursement for quality settings.
- Promote the implementation of the statewide school readiness assessment.
- Advocate for high quality standards in licensing to include ECERS Level III and health and nutrition, and eligibility alignment of Head Start and CO Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP).
- Facilitate statewide consistency of local CCCAP policies across income eligibility, eligible activities, and provider reimbursement.
- Convene the CCCAP Collaborative, which is a stakeholder engagement process dedicated to improving child care assistance by exploring: Quality Access, Technology & Infrastructure, Affordability & Co-Pays, Eligibility & Authorization Procedures, and Payment Policies.
- Advocate for the CCCAP Enhancement Program to pilot a program to mitigate the “cliff effect;” expand access to subsidies; and ensure that new dollars are used for quality improvement.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Inform the design of a tiered QRIS and advocate for elevating the importance of the learning environment. The new system is slated to roll-out in July 2014.
- Support legislation that would appropriate state dollars to support TEACH.
- Support legislation that would link the student identifier assigned in a publicly funded preschool program to the identifier assigned at kindergarten.
- Support legislation that would “fix” the child care tax credit to allow for an individual with a federal adjusted gross income of \$25,000 or less to benefit. The amount of the state credit is equal to 25% of the child care expenses an individual incurs with a maximum amount of \$500 for a single dependent or \$1,000 for two or more dependents and is refundable.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  \$800,000 increase in the Nurse Home Visitor Program to expand direct services to six additional counties in northeast Colorado.
-  \$4.5 million increase in Early Intervention Colorado.
-  Approximately \$10 million increase to support the addition of 3,200 Colorado Preschool Program slots through SB13-260.

PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  Amendment 66: The November ballot initiative could raise nearly \$1 billion to implement education reforms pursuant to SB13-213. \$47 million would expand Colorado Preschool

Program to 25,500 children, and \$105 million would expand full-day K to 46,000 students

POLICY UPDATES



Governance: HB13-1117, “The Alignment of Early Childhood Programs,” was signed into law in May 2013 and moves the Nurse Home Visitor Program, the Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program, the Colorado Children’s Trust Fund, and the Family Resource Center program to CDHS. It also reauthorizes the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) for another 5 years.



Infant and Toddlers: HB13-1291 creates the Infant and Toddler Quality and Availability Grant Program with \$3 million for local early childhood councils and county depts. of human services to increase the quality and availability of programs serving infants and toddlers through CCCAP.



Preschool Funding: SB13-260 included \$10 million to increase enrollment in the Colorado Preschool Program by 3,200 slots through the state’s 2013-2014 School Finance Act. Districts can choose to create full day preschool, or add a half of the day to support at-risk kindergarteners.



Child Care licensing: HB13-1084, requires that a previously licensed child care entity that is issued a new FEIN be treated as a when the new FEIN is solely due to a change in corporate structure; the management or governing body of the entity remains the same as originally licensed; and the facilities are the same as those originally licensed. The bill requires only newly-hired employees undergo background checks.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Interest among two interim legislative committees (the Economic Opportunity and Poverty Reduction Task Force and the Early Childhood and School Readiness Legislative Commission) to explore how to improve CCCAP for counties, the state, providers, and families.
- The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (the Advisory Council) was reauthorized and will play an integral role in supporting the Office of Early Childhood and advancing the alignment of programs.
- Pending the outcome of Amendment 66, supporting the expansion of the Colorado Preschool Program that maintains a mixed delivery system and full-day Kindergarten.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- The state is entering into an election year in 2014 and a recall effort is underway for one of Colorado’s strongest early childhood champions in the legislature.
- The deep commitment to local control presents challenges to develop greater statewide consistency in policies and implementation.
- Flood recovery remains a top priority, creating tension over the budget next year.

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Florida

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Amend the state's early learning statute to:
 - Include explicit standards for the health, safety and well-being of children in all publicly-funded School Readiness and voluntary Prekindergarten programs.
 - Establish benchmarks for quality and education based performance standards for early learning and school age care.
- Increase funding for the School Readiness program (Florida's child care subsidy) to reduce the wait list, which is currently close to 70,000, and implement quality improvements.
- Increase base student allocation for the voluntary prekindergarten program to at least \$3,000 per child to improve program quality.
- Expand eligibility for Florida KidCare, the state's children's health insurance program, which would include 1) removing the five year wait for children of lawfully residing immigrants and 2) extending presumptive eligibility to uninsured children applying for KidCare.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Review accreditation standards and processes for potential alignment and integration with developing state quality benchmarks and/or a statewide QRIS.
- Universal developmental screenings and assessments; adequate funding for Early Steps (early intervention Part C) program.
- Statewide information system (via phone and website) on child development.
- Statewide QRIS – how to take local QRIS systems to scale for statewide implementation (this is an aspirational goal, for future development, not a political reality for 2014).

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

- ⊕ \$5.1 million increase to the School Readiness Program (subsidized child care).
- ⊕ \$3 million increase in Early Steps (Early Intervention Part C) program to address growing need for autism-related screening and services.

PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊕ \$50 million increase in School Readiness funding to address 60,000+ waitlist for child care subsidies and quality improvements to be included in 2014 Early Learning Bill.
- ⊕ Increase the per-child allocation for Voluntary Prekindergarten program from the current level of \$2,383 per child per year to \$3,000 per child.

POLICY UPDATES

- Ⓟ **Comprehensive Early Learning Bill:** The 2013 Florida legislative session resulted in passage of 'Part 1' of a comprehensive early learning bill (HB7165) that clarifies governance of the state Office of Early Learning, as well as the roles and responsibilities

of local early learning coalitions and child care providers. Specifically, HB7165:

- Establishes the Office of Early Learning within the Department of Education's 'Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice.'
- Requires the Office of Early Learning to adopt a list of approved curricula; identify a pre- and post-assessment; and adopt a statewide, standardized contract with each School Readiness program (subsidized child care) provider.
- Revises the market rate schedule.
- Revises the eligibility criteria and priorities for enrollment.
- Places a 22% cap on School Readiness (subsidized child care) expenditures for any combination of administrative costs, non-direct services, and quality activities per fiscal year.
- Requires private providers to maintain a minimum level of general liability insurance.
- Includes provisions for fraud investigations and penalties.
- Requires the Early Learning Advisory Council to periodically analyze and provide recommendations regarding the School Readiness program to the Office of Early Learning.
- Authorizes after-school programs that are otherwise excluded from licensure to provide snacks and meals through the federally funded After School Meals Program (AMP).

Note: For 2014 legislative session, it is anticipated that an early learning bill ('Part 2') will be developed.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Tremendous support and momentum for early learning quality and systems improvements from the House Education Committee and Education Appropriations Committee Chairs.
- Election season: once again, we can use election season momentum to get on candidates' radar.
- Much more unity among early learning advocates, even though there are still some significant differences (see second item below).

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Many state legislators still do not understand the issues.
- Advocacy: grassroots support for early learning is fragmented; there are ongoing conflicts between early learning and afterschool advocates and between supporters and opponents of statewide QRIS; and there is still not enough support from the business community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Georgia

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Identify and secure private funds for Quality Rated (QRIS) provider incentives.
- Increase Georgia CAPS (childcare subsidy) rates.
- Increase/provide additional funding for Georgia Pre-K.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Support Georgia's new QRIS, Quality Rated, by managing a statewide public awareness campaign utilizing paid and earned media opportunities, social media platforms, and public speaking events.
- Convene roundtables of business leaders and philanthropists to promote new advocates for and investments in early education.
- Support research based initiatives including home visiting and early screening and assessment tools to promote better outcomes for children ages birth to five.
- Build support for new federal investments in early education.
- Serve as the liaison between the state of Georgia and Harvard's Center on the Developing Child as we work to develop a charter so that Georgia will become the second Frontier of Innovation state in the U.S.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



Funding to restore the remaining 10 of 20 school days that were removed from the GA PreK program year in 2011. Ten days were reinstated last year, and 10 more were reinstated to the 2014 GA Pre-k school year in the state's budget passed in 2013. This reinstatement will restore the program year back to 180 days.

POLICY UPDATES



Child Care: HB354- Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) bill "cleans up" language in the agency's existing administrative code and makes other substantive changes, which include stating that the total number of unrelated children cared for in a Family Day Care Home (for pay and not for pay) may not exceed six children under 13 years of age at one time. The bill also renames "day care centers" as "child care learning centers," and sets parameters for licensed early care and learning programs to carry liability insurance coverage sufficient to protect clients.



Tiered Reimbursement: a tiered reimbursement rate structure was established for the state child care QRIS, Quality Rated, and took effect on July 1, 2013. Tiered Reimbursement rates are awarded to programs that have earned 1, 2, or 3 stars through Quality Rated and provide child care for families that participate in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program.



Background checks: HB350 requires national background checks on all employees working in any licensed childcare facility. Existing centers have four years to get in compliance, but the rule goes into effect for new centers next year. The check must be

done every five years if the worker is continually employed with a center. See proposed rule changes related to this statute below



Matching Funds: HB487 transfers control and enforcement of video poker machines to the Georgia Lottery and requires a share of the profits from video poker machines to fund HOPE and Georgia Pre-K.



Licensing: DECAL has proposed to amend the rules that govern Child Care Learning Centers, Group Day Care Homes and Family Day Care Homes to reflect recent changes in Georgia law (see HB3560 above). The proposed rule changes require more stringent criminal background and finger printing check protocols for every “actual and potential Director and Employee” of these types of facilities. In addition the rules proposals also establish more stringent staff and director training requirements on a variety of health and safety considerations.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Business leader engagement and attention to the issue as result of the Ready Nation Summit.
- Upcoming elections provide the opportunity to educate candidates.
- Governor embraces both Quality Rated and the third grade level reading goal.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Ensuring access to the highest quality for the most at-risk children in the rollout of Quality Rated
- 2014 is an election year. The governor will be running for re-election and has two challengers within his own party. U.S. Senator Chambliss is retiring and there is a large field of candidates running for his seat.
- Keeping early education non-partisan even though it has been embraced by the President.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Illinois

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Protect early childhood funding in the FY15 and fight for restoration of previous cuts.
- Fight for stable, adequate funding for early childhood, including through involvement in discussions on addressing Illinois' revenue situation.
- Participate in the launch of "ExceleRate" (Illinois' quality rating and improvement system) 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.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



In the final FY14 state budget, the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), home visiting, and bilingual education were flat funded even though the State Board of Education proposed a \$40 million increase for the ECBG.



\$7.9 million increase out of the \$9 million proposed for the Child Care Assistance Program.



\$2.8 million increase out of the \$7.8 million proposed for Early Intervention (Part C).

POLICY UPDATES



Teacher License & Endorsements: There are new rules drafted for Illinois' early childhood teacher licenses and endorsements to reflect a stronger early childhood focus—the Early Childhood Endorsement includes teachers working with children from birth through second grade, and the Elementary Endorsement includes teachers working in first grade through sixth grade. This means that kindergartners will exclusively be in classrooms taught based on early learning pedagogy, and teachers in K-2 will continue to have a background in early childhood development.



Special Education: Successfully helped delay implementation of new special education rules which would have removed any requirements of school districts with regard to class size or ratio of teachers to special needs students in a regular classroom. The removal of these provisions would have significantly impacted early childhood classrooms. State Board of Education has delayed any further vote on this proposal at this time.



Child Care Co-Payments: The state announced a reduction in co-payments for child care assistance in three phases starting January 2014.



Early Learning Guidelines: Roll out of cross-system trainings on birth to five Early Learning Guidelines and Standards.



Child Care Standards: Early Learning Council adopted obesity prevention standards for child care and proposed a rule change.



Perinatal Depression Screening: Awaiting publication of rules for public comment regarding perinatal depression screening by medical providers.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Gubernatorial elections are an opportunity to ensure political support for early childhood.
- Capitalize on proposed changes and support at federal level in child care and President's proposal.
- Have bipartisan support in the state legislature for early childhood and mobilized new champions for early childhood in some of the new members of the legislature.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Expiration of the temporary income tax increase in January 2015, which will have a budgetary impact of \$4 billion annually.
- Gubernatorial election year.
- Lack of pension reform, so pension payments are competing for general revenue funds that could otherwise support education and human services.

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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). At a time when 1 in 4 young Kansas children live in poverty the loss of the EITC would be a step in the wrong direction.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Funding for Early Childhood Programs. For the first time in over half a century lawmakers passed a two-year budget in 2013. However, it is unclear to what extent lawmakers will revisit funding issues in 2014. It is anticipated that the state will receive \$17.3 million in additional tobacco dollars from a recent arbitration agreement that should be used for children’s programs. Kansas Action for Children will release a report at the end of the year regarding the impact of the arbitration agreement and actions to divert tobacco dollars from children’s programs.
- Literacy Initiative. Kansas Action for Children and the Kansas Coalition for School Readiness hosted a summit on literacy in September. The goal was to bring advocates and practitioners together to discuss the status and potential for increasing the number of children reading at grade level by third grade. Keynote speaker Susan B. Neuman and a number of other experts informed the discussion. This work continues with a working group to create a menu of policy options for improving early literacy in Kansas.
- Regional Field Organizers. Early childhood advocates in Kansas are introducing a new model for grassroots advocacy that relies on regional field organizers and their relationships with other influential individuals, businesses, and organizations in key regions of the state.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The State adopted a two-year budget. Although assurances have been made that there will be a supplemental budget bill next year, there will be much less of an opportunity for lawmakers to address unanticipated budgetary needs.



The Governor set aside \$7 million from the CIF for a literacy program. After the legislative process this amount was earmarked for a software program to improve literacy, creating a challenge to redirect this funding to a more comprehensive, effective program to improve early literacy outcomes.



Maintained \$55 million in funding for early childhood financed through the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) for each year in the biennium budget.

PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



The administration has discussed a significant investment in afterschool literacy using TANF funds made available by administrative changes limiting access to traditional TANF assistance.

POLICY UPDATES

- P** **Child Care:** Child care assistance work requirement increased to 28 hours per week.
- P** **TANF:** Amount of time mothers receiving TANF are required to seek employment was reduced from six months to two months.
- P** **Tax Policy:** 2013 tax policy changes resulted in a sales tax increase which is regressive and disproportionately impacts lower-income families.
- P** **Targeted Communities Strategy:** The Kansas Children's Cabinet, charged with oversight of the CIF, shifted the focus from statewide to nine targeted communities. This creates a battle to maintain funding for current programs that are proven to be successful for at-risk young children, but fall outside of the targeted communities.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The anticipated receipt of an additional \$17.3 million in Tobacco Master Settlement Disputed Payment Funds provides an opportunity to enhance the state's early childhood infrastructure. These dollars are currently designated for children's programs, although there is a real threat that the money will be diverted to fill holes in the budget.
- Kansas is fortunate to have a number of strong business voices for early childhood programs and investments, which are vital for success in the current political environment.
- The administration brought attention to the issue of grade-level reading with unsuccessful legislation during the 2013 Legislative Session. This focus continues with the State Board of Education expressing their support for improving literacy outcomes and advocates working toward meaningful policy change in this area.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Both houses of the Legislature and the governor's office are controlled by elected officials with a conservative, small government political philosophy. While these officials have not been antagonistic to early childhood specifically, they oppose government investments in general, creating funding difficulties for early childhood programs.
- The state agency charged with overseeing Child Care Assistance and Early Head Start along with a number of other programs for low income families has made a number of administrative changes in recent years that have made it difficult.
- Recent tax reductions have placed a great deal of pressure on the state budget, which results in pitting of one sector of public programs against another for limited resources. It also creates an environment where elected officials are always looking for sources of money for pet projects making the Children's Initiative Fund, the source of funding for early childhood programs, a target.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Louisiana

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Monitor implementation of Act 3 from the 2012 Louisiana Legislative Session, the Early Childhood Education Act. Under this Act, by the 2015-2016 school year, 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.” Thirteen pilots of the new system are in progress.
- Advocacy Campaign to impact the Act 3 Implementation Plan:
 - Increase 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 in blocks in 2014 to facilitate an adequate supply of high quality care.
 - Adopt a formal governance structure for the new local networks called for in the Act 3 implementation plan that ensures child care and other stakeholders have a say in decision-making at the local level.
- As capacity allows, respond to the draft of new child care licensing regulations due in November 2013, to ensure that the proposed regulations protect the health, safety, and quality of care for young children. Child Care Aware currently rates the state 49th in these areas.

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 new fiscal year, and previous use of one-time funds shifted to TANF.
-  School Readiness Tax Credits were preserved, which serve as the state match and maintenance of effort for the Child Care Development Fund Block Grant.
-  The Early Childhood Supports and Services program - a mental health prevention and intervention program for children from birth to age five - was eliminated, reducing early childhood investment by \$6.3 million.
-  \$408 million decrease was made to health care for children 0-5, a 49% reduction.

POLICY UPDATES

-  The State Superintendent has proposed an updated Implementation Plan for the Early Childhood Education Act that includes the following:

- Creation of Local Networks that will allocate publicly funded seats;
- Creation of a “Report Card” for early childhood education providers;
- Creation of incentives for teachers in 2015-16; and
- Roll out of pilots to achieve full implementation in 2015.

P **Early Learning Standards:** New Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards, aligned with the Common Core standards, were adopted by the Board of Education.

P **Assessment Pilot:** The State Board of Education voted to pilot new assessments—CLASS and Teaching Strategies GOLD—before launching a new rating system statewide.

P **Child Assessment:** The Early Childhood Education Act of 2012 called for the use of a child assessment as the basis of the new rating system. The State Board of Education added the requirement that any child assessment used in the new rating system must be developmentally appropriate, inform instruction, interactions, activities and routines, and communicate child progress to parents. Teaching Strategies GOLD is being used in the pilots.

P **Program Assessment:** The State Board of Education added the requirement that a research-based program assessment will be part of the new rating system. CLASS is being used in the pilots.

P **Child Care Licenses:** Act 179 of the 2013 Legislative Session creates three levels of child care licenses: Type I corresponds to current Class B centers and limits this type of center in the future only to church and religious organizations; Type II corresponds to current Class A centers; and Type III, a new class, is for centers that take public funds, including Head Start/Early Head Start, PreK, and child care assistance. Type III centers will be required to participate in the new rating system. The Act also calls for the current child care regulations to be rewritten in 2013.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Transfer of the CCDF Block Grant from the Department of Children and Family Services to the Department of Education provides an opportunity to change the way child care assistance is used and the services and supports it pays for.
- Focus on the Act 3 Early Childhood Education Act to reform LA’s early childhood care and education system provides an opportunity to educate policy makers on early learning from birth to five
- Increasing independence of the Legislature as the Governor’s term advances.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Mandate in the Early Childhood Education Act of 2012 to revamp the early childhood education system statewide by 2015 without the appropriation of additional funding.
- Educating policy makers about how recommended changes to benefit 4-year-olds in Louisiana may exacerbate the existing precarious situation for at-risk children under age 4.
- Developing champions for children from birth through age four in the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the business community.

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Maine

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Education and outreach to assure that a legislative preschool initiative is integrated with community providers and that quality care for younger children is improved in the process.
- Promote Educare as a statewide model and policy platform.
- Restore funding to state funded Early Head Start and Head Start.
- Provide information for policy makers regarding benefits of home visiting and public health nursing and prevent further cuts to programs.
- Continue to monitor parents' access to the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Education and outreach on benefits of preschool initiative to inform candidates for public office, particularly gubernatorial race.
- Monitor possible changes to school funding formula regarding impacts to low-income children and preschool programs.
- Promotion of parent engagement to improve academic and social outcomes for children during preschool through grade three.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



Home Visiting reduced by \$1.5 million during 2013 legislative session.



Biennial budget passed in 2013 restored \$1.3 million for state-funded Head Start in SFY 2014 also to be used to draw down \$2.6 million in CCDF match for child care. The Governor vetoed the budget, but that action was overridden by a 2/3 vote of the Maine House and Senate - one of only a handful of vetoes overturned by the Legislature.

PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



The Governor's Office of Policy and Management submitted a proposal to the Appropriations Committee of the Maine Legislature on October 1, which would cut millions of dollars from children's programming, such as:

- The proposal would cut \$448,875 from state-funded Head Start.
- The report recommends "consolidation and alignment" of Public Health Nursing and the Families Home Visiting program, which will result in a cut of \$500,000.
- The Maine Immunization Program is targeted for a cut of \$1 million.
- Approximately one third of the cuts in the proposal are focused on education. The administration recommends cuts of \$9.6 million to public schools in FY-15.

POLICY UPDATES



Assessment: Maine is partnering with nine other states in a consortium as part of North Carolina's \$6.1 million grant from U.S. Department of Education for Enhanced Assessment Grants (EAGs). The consortium's funds will be used to enhance the Kindergarten portion of a K-3 formative assessment system.



Training: Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is adopting the “Triple P” (Positive Parenting Program) across all child related sectors of DHHS to prevent ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences).



Child Care Auditing: DHHS seeking to disqualify parents and their children from CCDF for program violations without first proving the violation was intentional in the proposed state plan. It is also proposing sweeping and frequent auditing.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Maine’s Children’s Alliance (MCA) will join with partner organizations in support of a restoration and increase of state funding for Head Start by advocating in favor of LR 2612, “Act to Preserve Head Start and Child Care Services,” sponsored by Rep. Adam Frey.
- MCA will continue to advocate for LD 1530, “Act to Establish a Process for the Implementation of Universal Voluntary Prekindergarten Education,” legislation that was held over from the previous session to expand preschool in Maine.
- Use upcoming gubernatorial and legislative races as an opportunity to inform candidates and policy makers of value of early childhood investment.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- A recent report by the Governor’s Office of Policy and Management recommends new cuts to Head Start in the FY 2015 budget.
- Recommendations in the above mentioned report that will “consolidate” functions of home visiting and public health nursing programs with cuts of \$500,000.
- Continuation of federal sequester and its impact on Head Start in Maine.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Michigan

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Help assure successful implementation of the \$65 million expansion of our public preschool program, the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP).
- Secure additional GSRP funding of \$65 million in the state's FY15 budget, bringing total GSRP investment for FY15 to \$239 million, more than doubling the FY13 appropriation.
- Build a policy proposal for greater investment in evidence-based initiatives for children birth to three.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- In fall, winter, and spring, CFM will facilitate meetings with the CLCM, other business leaders, top-level administration officials in the governor's office, the Michigan Department of Education/Office of Great Start (MDE/OGS), and key legislators. At these meetings, there will be a push for meaningful increases in early childhood investment.
- In the next grant year, work will continue between the Center for Michigan, CLCM, grant partners and other advocacy groups to (a) identify initiatives that meet the needs of our youngest children and their families and have demonstrable value; (b) work toward a specific, actionable birth to three policy proposal that lays out evidence-based programs, the Michigan children served and not served by those programs, and the value serving more children will bring to the state; and (c) prepare additional materials, such as FAQs and opinion editorials, as necessary to frame and advance early childhood policy.
- All stakeholders understand that any future growth in early childhood investment depends on the successful implementation of the GSRP expansion. To this end, the CFM and CLCM will work closely with OGS to identify and carry out outreach and communications with key audiences to foster growth in the number of GSRP classrooms and raise parent awareness of public preschool opportunities.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The final budget included Governor Snyder's recommendation to increase funding for GSRP by \$65 million for a total of \$174 million, with an increase in the slot amount from \$3,400 to \$3,625 per child, creating an additional 16,000 half-day slots.

POLICY UPDATES



Preschool: There were several policy changes with the increased GSRP funding:

- Requires that at least 90 percent of participating children are living in households with incomes at 250 percent FPL or below.
- Requires that the children living with families whose income is in the poorest quintile are served first, then those in the next lowest quintile, and so on.
- Allows up to seven percent of the grant amount to be used for administrative services and up to two percent for recruiting and public awareness
- Requires GSRP sites to participate in Great Start to Quality and have a minimum of

- a three-star quality rating.
- Requires grant recipients to use a sliding scale of tuition rates, approved by the Michigan Department of Education, based on household income for families above 250 percent FPL.
- Requires all GSRP/Head Start blended programs to adhere to Head Start and GSRP policies and regulations, with adherence to the highest standard.
- Requires intermediate school districts (ISDs) or a consortium of ISDs to contract at least 30 percent of its total slot allocation with interested and eligible public and private community-based providers.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Our governor is truly committed to wise early childhood investment. He gets it and he has already called for another \$65 million increase in funding for GSRP.
- Our legislative champions are equally committed and see early childhood investment as part of their legacy.
- The Office of Great Start in the Michigan Department of Education, business leaders, and traditional advocates are well coordinated and in agreement on messaging.
- Business leader advocacy was essential to GSRP expansion. The Children's Leadership Council of Michigan (CLCM) will confirm these leaders' support for additional GSRP investment in the new grant year and enlist their support in writing and in meetings with elected officials to press the case.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- In an election year, the legislature is unlikely to increase investment in any existing or new programs, and lawmakers will want to know if the expansion of our public preschool program has worked before we can show them that it has worked.
- Four of our five biggest legislative champions will be in their last year in the legislature and their lame-duck status may hamper our advocacy efforts.
- We benefitted last year when other big issues (Medicaid expansion and funding for roads and bridges) kept our \$65 million expansion out of the limelight. The governor is likely to propose few big ticket items in his FY15 budget and so the further expansion of public preschool will be a highly visible target to opponents.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Mississippi

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Secure additional funding for Early Learning Collaborative Act.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Develop/cultivate new voices in the child care community around the importance of investment in early years
- Cultivate additional legislative champions to increase state investment in young children
- Develop a communication infrastructure to educate, amplify and unify voices interested in investing additional resources in young children.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



\$3 million for Mississippi Building Blocks.



\$3 million for first time state-funded Prekindergarten.

POLICY UPDATES



Kindergarten Compulsory Attendance: HB 1530 and SB 2347 require compulsory attendance for children enrolled in kindergarten.



Prekindergarten program: SB 2395 directs the Department of Education to implement a state pre-kindergarten program in phases. The bill also codifies the state's early childhood advisory committee.



Third grade reading/end social promotion bill: SB 2347 establishes a program of intensive reading intervention in kindergarten through third grade. Any child who cannot read above the lowest achievement level (in other words, read at "Basic" or above) must repeat third grade and be given additional assistance and intensive tutoring. The law also prohibits social promotion at every grade level.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Continued focus on education reform by political leadership.
- Large number of communities expressing an interest in applying for the Early Learning Collaborative.
- Revenue collections above projections.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Competing demands for state dollars.
- Amplifying the voice of advocates and providers who support investments in young children.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Nebraska

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 DRAFT Agenda

- Advocate required initial licensing visits, which would include a health and safety inspection, for Family Child Care Home I providers prior to licensure.
- Work with the Legislature’s Education Committee to:
 - Adjust the calculation for Nebraska Department of Education (DOE) preschool grants;
 - Explore increasing the weight of early childhood in the school funding formula;
 - Give schools with early childhood programs greater flexibility with the various funding sources they receive (i.e., relax/align regulations so funding can be blended/braided);
 - Integrate data, especially across publicly funded programs, for better decision making;
 - Set aside one time funding to incentivize school districts to build high quality early childhood facilities, or remodel facilities they already have as DOE grant funds cannot be used for this purpose.
- Revise the approval process for child care licensing trainings.
- Work with the DOE and the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of QRIS, which was passed during the 2013 legislative session.
- Work with the Sixpence Board of Trustees and public-private partners to ensure the new funding, allocated in 2013, is distributed across the state and monitor the evaluation for effective communication back to state legislators.
- Work closely with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI) and the DOE on early childhood workforce issues that are emerging as a result of teacher certification/endorsement requirements.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Explore the creation of a private “Investment Council.”
- Explore options for Education Innovation funding, a lottery, for early childhood. New funding priorities to be identified by 2016.
- Under consideration is a strategy to further engage public school superintendents in early childhood and the birth to eight continuum through regional meetings across the state leading up to a statewide conference on why and how they can play a significant role in providing quality early learning opportunities in their school district.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  \$11 million increase over three years for high quality services for infants and toddlers and their families through the Sixpence Early Childhood Endowment.
-  Five step QRIS legislation passed and funded. Includes provider incentives beginning at step 2 and tiered reimbursement beginning at step 3.
-  \$500,000 increase over two years in home visitation funding.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **QRIS:** Providers who accept subsidized child care funds of \$500,000 or more annually

are required to participate in the QRIS in 2014 and thereafter. Providers who accept subsidized child care funds of \$250,000 or more are required to participate in the QRIS in 2015 and thereafter. Other early childhood providers may participate voluntarily.

- P** **Child Care Eligibility:** Child care subsidy income eligibility was increased from 120% FPL to 125% (2013) and 130% (2014).
- P** **Background Checks:** Basic requirements for licensed child care were updated administratively. Among the updates, any person with a criminal history of child abuse, kidnapping, and other child-related or violent crimes is prohibited from operating or working in a child care program.
- P** **Revenue Option:** One and a half-cent of the two cent tax levy for learning communities can be used for early childhood programs.
- P** **Literacy Pilot:** Pilot program for parent education and early literacy development was established for incarcerated parents transitioning back home.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Positive momentum regarding early childhood continues to increase among policymakers, business leaders, the general public, and the media.
- Utilizing the expertise and credibility of Sam Meisels, Founding Executive Director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- Increasing coordination efforts with Fight Crime Invest in Kids and Mission Readiness members with Nebraska's Early Childhood Business Roundtable.
- Engaging a newly-formed network of superintendents interested and committed to early childhood, and connecting them to policy makers; as well as, working more closely with trade associations representing public school memberships, such as the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.
- Working closely with the Legislature's Planning Committee, Education Committee, Health and Human Services Committee, and Appropriations Committee to continue momentum and interest in investing.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- This is the final year for Governor Heinemann after an unprecedented 10 year tenure in office.
- Four state senators are running for Governor and another senator is running for State Auditor.
- 2014 is Nebraska's "short" legislative session lasting only 60 days. Two major issues are expected to take a majority of the time: tax reform and proposals to change the school aid funding formula.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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New Mexico

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 DRAFT Agenda

- Support the Legislative Finance Committee(LFC) in its commitment to a significant increase in general fund dollars allotted for early childhood services.
- Support efforts to make full-day prekindergarten a reality.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Track and participate in the implementation of the Home Visiting Accountability Act.
- Analyze child care policy and practice and facilitate consensus building leading to child care legislation for the 2015 session.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  General fund increase of \$22 million, which includes \$2.2 million for home visiting, \$10.8 million for NM PreK, and \$9 million for child care.
-  One year appropriation of \$9.75 million in tobacco settlement funds for early childhood with \$2 million for home visiting, \$2 million for child care, and \$5.75 million for Pre-K.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Home Visiting:** Passed the Home Visiting Accountability Act in the 2013 legislative session, which creates a framework for “standards-based” home visiting, ensuring a level of quality and consistency in home visiting programs around the State. It ensures a level of accountability for reporting, sharing outcomes, and understanding the State’s return on investment. It uses data to drive decision-making: by requiring that programs report their data and analyzing it in a uniform way.
-  **Procurement:** SB247 Procurement Procedures will allow the Children Youth and Family Dept. to use the same Pre-K application process as the Public Education Dept. Community-based applications will still be competitive but will involve a 13 page application instead of a 100-150 page proposal.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The continued increase in the commitment to high-quality early childhood on the part of the LFC.
- Growing opportunity to involve business leaders in advocacy for early childhood care and education.
- The state recognized as a national leader due to the 44% increase in funding for early childhood services in 2013, and the passage of a “standards-based” Home Visiting Accountability Act.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Lack of consensus on financing strategies.
- Lack of consensus among child care providers regarding effective child care policy.
- Need for a non-partisan support for quality early childhood care and education.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Oklahoma

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Support home visitation legislation to require a specified 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.

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 family participation in early childhood policy discussions, and enhance family participation and voice in the development of early childhood policies and procedures.
- Implement a pilot early literacy assessment that informs teachers' instruction to improve literacy outcomes.
- Begin using cost modeling to determine the costs and impacts of policy options to improve early care and education programming.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  Increase to Department of Education to enhance the student data system, which will include connecting early childhood with education data.
-  \$44 million increase to enhance the Child Welfare and Developmental Disabilities Systems, which will include support for the developmental needs of children birth to five.

PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  Rate increases for child care were proposed but did not occur.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Child Care Licensing:** Child care licensing revisions have been approved by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and will move forward for legislative approval next legislative session.
-  **Early Childhood Advisory Council:** HB 1699 passed, and will re-create the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board.
-  **Home Visiting:** Pending legislation to address home visitation.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Increased collaboration within the broader early childhood system and specifically with home visitation programs and the child welfare system.
- The Reading Sufficiency Act is in full effect, requiring that students be above the unsatisfactory level on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (if not, intensive remediation that can include grade retention will occur); this provides an opportunity to heighten the awareness of the importance of early literacy and quality early childhood experiences.
- New leadership at DHS is supportive of the importance of the early years to children's development.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- An increase in subsidy reimbursement rates has not occurred since 2009. This much needed increase has not been approved in past legislative sessions; the need has become critical to support the infrastructure of the child care industry.
- Connection of existing early childhood data is needed to inform decision-making on early childhood issues, but there is ongoing concern about privacy and protection of data.
- Education reform has resulted in increased testing mandates for public schools; some legislators are expressing concern with the number of tests being required. Implementation of new assessment tools in early childhood programs may be a challenge.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Oregon

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Create a flexible funding stream for the 2015 legislative session that supports a high quality mixed delivery preschool system in which school districts, schools, Head Start programs, high quality child care centers and other community-based providers are all eligible participants.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Connecting early childhood education to health policy.
- Connecting health to early childhood practice through our demonstration project, Early Works.
- Expand and deepen connections with rural communities to develop strategies and policies that specifically address the impact of poverty on school readiness and access to health care.
- Ensuring lessons learned through Early Works has statewide policy implications.
- Create a common preschool framework aligned with K-3 and develop standards to facilitate the development of a mixed-delivery preschool program in Oregon.
- Work with the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) to build a coalition of superintendents and advocates to increase the capacity of schools to support and link early learning efforts to K-12.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES



The 2013 Oregon legislative session, responsible for setting the 2013-2015 biennium budget, came to a close in July. As with the last legislative session, support for early childhood remains extremely high:

- \$6 million increase for Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten.
- More than \$17 million increase for Early Intervention/EC Special Education.
- Employment Related Day Care funding was increased to support a maximum caseload of 9,000 – 500 more children than the previous biennium.
- Reimbursement rates for licensed providers were raised to 75% of the 2012 Market Rate Survey.
- \$4 million for a new Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund (see below), and a new Early Reading Grants program.
- \$4 million to launch a first cohort of regional Early Learning Hubs.

POLICY UPDATES



Linkages between Early Learning and K-12: HB 2013 creates the Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund to build local connections between early childhood programs and schools.



Regional Hubs: HB 2013 also launches the regional Early Learning Hubs, through which communities will coordinate and tailor early learning services to meet the needs of children and families. The RFA for the Hubs was released in August, and the first seven of these 16 regional entities will be selected in the fall, with the additional nine created the following year.



Governance: HB 3234 creates a new Early Learning Division within the Department of Education, consolidating the administration of key early childhood programs such as Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten, Healthy Start, and child-care licensing under a new Office of Child Care. The consolidation of these programs within the Dept. of Education is already underway. The new Division will be the lead agency for CCDF, but ERDC, the state's child care subsidy program, will continue to be administered by the Department of Human Services.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The governor's vision and priorities align with our advocacy agenda in an unprecedented way.
- Full-day kindergarten funding, to begin in 2015, may have flexibility to use for pre-kindergarten.
- The Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Fund (ELKRPIF) is a new source of funds to build connections between early childhood programs and schools.
- A motivated COSA group wants to create change at the state policy level that would allow funding for preschool for 4-year-olds.
- Newly convened joint subcommittee on health and early learning focused on school readiness is an opportunity to expand and deepen our work.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Resistance to a more expansive preschool system by the Head Start community.
- Agreement on the statewide preschool framework and standards.
- Bringing the Common Core and early childhood together.
- Full-day kindergarten funding vs. preschool.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Washington

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2013 DRAFT Agenda

- Implementation of 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 for families.
- Integration of early learning funding streams and programmatic congruence at the state level to create Early Start, a single high-quality continuum of early learning services.
- New revenue to fund a continuum of early learning from birth through age five.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- 12-month child care authorization regardless of change in circumstances (within CCDBG limits).
- Child care contracting pilot is aligned with implementation of Early Achievers, the state's QRIS.
- Strengthened partnerships between child welfare and early learning systems.

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

-  **Preschool:** \$22.391 million increase to expand access to ECEAP, the Pre-K program, by providing 350 new slots in the 2013-14 school year at \$6,812 per slot; 1,350 new slots in the 2014-15 school year at \$7,500 per slot; rate increase of \$7,500 for existing slots in the 2014-15 school year; and additional oversight by the Department of Early Learning (DEL). \$2.256 million to maintain 165 ECEAP slots funded with CCDF in previous biennium.
-  **Child Care:** \$14.6 million increase to the base rate for child care subsidies by 2% and to provide a 2% enhancement to providers achieving level 2 or above in Early Achievers. \$50k to implement SB5595 to make the child care system easier to navigate for families and early learning providers. It also establishes a legislative planning group to consider long-term improvements to the child care system.
-  **KRA:** \$1.6 million in additional funds for Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) for 2013-2015 biennium.
-  **Home Visiting:** \$1 million for expansion of home visiting services.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **Preschool:** The Department of Early Learning completed recommendations for expanding ECEAP to reach entitlement by 2018 as required by SB5904.
-  **Preschool Mixed Delivery:** The Department of Early Learning is required to support a mixed delivery system, including licensed child care centers and family child care providers, when reviewing applications for state funding for ECEAP.
-  **Early Start** is intended to be established as an integrated high-quality continuum of early learning for children birth-to-five years of age that includes, but is not limited to,

home visiting and parent education and support programs, the Early Achievers, integrated, full-day and part-day high quality early learning programs, and high quality preschool for children whose family income is at or below 110% FPL.



Legislative Task Force is established to make recommendations on long-term improvements to the child care system, including implementation of a mixed delivery system, implementation of tiered reimbursement, and opportunities for increased funding for early learning.



Child Care Eligibility and Redetermination: Child care subsidy eligibility restored to 200% FPL and 12-month reauthorization periods established.



Child Care Reform: Legislation passed that requires DEL and the Department of Social and Health Services to identify reforms for policy and procedural practices of child care subsidy, and to develop ways to better align funding and provide more consistent, reliable communication to families and providers. Required:

- Provide professionalism training to its employees when providing WCCC benefits.
- Design a subsidy system that accounts for small fluctuations in family circumstances.
- Create categories so that minor work changes do not require authorization changes.
- Establish rules to specify that parents who participate in 110 or more hours of approved work are eligible for full-time child care services.



Kindergarten Entry Assessment: Implementation of a 3-day waiver for teachers implementing WaKIDS to meeting with families before the start of the school year.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- In 2010 the legislature passed a commitment to make the targeted PreK program an entitlement by 2018. In 2013, advocates secured a \$25M expansion toward reaching this goal. Minimally 12,721 new ECEAP slots will be needed to meet the minimum caseload expected by 2018. This is a unique opportunity to integrate PreK and child care and improve the quality of care overall.
- In 2013, advocates joined key legislative champions in prioritizing HB1723 which establishes a legislative study to make recommendations for expanding access to a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities referred to as Early Start. Since then, education and appropriations leaders in both chambers have discussed opportunities via legislation and/or administrative changes for integrating disparate early learning funding streams at the state level to create a system that is more accessible to children and families and produces positive child outcomes.
- Early learning has broad bi-partisan and bi-cameral support in the state Legislature as evidenced by bi-partisan support for increased investments and select policy changes.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- The 2014 legislative session is scheduled for only 60 days and budget leaders have indicated that new spending for early childhood is unlikely due to projections of insufficient state revenue.
- As a result of a 2012 State Supreme Court ruling, the legislature is under a judicial mandate to fully fund basic education by 2018, which does not currently include early education in the definition.
- Some legislators believe the array of early childhood programs is fragmented and uncoordinated.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Wisconsin

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 Agenda

- Improve and simplify the YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System, with continued focus on improving the qualifications of the ECE workforce.
- Substantially improve child care payments and policies, after seven years of frozen rates.
- Continue building a statewide early learning and development system, including improvements in screening and assessment, the longitudinal data system, public-private partnerships, family engagement, and professional development, with the help of Race to the Top funds.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Improve and establish a uniform messaging framework.
- Develop stronger relationships and communication with Department of Children and Families on key issues: continuity of care, coherence of subsidy and YoungStar policies, emerging electronic benefit card system for child care.
- Broaden our alliances with stakeholders and advocates, with a particular focus on business champions.
- Make progress on a broad-based birth to eight policy framework, working with the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council.

STATE BUDGET

-  Child care subsidy was cut by \$31 million over the 2-year biennium budget, 5-6% per year.
-  Child care's 7-years rate freeze ended, but rate increase in 2014 is less than 1%.
-  Increase incentive payments for 4-star child care programs in the YoungStar QRIS program from 5% to 10%.
-  \$2.3 million to develop an electronic benefit transfer system for child care payments.

POLICY UPDATES

-  **QRIS:** Implementing Race to the Top funding, with an emphasis on strengthening the YoungStar QRIS program and building a longitudinal data system.
-  **Public-Private Partnerships:** The State and Celebrate Children Foundation completed public-private partnership grants to 16 local early childhood coalitions with ARRA funds. Another \$300,000 is available from the Race to the Top grant.
-  **Literacy Screening:** Literacy screening required for all public school and charter school students in 4K, 5K, first, and second grade to be phased in by 2015.
-  **Race to the Top:** The state is applying for an additional \$11 million in Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funds as a supplement to round two funding of \$22.7 million.



Disability services: Expectation exists that one outcome of Race to the Top will be better coordination with Part C, with impact on Medicaid payments for Part 3 that will include mental health interventions for young children in the home.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Strong state interest in improving third grade reading proficiency.
- General support for YoungStar QRIS.
- Build on efforts funded by Race to the Top- Early Learning grant, which total \$34 million over four years.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Very conservative administration, with top-down decision making.
- Lack of collaborative environment for problem solving with key state officials.
- Funding for early care and education is being shifted, possibly permanently, to other priorities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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