

# the Ounce

## STATE POLICY UPDATES AS OF OCTOBER 2012

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This report for the **Peer Advocate Roundtable Network**  
is brought to you by the **National Policy Team** at the  
**Ounce of Prevention Fund**

 = Recent/Proposed Budget Cut       = Recent/Proposed Budget Increase/Restoration  
 = Funds held level       = Policy Change       = Pending Policy Change

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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.

This update provides a snapshot of each state in the Peer Advocate Roundtable (PAR) network's birth to five policy priorities, political challenges and opportunities, birth through eight agenda, and work on the RTT-ELC grant competition. It also details recent state budget and policy changes since the last version in April 2012, which can be found on our [webpage: http://www.ounceofprevention.org/advocacy/national-policy.php](http://www.ounceofprevention.org/advocacy/national-policy.php).

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# Arizona

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Restoration of general fund match to Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)
- Alignment of subsidy policy with quality rating system
- Implementation of statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment
- Implementation of statewide, connected data system

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Evolution of child care subsidies to be tied into early literacy
- Tying school district 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading plans to early literacy and early education

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



Nothing restored in state budget



Child care subsidies are frozen and no new low-income working families are being added.



\$40M appropriated statewide to school districts for K-3 reading intervention programs (“Move on When Reading”)

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES



25,000 new slots open for children’s health insurance (CHIP) – but not with state funding. This is time-limited and possible due to contributions from three hospitals and federal matching funds.

## 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

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Proposition 204: the Quality Education and Jobs Initiative on November ballot invests in education by creating a permanent, stable source of funding.
- Implementing a statewide longitudinal data system
- Implementing a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- Tying the importance of early childhood to the “Move on When Reading ” K-3 reading intervention program to be implemented by the Arizona Department of Education

## RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT

- The three biggest opportunities (see above) would not be on the table without having gone through RTT-ELC.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Ginger Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Southwest Human Development: [gward@swhd.org](mailto:gward@swhd.org)
- Rhian Evans Allvin, Chief Executive Officer, First Things First: [rallvin@azftf.gov](mailto:rallvin@azftf.gov)

# California

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Restore, preserve, and build existing early care and education (ECE) funding in CA
  - Preparing for the January 2013 budget release by creating budget messaging, creating a communications plan, and meeting with legislative offices
  - Disseminating information about the ECE impacts of Proposition 38, a November 2012 ballot initiative intended to significantly increase the amount of public funding provided for ECE programs and K-12 public education
- Build the ECE system in CA to expand and enhance opportunities for CA's early learners
  - Supporting Educare LA in the planning phase in order to secure a site location
  - Informing the public about the benefits of Transitional Kindergarten to serve four-year-olds to support the rollout and implementation and to protect against political challenges
  - Working with California Department of Education (CDE) to solidify our TA role in terms of the work of the RTT-ELC grant
- Advance policy for infants and toddlers in CA in order to ensure that their access to high quality child development services is protected and expanded
  - Convening a workgroup that engages in policy and advocacy planning and projects on behalf of infants and toddlers

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Budget defense for the January 2013 budget proposal
- ECE and budget messaging communications plan
- Future meetings of the CA Infant Toddler Advocacy Workgroup
- Supporting CDE with TA in the RTT-ELC implementation efforts

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊖ Governor Brown's proposed budget in January 2012 included \$517M in cuts to funding streams administered by the CDE's Child Development Division. The final budget in June 2012 included \$140M in cuts. However, since 2008 the state's early childhood funding system has lost almost \$1.5B, impacting well over 100,000 young children.
- ⊖ Also in the June budget, \$80M from First 5 CA's ECE programs was redirected to other programs for children 0-5.

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- Ⓟ In the January 2013 budget, we expect to see additional cuts proposed to ECE programs, as well as potentially the Governor's "realignment" proposal again, which would "realign" the administration of child care and development programs so that they are administered by county welfare agencies instead of the Department of Education, changing the system to a voucher-based one that would only require licensing without regard to quality or educational content. This proposal was not enacted this past year so these programs currently remain under the purview of the Department of Education.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- P** Advancement Project's Prop. 38 would raise \$10B/year for education and includes \$1.5B for ECE. Gov. Brown's Prop. 30 for education includes no ECE funding. Both qualified for the November ballot.
- P** California has received \$52.6M as a part of the RTT-ELC to support 17 regional leadership consortia's efforts to establish and implement a QRIS. The work of the consortia is underway, with both state level and regional meetings and coordination occurring.
- P** First 5 California is rolling out its Child Signature Program, which incorporates much of the model and learning of Educare, and brings it statewide. Educare Santa Clara and Educare Los Angeles are moving forward with planning and implementation.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- CA continues to experience fiscal challenges, making it likely that we will see significant cuts to existing government programs in the January 2013 budget.
- Children 0-5 continue not to be a priority for Governor Brown's administration.
- Political insiders have advised that the "realignment" proposal, described above, will come back into play with the January 2013 budget.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- If passed in November, Prop. 38 would double the funding for CA's ECE system. This would result in quality improvement, access expansion, systems building, and increased supports for ECE providers and the families that they serve.
- The RTT-ELC grant that CA received is an unprecedented opportunity to expand and strengthen our QRIS, improve data coordination, promote greater health integration, and support positive child outcomes in CA.
- CA Child Signature program affords opportunity to launch Educare beyond the walls.

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- In 2010, SB 1381 created a statewide "transitional kindergarten" program, which creates another year of kindergarten to serve the youngest four year olds. Transitional kindergarten has proven to be an invaluable connection between ECE and K-12, with young children being served in greater and greater numbers on K-12 campuses and by K-12 teachers.

## RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT

- CA was one of the nine states to receive RTT-ELC in the first round. We are in the optimistic, but still nascent, stages of rollout.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Kim Pattillo Brownson, Director of Educational Equity, Advancement Project: 213-989-1300 ext. 128, [kpattillo@advanceproj.org](mailto:kpattillo@advanceproj.org)

# Colorado

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### Current Agenda:

- Expand the newly created Office of Early Childhood within the Colorado Department of Human Services to include home visiting and prevention services to be transferred from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Embed in that legislation (needed to move funding streams) language to require a state plan for early childhood programs and the development of common service delivery outcomes for all programs serving young children.
- Reauthorize the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, Colorado's Early Childhood Advisory Council, which will sunset on June 30, 2013. Expand the role of the Commission to include becoming the advisory body to the Office of Early Childhood.
- Ensure the School Readiness Assessment scheduled to be adopted by the State Board of Education in December is a single tool rather than a menu of options from which school districts can choose
- Work to help shape Colorado and School Finance Partnership early childhood recommendations (to be determined)
- Ensure state and county level implementation of the intent of child care legislation passed in 2010 extending eligibility from six months to 12 months and further aligning eligibility periods with the Head Start program year for children enrolled in both programs
- Strengthen Infant-Toddler standards within child care rules and regulations: reduce group size in infant classrooms from 10 to 9; and require that a primary caregiver be assigned to all infants
- Identify additional policy issues to be addressed under a comprehensive Infant-Toddler Policy Agenda under development with support from ZERO TO THREE

### Ideas or Topics in Development:

- Strengthen the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) so that it works better for families and for child care providers:
  - Implement consistent administrative and eligibility criteria across counties;
  - Regionalize income eligibility criteria;
  - Allow for contracted slots for programs meeting certain requirements such as types of children served and quality requirements; and
  - Ensure all providers participating in CCCAP and serving X percentage of CCCAP children are participating in quality initiatives

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- P** Passed unanimously a bill titled *Child Care Licensure Waivers for Materials Related to Child Care Center Curriculum* which requires the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) to inform child care centers about the waiver process on licensing applications as well as on the reports of inspection; requires child care centers receiving a waiver to inform parents of the waiver and ensure staff have appropriate professional development related to the waiver; and sets forth timeframes for the waiver process and for any subsequent appeals.
- P** Passed a bill titled *Child Care Assistance Program CCCAP Extension Bill* that will allow counties to participate in a two-year pilot program that extends CCCAP for families who

exceed the county eligibility threshold to remain in the program for two years. During this timeframe, the parent co-payment required of program participants would be increased gradually until it reached the true cost of care. The idea behind the bill is to mitigate the “cliff effect” that families face when their income exceeds eligibility thresholds for child care or other public programs and they are suddenly responsible for the full cost of care, which impacts their ability to become and stay self-sufficient.



Passed the Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act, which provides individualized and research-based interventions for struggling readers in grades K-3. The legislation ensures parents get the information and help they need to support their child. Reading at grade level by the end of third grade strongly predicts long-term academic success and early interventions allow children to catch up and keep up with their peers.

Additionally, advocates defeated a bill that would have removed all licensing requirements related to quality standards in child care centers and require that any changes to child care regulations be initiated either by the Governor or by the General Assembly.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Messaging the importance of quality early childhood education to conservatives; refuting the idea some conservatives have that what happens to children before they enter the K-12 education system is their parents’ responsibility, with the state having no role or responsibility
- Maintaining the child care subsidy budget if federal automatic spending cuts (sequestration) go into effect in January 2013
- Approximately one-third of Colorado’s state legislature seats will turn over this year due to term limits. Several early childhood champions from both parties will not be returning.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- A solid early learning landscape continues to emerge in Colorado. Several efforts in the educational arena at the local and state levels will touch on early learning as a promising solution to some of the economic and social issues that face our state:
  - The Governor’s initiative, still in development, has so far included a strong focus on early childhood.
  - The School Finance Partnership has recommended half-day preschool for at-risk 3-year-olds, full-day preschool for at-risk 4-year-olds and universal full day kindergarten as part of a comprehensive plan to reform Colorado’s school financing system.
  - Governor Hickenlooper announced the establishment of a new Office of Early Childhood within the CDHS in early June which consolidates the management of all early childhood programs under the Department’s authority.

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- Colorado takes a birth-to-8 approach for its early childhood initiatives. Many of the state-level conversations happening among traditional and non-traditional stakeholders alike see early childhood, particularly preschool for 3- and 4-year-old children, to be the beginning of the

educational pipeline. Implementation of the school readiness assessment will better link what happens before kindergarten to the preparedness of children for kindergarten and discussions related to the implementation of the assessment center largely around how we can build on to Results Matter, the assessment used in public preschool programs and Head Start programs, for the kindergarten readiness assessment.

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- Colorado is now writing for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Round Two funding. Much of our work over the past year has centered on putting in place to a greater degree many of the items required in the application. We continue to work on the redesign of our TQRIS which will be embedded in child care licensing, development of a workforce registry and learning management system, expansion of Results Matter to early childhood programs beyond our publicly funded preschool and Head Start, and implementation of a kindergarten readiness assessment. Between applications, Governor Hickenlooper announced the creation of an Office of Early Childhood within the Colorado Department of Human Services that will have a MOU with the Colorado Department of Education to better align early childhood programs.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Jennifer Landrum, VP, Early Childhood Initiatives, Colorado Children’s Campaign: 303-620-4541, [jennifer@coloradokids.org](mailto:jennifer@coloradokids.org)
- Charlotte Brantley , President and CEO, Clayton Early Learning: 303-398-8578, [CBrantley@claytonearlylearning.org](mailto:CBrantley@claytonearlylearning.org)



# Florida

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Adequate funding for Florida's School Readiness (subsidized child care) program including expanding the population served from birth-5 to birth-8, to ensure children are reading proficiently by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- High-quality Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program including comprehensive VPK and Kindergarten readiness assessments
- Expand access to KidCare (Florida's children's health insurance) to include children of lawfully-residing immigrants
- Licensure standards – recent challenges to agency authority to establish licensure standards may have negative impacts on licensure standards

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Accreditation – review accreditation standards and alignment to QRIS to determine how both state recognized systems can be integrated
- Birth to age 8 continuum - revise School Readiness statute to expand population served from birth-5 to birth-8 (outcome: reading proficiency by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)
- Universal developmental screenings and assessments; adequate funding for Early Steps (early intervention) program
- Statewide parent information system (via phone and website) on child development
- Statewide QRIS (NOTE: this is an aspirational goal, for future development) – how to take local QRIS systems to scale for statewide implementation

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



In the aftermath of the 2012 legislative session, a new School Readiness allocation formula has resulted in the redistribution of 10% (about \$60M) of the state's School Readiness funds, reducing child care subsidies in many counties that have demonstrated need and demand, increasing waiting lists for child care, and cutting back on quality improvement and administrative budgets.



Additional budget items from the 2012 Florida session which are likely to be at risk again in 2013 include:

- **School Readiness** (child care subsidies for low-income working families): the funding formula will be an issue in the 2013 session.
- **VPK**: additional funds are needed to cover enrollment increases and quality improvements. Per student allocation remains at \$2,383.
- **Early Steps**: 2012 legislature appropriated \$6.8M, sufficient for federal match to continue the program.
- **Healthy Start**: 2012 legislature restored \$5.4M cut from 2011 budget.
- **Healthy Families**: funding maintained at \$18.2M
- **T.E.A.C.H.**: funding preserved at \$3M
- **Home visiting funds**: Florida has not committed to utilizing federal home visiting funds.

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

2013 Florida Session begins in March; the Governor's proposed budget is usually released in January.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

The early learning legislation that passed in the 2012 session was subsequently vetoed by the Governor. Some features of that legislation were addressed administratively by the Office of Early Learning, including:

- P** **Pre/post assessments:** Required pre and post assessments were in the vetoed legislation. It remains unclear how pre- and post-assessments will be addressed for School Readiness (SR) Programs, and the likelihood of two different assessments for four-year-olds attending both VPK and SR are high. DOE has implemented an assessment that focuses solely on language, literacy, and numeracy. SR assessments are expected to be more developmentally comprehensive but a final determination has not been made.
- P** **ELIS:** An integrated early childhood data collection system for the state received continuation funding despite the vetoed legislation and is scheduled to be implemented July 2013.
- P** **Standardized contracts and provider reimbursement rates:** Despite the Governor's veto the Office of Early Learning has moved ahead with administrative changes including a new 'equity' funding formula (see above).

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- **Budget:** Increasing School Readiness (subsidized child care program) funding; dedicating any new state revenues to expanded child care subsidies and quality improvement (addressing the 'quality vs. quantity conundrum')
- **School Readiness funding formula:** revising the allocation formula with an appropriate definition of 'equity' that does not result in disenrollment of children currently receiving services
- **Local decision-making:** maintaining the local autonomy of local Early Learning Coalitions (for quality improvement efforts and to allocate resources)
- **Potentially divisive funding issue:** pitting early learning against afterschool care advocates

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to find common ground with all early childhood stakeholders and advocates on the issue of child care funding increases
- Many newly-elected legislators may be more open to learning about early learning.
- A strengthened statewide coalition of early childhood advocates

## **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- The issue that seems to connect early learning to K-12 is 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency because of its significance as both an indicator of later school success and as an outcome of high-quality early learning programs. In Florida we are still in the infancy of planning and strategizing around this powerful measure.

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- Despite a push for quantity over quality, advocates continue to point to the RTT-ELC as evidence of the importance of a focus on quality; it provides some justification against the efforts to eliminate quality supports.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Jessica Scher, Director, Public Policy, United Way of Miami-Dade: [scherj@unitedwaymiami.org](mailto:scherj@unitedwaymiami.org)



# Illinois

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### Current Agenda:

- Roll back cuts to Early Childhood Block Grant & IDHS Child Care Assistance Program
- Improve child care licensing infrastructure
- Build community collaboration around 0-5 through targeted campaigns
- Support internal state agency structure to better support children and families (HS Commission)
- Work with the new ECE leadership in the city of Chicago, participate in workgroups that they have created, and monitor the roll out of their new 0-5 RFP process
- Reform Early Intervention Part C Reform
- Make tax increase from 2011 permanent to avoid more and larger budget cuts

### Ideas or Topics in Development:

- The Latino Policy Forum will develop a birth to age 8 policy agenda with a focus on Latino children.

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



In the final FY13 state budget, the **Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)** was cut by nearly \$25M (7.7%) as part of overall cuts to education spending approved by the Senate and House.



Parents Too Soon and Healthy Families **home visiting programs** in the Department of Human Services (DHS) were funded at last year's levels. Legislators rejected cuts that were previously on the table for these programs.



The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) received a \$5.3M funding cut for FY 2013. However, the actual programmatic cut to CCAP is \$25M, which represents a 37% average increase in copayments for low-income working parents. For example, a family or four earning 175% of the federal poverty level, or approximately \$3,200/month will see their copayments increased by \$102 a month, over \$1,200 in a single year. Because of our advocacy efforts, we were able to avoid further and more burdensome cuts for low-income families like further reductions in income eligibility guidelines, reduction in quality dollars, etc.



**Early Intervention services** in DHS budget were cut by \$3M (4%).

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES



New, experienced Illinois leader in Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development



Developed state of the art Birth to 3 Early Learning Guidelines to align with amended preschool age Early Learning Standards

- P** Mandatory participation in workforce development registry
- P** Funding to pilot Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and vendor was chosen to select tools to pilot
- P** Increased focus on child care licensing effectiveness
- P** Advocates added to Early Intervention Part C Advisory Council

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Declining public dollars for ECE, which results in fewer children being served
- Lack of strong champions in Illinois House
- Continued reluctance to address the ‘structural deficit’ problems this state faces (ongoing downgrading of bonds, negative outlook, inability to agree on substantive pension reform, etc). No long-term thinking about investing—only short-term thinking.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Early childhood can point to significant cuts – in prior years, both budget and programmatic, so we can demonstrate impact and ongoing/increasing need.
- Amount of new legislators who could be potential champions
- The new focus on early childhood in Chicago

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- Alignment of early learning standards and guidelines with KRA and other assessments;
- Teacher certification and teacher evaluation
- Leveraging Title I guidance and funding to increase support for early learning and to improve transitions and partnerships
- Conversations and research on the pros and cons of a phase- in from the ECBG to the state funding formula

## RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT

- Increased prioritization of new TQRIS
- Increased focus on quality and quality assurance
- New regulations on credentials for child care directors
- Bringing key stakeholders together
- Identifying the shortcomings in our current system and working towards a plan for what it needs to be
- Recognition that families’ well-being has to be part of our conversation regarding supporting the early learning needs of children 0-5

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Nancy Shier, Vice President, Illinois Policy, The Ounce of Prevention Fund:  
[nshier@ounceofprevention.org](mailto:nshier@ounceofprevention.org)

# Kansas

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### Current Agenda:

- Maintain full funding for early childhood programs financed through the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) in the face of dramatically reduced tobacco revenues anticipated beginning in FY2014

### Ideas or Topics in Development:

- Maintain the state Earned Income Tax Credit and restore the Child and Dependent Care Credit that was eliminated by Kansas lawmakers as part of sweeping income tax changes in 2012. These supports are critical in light of the fact that children under age five are more likely than children ages five to 17 to live in poverty.

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



As part of the budget process, the Governor requested all state agencies to submit a 10% reduced resources budget for FY2014. This corresponds with anticipated revenue shortfalls beginning in that year due to sweeping tax cuts enacted by lawmakers in 2012. This 10% reduction would include funding for early childhood programs for children birth to five.



This year’s tobacco settlement payment came in at \$58M – more than enough for the early education programs supported by the Children’s Initiatives Fund. During the legislative session, there was an effort to move a portion of the tobacco dollars into the State General Fund. Another proposal sought to restrict when and how agencies could spend their CIF appropriations. Both measures were defeated, and the CIF received \$56M and the addition \$2M was deposited in the Kansas Endowment for Youth Fund.

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



Birth to five programs are expected to take an even larger hit in FY2014 as the result of reduced tobacco revenues which serve as the only source of funding for the CIF. State officials are expected to announce the settlement of satellite litigation over enforcement provisions of the original tobacco settlement. This will result in large reduction in state tobacco revenues – as much as 80% - for a period of five years.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES



The Earned Income Tax Credit was under threat of elimination or reduction in several tax reform proposals considered by lawmakers. In the end, the EITC was saved. The tax plan that is now law included the repeal of other credits that benefit Kansas families, including those for adoption, food sales tax, child and dependent care, and child day care expenses. It also bars renters from participating in the Homestead Property Tax Refund program, which makes it more difficult for low-income families to afford housing.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- **Funding:** the dramatic decrease in tobacco settlement funds along with an anticipated revenue shortfall at the state level in FY2014 will create a severe challenge to maintaining funding for early childhood in Kansas.
- **Loss of moderate Senate:** the strongest champions for early childhood programs have traditionally been in the moderate-controlled Kansas Senate. Many of these champions lost their primary elections in August 2012. The result is a loss of early childhood champions and also the moderate control over the Kansas Senate that prevented many dramatic cuts to early childhood and other key services in recent years.
- **Shift in focus for early childhood investments to targeted communities:** leadership of the Kansas Children's Cabinet, the key body charged with oversight of CIF, has expressed a commitment to steer future funding to 9 targeted communities in the state. This creates a battle to maintain funding for current programs that are proven to be successful, but fall outside of the targeted communities.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- **Legislative Turnover:** taking into account retirements and the result of the August primary elections, at least 30% of legislators in both the House and Senate will be new in 2013. Although the majority of these legislators have campaigned on a platform embracing smaller government, we have an opportunity to educate them about the importance of investing in early childhood programs children ages birth through 5.
- **Presence on the Kansas Children's Cabinet:** the presence of KAC President/CEO Shannon Cotsoradis as a member of the Kansas Children's Cabinet provides a seat at the table when funding recommendations are made for early childhood programs.
- **Modernizing the Coalition for School Readiness:** efforts underway to modernize and update the Coalition for School Readiness and create a steering committee to help guide the coalition will facilitate a more nimble response to legislative challenges and provide for more strategic collaboration on behalf of early childhood programs.

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- There have been limited conversations within the Early Learning Advocacy Council (ELAC) about opportunities to include funding for PreK in the school finance formula if the administration attempts to make substantive changes to that system in 2013.

## RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT

- We have not seen a significant sign that the Kansas Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application has influenced the state's policy agenda and priorities.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Christie Appelhanz, Vice President, Public Affairs, Kansas Action for Children: 785-232-0550, [Christie@kac.org](mailto:Christie@kac.org)

# Louisiana

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Implementation of Act 3 of the 2012 Louisiana Legislative Session, the Early Childhood Education Act. Under Act 3, 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.” It is anticipated that the plan creating this network will be passed by the state board at its December 2012 meeting.
- Sustain, and if possible increase, current funding for the child care sector to provide greater access for children birth to age five to high-quality early childhood education
- Build a coalition and new champions to support high quality early childhood education in Louisiana

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊖ In FY2012-13, there was a significant decrease of \$21.5M in the Child Care Assistance Program, with the resulting total budget after the cut of \$113M and a subsidy portion of \$62.5 M.
- ⊕ Funding levels for PreK programs for 4 year olds (LA 4) increased slightly in FY2012-13. However, \$20M of the \$76M for the LA 4 program is being funded with one-time funds (Community Development Block Grant recovery funds).
- ⊕ The 2012-13 budget also slightly increased the funding for Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) to \$6.3M. ECSS is a prevention and intervention program that serves children from birth to five years of age who have been identified as at risk for developing social, emotional and/or developmental problems.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- Ⓟ The Louisiana Early Childhood Education Act (Act 3) has the potential to change the way early childhood education for children ages birth to five is governed, delivered, judged and funded in Louisiana. Act 3 provides that the state board of education shall:
  - Establish a definition of kindergarten readiness aligned with state content standards for elementary and secondary schools
  - Establish performance targets for children under the age of three and academic standards for kindergarten readiness for three - and four-year old children to be used in publicly-funded early childhood education programs
  - Create a uniform assessment and accountability system for publicly funded early childhood education programs that includes a letter grade indicative of student performance
  - Coordinate with the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Health and Hospitals to align the standards for the licensing of child care facilities, including the requirements for participation in the Louisiana Quality Start Child Care Rating System, with the standards established for early childhood education programs

- Establish a timeline for the creation and implementation of the early childhood care and education network that shall be fully implemented by the beginning of the 2015-16 school year

**P** It is anticipated that implementation of the state board's plan will include changes in rules and regulations for the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Family Services, and possibly for the Department of Health and Hospitals. As noted above, the state board is expected to vote on the plan for the network at its December, 2012 meeting. It is also anticipated that the plan will include statutory changes that will be introduced in the 2013 legislative session.

**P** Louisiana is in the process of establishing new career pathways and a new certification for early childhood professionals. Four career paths have been defined with a goal of creating clock hours and courses that result in progressively deeper knowledge and skills by early childhood educators as they earn CDA's, certificates, diplomas, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and graduate degrees. Included in this proposal is the creation of an early childhood, birth through kindergarten, area of teacher certification. Currently the only certifications in the state are for early childhood interventionists and for teachers for pre-k through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## **POLITICAL CHALLENGES**

- Having opportunities to educate policymakers about the unique nature of child development for children ages birth to five and its implications for policy
- Maintaining and expanding access to high quality early childhood education, especially for children under age 4, given the serious budget constraints in Louisiana and the continuing cuts to the Child Care Assistance Program
- Implementing Act 3 without additional funding

## **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Recognition by both the Governor and the Legislature of the critical importance of early childhood education as evidenced by the inclusion of Act 3 as part of their Education Reform Package
- Understanding by both the Governor and the Legislature that a large percentage of children in the state entering kindergarten are not ready to learn and that this has a significant impact on their success in school and in life
- Although many members of the Legislature are new due to term limits, they now have one year behind them and may be more likely to champion their own causes. Also, due to budget cuts affecting their districts, legislators are more likely to be independent of the administration in the 2013 session.

## **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- As noted above, all early childhood education programs are being moved under the jurisdiction of the state board of education as part of the Act 3 implementation.

- The new Louisiana Early Learning and Development Standards are almost completed as part of the implementation of Act 3, and have been intentionally aligned with the K-12 Common Core standards that have been adopted in Louisiana.
- A new career pathway for early childhood educators is being developed that will align training and courses to the Early Learning and Development Standards referenced above, and includes a proposal to create an early childhood, birth through kindergarten, area of teacher certification replacing the current pre-k through grade 3 current certification

### **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- Louisiana did not complete a RTT-ELC application. However, the work being done now around Professional Development/Articulation for early childhood educators is a direct result of the initial work done by the team that was assembled and attended the DC TA for RTT-ELC in anticipation of Louisiana's applying for the grant.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Melanie Bronfin, Director, The Policy Institute, Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families: 504-228-0988, [Melanie.Bronfin@lapartnership.org](mailto:Melanie.Bronfin@lapartnership.org)



# Maine

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Increasing quality access for low income children (to all early childhood services/systems)
- Increasing and diversifying early childhood finance
- Promoting Educare as a statewide model and policy platform
- Providing information for policy makers, thought leaders and the general community
- The work in the four priorities listed above will be addressed primarily through two overarching activities: Public Information and Outreach, and Engaging the Private Sector.

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Strategies for ensuring children are reading at grade level in 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade
- Including ECE in education reform efforts from current administration

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



The budget passed by Maine's 125<sup>th</sup> Legislature cut over \$6M from the Maine Early Childhood System:

- \$2M cut for Head Start, which means that 216 very young children will no longer have access to Head Start.
- \$2M cut for the Child Care Subsidy Program, which will lead to a deep cut in the availability of child care vouchers for families with incomes below 250% FPL and will negatively impact 1,400 children.
- Eliminated funding (\$2.6M) for the Maine Families Home Visiting Program, which will eliminate vital services for Maine's most vulnerable infants and children. Approximately 750 families will lose services.

Much of these funding reductions were justified by claiming that a significant amount of federal money, or state money in other programs such as public PreK (which only serves 4 year olds in Maine) would lessen the negative impact. This has not proven to be the case, as waiting lists for child care subsidy continue to climb, Head Start programs are reducing slots, public PreK programs are closing due to school budget issues, and the home visiting program will remain stagnant rather than the expected increase in service with the federal grant awarded last year.



The budget also eliminated MaineCare (health insurance) coverage for an additional 14,500 low-income working parents (with income between 100-133% FPL).

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- Governor LePage is expected to propose again to zero out state funded Head Start at the least. The budget will not be presented until January 2013. There remains the possibility of administrative cuts.

## PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- P** A recent review of the Part B & C programs in Maine revealed significant dysfunction in that system. We expect legislative response in the next session.
- P** The Administration has proposed a literacy initiative. Local teams will be developing plans.
- P** Education reform has been broadly discussed with the only significant changes from last session being school choice and charter schools. More is expected from the administration in the next session.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- After the November elections, educating new policy makers about early childhood, from brain science to ROI
- Changing the frame about early childhood programs such as child care subsidy and Head Start, away from a “welfare” view to a long-term investment/educational view. There has been a lot of negative press blaming the poor.
- Increasing public support for early childhood investments and ensuring it is a non-partisan issue. The current administration does not have anyone at the senior policy level that values early childhood.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The elections create an opportunity to ensure early childhood is a topic of conversation.
- There are a growing number of business and community leaders who are expressing their support for early childhood.
- Lots of media coverage about impact of budget cuts, as well as positive op-eds and letters to the editor from various factions of Council for Stronger America.

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- There is a literacy initiative that includes early childhood, but there remains little to no true support for early childhood from top cabinet level in the Department of Education.
- Part B & C reforms are on the horizon. There could be an opportunity to frame ECE in a new light when those efforts begin.
- Improving reading scores for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grades is an opportunity in conversations about education reform.

## RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT

- DHHS and DOE have created a working group, SAIEL, to attempt to implement the goals Maine spelled out in our RTT application, but without the funding this is a bigger challenge and slower going. The composition of the group is all mid-level managers with minimal influence on policy. Re-organization in both DHHS and DOE leave the membership in question. There is doubt as to whether or not the group will even remain.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Judy Reidt-Parker, Early Childhood Policy Analyst, Maine Children's Alliance: 207-623-1868 ext. 210, [jreidtparker@mekids.org](mailto:jreidtparker@mekids.org)



# Michigan

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Continued reform of state early childhood system through the new Michigan Office of Great Start (OGS) to improve coordination and impact and to better integrate early learning with K-12 education
- Ensure that early childhood investments are a top priority as Governor Snyder and the legislature work to balance the state budget
- Make a top priority investments in what all young children need to thrive, including:
  - Expanded access to high quality child care and early learning programs for at-risk children;
  - Improved access to preventive and primary health care through the expansion of pediatric medical home models; and
  - Increased access for parents and caregivers of young children aged 0-3 to needed supports, including home visiting services for at-risk children and families

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Expansion of the state's public preschool program for four-year-olds, the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). In June, the HighScope Educational Research Foundation released a comprehensive evaluation, demonstrating that GSRP had a profound long-term effect on children who participated in the preschool program. This evaluation has inspired renewed efforts to enroll more eligible four-year-olds in the program in the years ahead.
- A 0-3 set aside for any expansion of funding for early childhood

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  The final FY13 budget signed into law by the governor features \$282M in federal funds to increase reimbursement rates for primary care physicians to 100% of Medicare rates. (This is a requirement of the federal Affordable Care Act.) The final budget also includes \$11.9M gross (\$4M GF) to increase reimbursement rates for OB/Gyns by 20%.
-  The legislature approved a \$7.3M boost for prenatal care outreach and service delivery, but Governor Snyder vetoed this due to a lack of funding.
-  The final budget expands coverage for the Healthy Kids Dental program into 10 more counties, serving 91,000 more Medicaid children under age 21. This expansion will cost the state \$16.6M gross (\$5.6M GF).
-  The final budget includes \$310,000 for OGS to prepare a report by May 15, 2013 that features a comprehensive plan for early childhood development and learning.
-  GSRP funding is increased by \$5M (School Aid Fund) to a total of \$100.4M. Funding for the GSRP competitive grant program holds steady at \$8.9M.
-  The final budget appropriates \$10.9M to Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) or consortia of ISDs as an early childhood block grant. This was formerly funding for the Great Start Collaboratives (\$5.9M) and Great Parents/Great Start (\$5M). Each ISD will receive the same funding that it receives in the current fiscal year but must first submit

an application to OGS by August 15, 2012 detailing planned activities as well as report by December 1, 2013 on actual activities provided and children served.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- P** The Office of Great Start—in cooperation with grant partners the Center for Michigan, ECIC, Michigan’s Children, and others—is working hard to create a coordinated early childhood strategy for the state. This will be informed by the report described above, but OGS is not waiting for the report to move ahead on several fronts, including an early childhood IT system.
- P** PA 291 of 2012 establishes standard definitions of evidence-based and promising home visiting programs; requires all state and federal spending in Michigan for home visiting to be for promising or evidence-based programs; and encourages collaboration among three state departments on home visiting. A concurrent effort to include a 0-3 set aside for any early childhood expansion did not succeed.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Republican majorities in both chambers of the state legislature have made modest investments in early childhood, but are wary of making greater commitments to programs that do not have a clear evidence base or for which there is not a clear demonstration of children and families served and unmet need.
- Republicans want accountability for programs and systems, but are skeptical of system-building efforts, which they fear are heavy on administrative costs and light on direct service provision to families and children.
- It is unclear how the shift of some early learning funds to the ISDs will affect ISDs’ commitment to early learning and improving child outcomes.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Governor Snyder highlighted early childhood in his special message on education in 2011 and he has called for a rewrite of the school aid act; the drafters of the new act are using the governor’s special message on education as the touchstone.
- As 2013 is not an election year, the FY14 budget, which the governor will unveil in early February 2013, offers the administration an opportunity to propose meaningful new investment in early childhood programs that have been proven effective in Michigan and have a clearly demonstrated unmet need.
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction has stated repeatedly and publicly that he believes that kindergarten readiness and third-grade reading proficiency goals—the latter of which is a key metric in the governor’s dashboard—cannot be reached without greater investment in early childhood programs.

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- These conversations are ongoing and essential, given the transfer of fiduciary responsibility for key early learning programs to the ISDs.
- The rewrite of the school aid act offers an opportunity to make preschool part of the K-12 system.

## RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT

- While Michigan failed to receive the federal grant, it continues to use the application to guide system development in Michigan. The early 2012 supplemental budget funded a kindergarten readiness assessment and the Great Start to Quality tiered rating system for child care and preschool programs; both of these were prominent in the state's RTT-ELC application.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- John Bellow, President, The Center for Michigan: [jbelow@thecenterformichigan.net](mailto:jbelow@thecenterformichigan.net)
- Peter Pratt, President, Public Sector Consultants: [ppratt@pscinc.com](mailto:ppratt@pscinc.com)



# Mississippi

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

Based on discussions in May with the chair of the State Early Childhood Advisory Committee and the division director of the Department of Human Services, our platform is as follows:

- Enhancement of the Quality Rating System – this will reflect increased emphasis on professional development; tie-in to the Early Learning Guidelines/Common Core Standards; and an enhanced Resource and Referral System;
- Development of a statewide kindergarten assessment tool to be developed by 2014 – Center for Education Innovation is leading a task group to explore options for the state;
- A statewide approach to home visitation – currently this is being rolled out only in select areas (Southwest MS);
- A statewide technical assistance program for child care providers – this would be closely based on the Allies model sponsored by Department of Human Services, featuring provider development, parent education and business development support. The original model was developed by MSU and further honed by Mississippi Building Blocks, the current privately-funded research effort;
- Support of MS-based community outreach efforts, namely Excel by 5 and SPARK, which focus on community engagement around early education and transition and alignment between early education providers and early grades, respectively; and
- Coordination of health care supports for young children and their families – this includes increasing the capacity to perform developmental screenings, increased focus on oral health, and development of a mixed delivery system (pediatricians, nurse practitioners) so that every child has a medical home.

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Crystallizing an early childhood ask for the 2013 legislative session

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



There have been no changes, but the budget for both resource and referral and QRIS funding is expected to remain stable at \$1.5M.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

There was an attempt to move licensing from the Department of Health to the Department of Human Services, which was defeated in the state legislature mainly due to opposition from the child care provider community.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Consensus building between early education and business leaders
- Finding new funding streams to support platform
- Charter school legislation

## **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Governor is supportive (as long as there is consensus)
- SECAC is firmly entrenched
- Key staff in Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development has remained stable.

## **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- There are ongoing conversations happening in support of a 2013 legislative ask with a cadre of key policy stakeholders.

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- See policy priorities area above

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- John Williams, Senior Consultant, DCA, Inc.: 303-620-4541, [jwilliams@dcaboston.com](mailto:jwilliams@dcaboston.com)

# Nebraska

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Utilize existing funding and allow innovative ways to blend, braid funding streams
- Align rules and regulations for existing programs
- Increase investment in high quality programs
  - Preschool grant program
  - Sixpence (0-3 Endowment)
- Refine criteria for a possible QRIS; secure funds for development and maintenance
- Build support for a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
- Educate senators-elect on the importance of the first five years

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Nebraska has 249 school districts of which all but 14 have a four-year graduation rate of 94.4%. 70% of the state's high school dropouts are concentrated in the remaining 14 districts. In addition, 64% of the almost 60,000 children 0-5 who are at risk of failing in school reside in these 14 school districts. We are in the process of talking with policy makers and state partners about targeting those 14 school districts over a three to five year period to "demonstrate" braiding existing early childhood funds, relaxing current restrictions to providers, and building in accountability. Some new monies will be required; we anticipate a public-private partnership but are still working out the details.
- Secure lottery funds for early childhood beginning in 2016 (when new lottery priorities take effect)
- Explore Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund for early childhood mental health investments
- Tap into Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund to reward/incentivize 0-5 teachers meeting quality standards
- Require common measures for all publically-funded home visitation programs
- Require provider participation in QRIS as condition of receiving public funds for early childhood (once QRIS is built) and utilize tiered subsidy reimbursement based on quality

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  \$150,000 additional funds for home visiting
-  \$650,000 to fund the creation of a separate state program under the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for unborn children of mothers who are ineligible for coverage under Medicaid.

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

As of this writing, there are a lot of unknowns for the proposed state budget. Nebraska will enter the 2013 legislative session in January with over a \$400M cash reserve and a \$600M projected budget shortfall for the next biennium. Conversations are taking place that there will be a significant change in the K-12

funding formula this next legislative session, which will impact the budget. It is still unsure whether Nebraska will opt out of Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- P** Separate state program under CHIP gives prenatal care to approximately 1,200 children of undocumented or incarcerated women.
- P** Modest improvements will be made in the proposed child care licensing regulations:
  - Staff to child ratios in all settings would be improved;
  - Smoking in child care center vehicles would be prohibited;
  - Smoking in vehicles used by family providers would be prohibited during times they are transporting children for their business (not to interfere with their personal use of the vehicle);
  - Felons convicted of a crime involving children would either be permanently disqualified from providing child care or disqualified from providing care for a certain number of years (depending on the severity of the crime).

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Early childhood is not a priority for our current Governor, who has two years left in office.
- Term limits make it difficult to keep senators educated.
- The school financing formula is complex, understood by only few people, and is seen as growing out of control. There is great pressure to cut significant amounts of education dollars. Nebraska's Governor leads the charge on pitting investments in education and health against one another.

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- There is great potential for the next Governor of Nebraska (2014) to be a champion of early childhood.
- The business community is becoming very involved in early childhood. Examples include: the Early Childhood Business Roundtable continues to grow, gain momentum, hold meetings throughout the state, and target key political areas. The Nebraska State Chamber of Commerce has identified early childhood as a priority and is including it in their state legislative forums (32 in total) this fall. They have also asked us to secure Jim Heckman as a speaker for their Annual State Chamber Meeting in February.
- The Legislative Planning Committee (charged with long range planning of the state budget) has taken a significant interest in early childhood. After including early childhood in the list of indicators they are tracking, they had the Early Childhood Business Roundtable present the case for investing in early childhood in July. In August, they had the Nebraska Department of Education present their data on the longitudinal impact of early childhood (both on the education system and what it means for children's success). In October, they have asked the University to do a presentation on a Nebraska-specific economic analysis currently being

conducted, entitled, “Measuring the Impacts and Returns from Early Childhood Education and Programming in Nebraska.” There is significant political opportunity within the Legislative Planning Committee.

### **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- Our demonstration site concept currently being developed (see policy priorities above) will incentivize (perhaps even require) alignment of early childhood services with K-12.

### **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- While Nebraska failed to receive a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, we are trying to move discussions forward in the areas of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, alignment of standards (through possible demonstration sites), and we are beginning work on refining QRIS criteria.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Becky Veak, Policy Associate, First Five Nebraska: 402-261-9671 ext. 101, [bveak@firstfivenebraska.org](mailto:bveak@firstfivenebraska.org)
- Jen Hernandez, Policy Associate, First Five Nebraska: 402-261-9671 ext. 102, [jhernandez@firstfivenebraska.org](mailto:jhernandez@firstfivenebraska.org)



# New Mexico

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### Current Agenda:

- Based on current revenue projections, development of legislative strategy to include additional general fund appropriations for early childhood

### Ideas or Topics in Development:

- Create a Home Visiting platform for New Mexico to include model standardization, accountability, policy recommendations
- Advance quality childcare through support of Children Youth and Families Department new FOCUS TQRIS and related issues including funding
- Advance professional development and wage incentives for the early childhood workforce, to include registered family home caregivers

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

Proposals for 2013 legislative session are currently under development. Current revenue projections estimate increased gas and oil revenue for FY14. Legislative strategy includes allocation of new revenue to early childhood.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- P** Implementation of improved TQRIS (FOCUS): This is the third generation of TQRIS for NM. The first quality rating system was implemented in 1997, followed by a revised TQRIS in 1999. FOCUS TQRIS improves quality by 1) focusing on children's learning through implementation of NM's authentic observation-documentation-curriculum planning process based on the *New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten*; 2) establishing common program standards across all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs; and 3) utilizing a common Comprehensive Assessment System as the basis for continuous quality improvement in all early learning and development programs. FOCUS TQRIS is being piloted in selected programs across the state.
- P** The Early Learning Advisory Council is up and running. A business leader, CEO of the New Mexico Business roundtable, has been appointed as chair.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Lack of consensus among stakeholders on the approach to amend the state's Constitution to allow distribution of Land Grant Permanent Fund dollars to support early learning services
- Alignment of prioritization of adequate early childhood funding between the executive and legislative branches of government.
- Lack of consensus among childcare providers regarding implementation of FOCUS TQRIS, licensing regulations, and costs that will challenge efforts to move the needle on quality and access

## **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Increased knowledge and support of members of the legislative finance committee and its Director towards creation and funding of a high-quality early childhood system
- Collaboration of partners (LFC, legislators, business community, providers, advocates) towards effective home visiting, quality childcare and other early childhood programs
- Commitment of business leaders regarding prioritization of early childhood programs and funding. Both the New Mexico Business roundtable and the Association of Commerce and Industry have made Early Childhood Investment a Policy Priority creating the opportunity to expand business interest across the state.

## **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- The ELC-RTT proposal provided the opportunity for profound changes in collaboration between the Children Youth and Families Department and the Public Education Department. Recognition of the role of early childhood in early grade reading is being discussed and alignment of efforts is beginning to occur.
- We are working to integrate data systems, including a unique identifier that will allow us to track children and families from birth through 12.

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- Senate Bill 120 and the many years of work were the basis for the ELC-RTT and it has become the plan that the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) intends to implement in the future. The ELAC and partners will make policy recommendations based on the plan.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Katherine Freeman, New Mexico Early childhood Investment Partnership:  
[kfreeman@nmeccdp.org](mailto:kfreeman@nmeccdp.org)

# Oklahoma

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Continue efforts to establish an early childhood unified data system
- Redesign existing child care quality rating and improvement system; conduct an analysis of the alignment of all early childhood program standards
- Inventory the existing range of early childhood assessments being administered in all settings, develop a model assessment system, and develop a plan to implement a comprehensive assessment system
- Ensure families of young children have access to comprehensive physical and mental health services and that these services are integrated as key components in early childhood programs
- Infuse the Strengthening Families framework into early childhood systems through quality standards, professional development, early learning guidelines
- Increase family engagement in early childhood policy discussions
- Encourage and support local programs to braid and blend funding; identify existing barriers that inhibit program collaboration
- Review and assure the early childhood education competencies for licensure and certification align with college curriculum for early childhood professionals

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Draft policy recommendations to support the state priorities
- Develop a statewide comprehensive early literacy plan

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



Flat-funding of education including state Pre-K and Oklahoma Early Childhood Program



Oklahoma's Child Welfare System received an additional \$20M to satisfy requirements from the lawsuit, and an additional \$5M to improve Oklahoma's child welfare program.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES



Legislation facilitating shared use of school facilities for community programs



Interim Study in the Fall of 2012 to support the "Bridge to Literacy" legislation that failed in the last legislation session



Interim Study in the Fall of 2012 on "Strong Families"

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- State legislative leaders have concerns about governmental involvement with families of young children; less governmental intrusion and more family responsibility is widely supported.

- The Oklahoma legislature continues to explore changes to the structure of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the November ballot will include a state question to amend the Constitution in order to restructure the composition of the OKDHS Commission.
- Overcoming the barriers to funding and developing data-sharing across state programs and agencies

## **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- There is a growing awareness around the economic benefits gained from investment in early childhood programs with both the public and private sectors.
- Supporting children of incarcerated parents is a high priority of the current Governor; a newly formed committee will provide a platform to discuss the supports needed for families of young children.
- Improved agency cooperation resulting from Early Learning Challenge and other grant opportunities

## **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- Increased state and local discussion of early learning in connection with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores and upcoming test-based retention policy
- Increased discussion of braiding child care subsidies with school-based funding
- Review and discussion of existing program quality standards in Pre-K

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness revised the state early childhood strategic plan to include priorities identified in the Early Learning Challenge application; implementation responsibilities have been assigned to existing OPSR workgroups.
- Recommendations to the Governor from the OPSR for the 2013 legislative session were developed, in part, based upon the priorities identified in the application.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Debra Andersen, Executive Director, Smart Start Oklahoma: 405-278-6978, [Debra.andersen@smartstartok.org](mailto:Debra.andersen@smartstartok.org)

# Oregon

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Seeding connections between early learning and early elementary, both through our Early Works demonstration sites and our state policy agenda
- Advocating for alignment of child care subsidy policy and TQRIS so more low-income children have access to high quality programs
- Supporting development of key state early childhood infrastructure (kindergarten readiness assessment; integrated data system; comprehensive assessment system)
- Ensuring that early childhood investments remain a high priority for the legislature in 2013

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Advocating for a state \$10M Strategic Grants Fund to support school districts that are taking the lead in connecting early learning to the early elementary grades
- Promoting state policies to encourage school districts to use Title I resources for early learning, as well resources for districts

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

- P** Adoption of statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for pilot in fall of 2013
- P** Oregon's revision of its RTT-ELC application for second round funding
- P** Appointment of Rudy Crew as Oregon's first Chief Education Officer

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Uncertainty caused by the creation of the Early Learning Council and the Oregon Education Investment Board
- Continuing sluggish economy and low state revenues

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Governor and Chief Education Officer's are committed to early childhood.
- Creation of Early Learning Council and the Oregon Education Investment Board
- Second round funding from RTT-ELC for Oregon

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- The newly created Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) is charged with developing a unified "P20 education continuum." The OEIB has identified both the transition between early learning and early elementary and between high school and higher education as key areas of focus. The Early Learning Council, which is formally under the auspices of the OEIB, has also made building connections to the K-12 system a high priority. The pilot of the new Kindergarten

Readiness Assessment this fall and the work around an integrated early childhood data system connected to the K-12 longitudinal data system are two places where this connective work is currently underway.

- The Children’s Institute’s Early Works demonstration project, with a site in east Portland and a second site in rural southern Oregon, is intended to not only provide local on-the-ground models for connecting early learning to early elementary, but to spur this conversation forward in Oregon. We are currently developing strategies to use the learning from Early Works to seed similar connection building in other school districts. We are also developing a policy proposal for state funded Strategic Grants to incent districts to pursue these strategies.

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- Most of the key activities and timelines outlined in Oregon’s RTT-ELC application were adopted into state legislation as part of HB4165. Even without first round funding, Oregon has accomplished most of what was proposed for the first year of grant – development of tiers for TQRIS; selection of a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for piloting in 2013.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- David Mandell, Policy & Research Director, Children’s Institute: [david@childinst.org](mailto:david@childinst.org)

# Washington

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Current Agenda:*

- Barriers and changes to child care subsidies in the past two years have resulted in a sharp drop in enrollment. Through policy, we have removed some of these barriers and are working to make sure families are aware of program availability and are getting the assistance they need in this interim period. We are mindful that the perception that funding is not needed could result in further budget cuts to this program when budget discussions resume in the legislature.

### *Ideas or Topics in Development:*

- Early learning as part of education strategy and funding to close the opportunity and achievement gap
- Birth to three set-aside as part of PreK expansion
- Implementation of state PreK program as entitlement by 2018
- Expansion of Early Achievers (WA's QRIS system)
- Expansion of WaKIDS (Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills)
- State-Local Coordination Project, which may result in changes to Early Learning Advisory Council
- Increasing child care subsidy rates while increasing quality

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  \$1M in additional funds (to total of \$1.4M) for WaKIDS for FY13
-  \$1.1M transferred from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Department of Early Learning for implementation of an electronic benefit transfer system to electronically track child care attendance, make payments, and interface with the eligibility information technology system. Funding is also provided for a consultant to evaluate and recommend the optimum system for the eligibility determination process.

## RECENT POLICY CHANGES

-  Child care subsidy eligibility restored to 200% FPL
-  Child support enforcement requirement removed as barrier to accessing child care
-  12-month reauthorization periods for families receiving child care subsidies

## **POLITICAL CHALLENGES**

- Inclusion of early learning in education funding streams resulting from the recent McCleary lawsuit, which found in January 2012 that the state was not adequately funding public education
- Changes to Governor's office and staffing, and changes in legislature and state agencies, including the major loss of the recently retired Senate Majority Leader, who was a backstop for early learning in the Senate
- Implementing and expanding our efforts in an environment where leadership is reluctant to propose revenue options and the public is reluctant to support new revenue

## **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Using our progress in early learning through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge to promote efforts to improve access to quality
- Continuing to build momentum and understanding of early learning with a bipartisan group of new and existing legislative members
- Reframing education conversation as about raising the bar and closing the gaps so that early learning is part of a continuum and a fundamental strategy to a strong education system

## **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION**

- WaKIDS (Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) is expanding into all full-day kindergarten classes.
- Washington's new Early Learning and Development Guidelines include information from prenatal through third grade:  
<http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/Guidelines.pdf>

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- We are expanding Early Achievers, Washington's QRIS system, and WaKIDS through RTT-ELC.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Leslie Dozono, Early Learning Policy Director, Children's Alliance: 206-324-0340 ext. 20,  
[leslie@childrensalliance.org](mailto:leslie@childrensalliance.org)

# Wisconsin

## BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

### Current Agenda:

- Sustain and Improve YoungStar, Wisconsin's QRIS, with an improved tiered reimbursement system
- Build a statewide system for early learning and development
- Improve child care payment policies, and prevent further declines in payments
- Strengthen family engagement, particularly with infants and toddlers
- Support effective use of Race to the Top funds

### Ideas or Topics in Development:

- Birth to 8 framework, building on Read to Lead initiative
- Assess 4-year-old kindergarten quality and effectiveness

## RECENT STATE BUDGET CHANGES



\$9M in TANF shifted from child care subsidy to other TANF services



Badger Care health coverage for some low-income children and families was in some jeopardy, but the proposed cuts did not occur

## PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

Governor's budget proposal will be released in February 2013.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Sustaining and improving YoungStar, a fairly new and bold QRIS program, with over 4,000 programs participating affecting over 50,000 children
- Protecting early learning programs in an environment of budget cutting and limited revenue
- Maintaining funding for basic services: child care subsidy, 4-year-old kindergarten, Head Start/Early Head Start, YoungStar, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and wage supplement, services to children with disabilities, and home visiting

## POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Taking advantage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Race to the Top funding to build a strong early learning infrastructure, working with the Early Childhood Advisory Council
- YoungStar has the potential to transform child care quality over time
- Expanding private sector support as a public-private partnership is implemented, and business and civic leaders get more involved

## LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD TO K-12 EDUCATION

- Our Early Learning Coalition has set developing a Birth to Eight framework, working with key partners from K-12.

## **RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPACT**

- Wisconsin is applying for \$22.7M in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of RTT-ELC. Wisconsin's Coalition is working to influence the direction of the policies and funding.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Dave Edie, Early Education Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families: 608-284-0580 ext 315, [dedie@wccf.org](mailto:dedie@wccf.org)