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Highlights

Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness

The Ounce of Prevention Fund, together with the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), released two new tools to assist states in utilizing the CCDF Plan as a vehicle for advancing access to child care for children and families experiencing homelessness. Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: CCDF State Guide and its companion piece, the CCDF Self-Assessment, provide background information on child and family homelessness as it relates to early care and education, a summary of requirements of the CCDBG Act related to homelessness, and a summary of some of the opportunities available through the state CCDF Plan to improve access to this vital support for families who experience homelessness.

The guide is organized according to the CCDF draft preprint that was released on September 14, 2015, and summarizes key policy and practice opportunities that can be addressed in each section to advance access and quality for homeless families. The self-assessment tool identifies key policies and practices that may improve inclusivity of homeless children in early care and education programs and services. State advocates or administrators can use this tool to identify policies and practices that are already in place, as well as those they could consider implementing or enhancing. Find the two tools [here](#).

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Federal Updates

Appropriations

Congress is still finalizing appropriation levels by the time the current continuing resolution ends on December 11. The budget deal secured in late October increases funding for the next two years over the sequestration cap level for a total of \$80 billion, but it still needs to be parsed out between programs. Therefore, the final funding levels for many early childhood care and education programs remain to be seen - including child care assistance, Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships, Early Head Start and Head Start, in addition to the Preschool Development Grants program that was not included in previous appropriations bill drafts. Read statements from [First Five Years Fund](#) (FFYF), [ZERO TO THREE](#), the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) (CLASP), and [Food Research and Action Center](#) (FRAC).

Preschool Development Grants

Elevating the importance and state need for the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program, the National Governors Association (NGA) released a bipartisan letter urging Congress to continue funding for the program. Read the letter [here](#) and coverage from Education Week and FFYF [here](#) and [here](#).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The House is poised to vote on bipartisan conferenced legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA/S.1777), with the Senate following suit next week. The conference committee-chaired by Rep. John Kline-released a draft of ESSA earlier this week after weeks of negotiations over the House- and Senate-passed versions, Student Success Act (HR5) and Every Child Achieves Act (S.1777), respectively. The current draft includes language for the Preschool Development Grants program to be jointly administered through the US Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. It also has an emphasis on encouraging greater early learning and elementary education alignment. Read Education Week's analysis of the bill [here](#) and First Five Years Fund's support for the bill [here](#). Read The Seventy Four's take on what was at stake for ECE during conference [here](#).

Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)

The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a joint report that shows states receiving Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants are rapidly improving the quality of their early education programs. The report comes on the heels of an annual performance review for the 20 states who have received \$1 billion in grants since 2011. The report identified that more low- and moderate-income children are being enrolled in highest quality early learning programs and thousands more children are receiving early medical and developmental health screenings. Read the 2014 RTT-ELC Progress Report [here](#). Read the individual state RTT-ELC Annual Performance Reports for 2014 [here](#). Read summary by First Five Years Fund (FFYF) [here](#) and media coverage by Education Week [here](#).

Child Care

- Sen. Patty Murray, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee highlighted the need for affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care by introducing a Senate Resolution outlining principles for meeting these goals during a "Call to Action" hosted by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC). Read the Senate Resolution signed by 22 other Senators [here](#). Read more about the call and resolution [here](#) and [here](#).
 - The Director of the Office of Child Care, Rachel Schumacher, marked the one-year anniversary of Congress passing the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization Act of 2014. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
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Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

To improve the CACFP, Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Elise Stefanik introduced H.R. 3886, The Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act, which complements the bill introduced in the Senate earlier this year by Sen. Bob Casey--S. 1833, The Access to Healthy Food for Young Children Act of 2015. Read more [here](#).

Parent Interventions

US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), released a package of new resources on finding and implementing evidence-

based and culturally-appropriate parent interventions for states, schools, and early childhood programs. Find the "Compendium of Parenting Interventions" that profiles parenting-interventions [here](#) and the "Implementing Parenting Interventions in Early Care and Education Settings: A Guidebook for Implementation" [here](#). More information from ACF about the new resources and other related initiatives available [here](#).

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Policy Trends and Analysis

Parent Incarceration

As new research suggests that many more children have had at least one parent in prison than previously thought-about five million or seven percent of all children-Child Trends published "Parents Behind Bars: What Happens to Their Children?" in which researchers analyze child outcomes reported by the National Survey of Children's Health as it relates to parent incarceration. Read more [here](#).

State Early Childhood Education

The Ounce of Prevention Fund National Policy Team surveyed state advocates in 22 states for its "State Policy Update: November 2015" report. It includes both budget and policy changes that occurred over the recent legislative session, as well as a snapshot of advocates' birth-to-five policy priorities, opportunities and challenges looking toward 2016. Read more [here](#).

Home Visiting

Center for American Progress argues for the adoption of evidence-based home visiting services as an optional Medicaid benefit to support increasing access to the program in its new brief, "Paying It Forward: New Medicaid Home Visiting Option Would Expand Evidence-Based Services." Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Investment

- The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) released "Renewing Childhood's Promise: The History and Future of Federal Early Care and Education Policy," that claims after analyzing data that the federal government's path with regard to helping young children over the past hundred years has been 'circuitous, unintentional.' The report also calls for additional state flexibility with federal funds, with a commitment to innovation. Read more [here](#).
 - ReadyNation published "The Case for Investing in America's Hispanic Young Children," highlighting the fact that the fastest growing group of children in the US are Hispanic children with estimates that the child population will be one-third Hispanic by 2050. Read more [here](#).
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Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The Brookings Institute's Elizabeth Kneebone updated the EITC Interactive data tool this year to allow users to view data on EITC receipt by number of claimed children in addition to share of filers claiming EITC and the benefit level by local community. Read more and view the tool [here](#).

Workforce

The University of California, Berkeley's Center for the Study of Child Care Employment and Institute of Research on Labor and Employment released "Early Childhood Higher Education:

Taking Stock Across the States" as part of its Early Childhood Education Higher Education Inventory project. It highlights the extent to which professional development in several states is integrated across a birth-to-age-eight continuum. Read more [here](#). Learn about the Higher Education Inventory Project [here](#).

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New Research

Child Care

Researchers from the Urban Institute and the University of Chicago published the final report from the Illinois-New York Child Care Research Partnership, a mixed-methods multi-year study of the subsidy and child care experiences in these states. "Determinants of Subsidy Stability and Child Care Continuity," includes findings from the quantitative portion of the study that include the fact that child care subsidy spells are in short duration and exit from the program clusters around length of eligibility period. Read more [here](#).

State-Level Collaboration

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) funded the Education Development Center to study early care and education administrators' state-level collaboration in "A National Snapshot of State-Level Collaboration for Early Care and Education." Read more [here](#).

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Upcoming Events

December 3, 2015

The Early Childhood Hearing Outreach Initiative (ECHO) is hosting "Planning Evidence-Based Hearing Screening Practices for Children 0-3 Years of Age" webinar.

[Register >](#)

December 8, 2015

The Office of Head Start is hosting a webinar "State Early Childhood Education Systems and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework."

[Register >](#)

December 8, 2015

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is hosting a webinar on its new resources called "Introducing a Compendium of Evidenced-Based Parenting Intervention."

[Register >](#)

December 10, 2015

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) is hosting the second webinar in a series about family tax credits, "Part II: Tax Credits Outreach: Tips and Tools for Advocates."

[Register >](#)

December 18, 2016

The application to join the 2016 Learning Table on State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning hosted by the BUILD Initiative and the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is due.

[Learn More & Apply >](#)

February 28 - March 1, 2016

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) and Feeding America are hosting the 2016 National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in Washington, DC.

[Register >](#)

News and Resources

Infant-Toddler

ZERO TO THREE's Policy Center has released "Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Toolkit for States." This toolkit is intended to help state policy leaders and advocates assess the current status of services for infants, toddlers, and their families and set priorities for improvement. This toolkit is a revised version of a previous ZTT self-assessment tool. Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Education

- The Strategies for Children blog, *Eye on Early Education*, wrote about how housing authorities can be powerful early childhood education collaboration partners, especially in response to the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR). Read more [here](#).
- *Education Week's* columnist Mark Walsh reviews the five-episode free online public television documentary called "The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation." Read more [here](#). Read more about the documentary [here](#).
- Christina Samuels writes for *Education Week* about results from a graduate school research survey by Erica Greenberg, currently a research associate at the Urban Institute, on the preferences for government-funded preschool in 2013 that found Republicans were more likely to favor cuts in preschool spending. Read more [here](#).
- *The Atlantic's* Alia Wong profiles a new report by Child Trends on the impact of parent incarceration on children's education. Read more [here](#).

Home Visiting

- The Pew Charitable Trust officially ended its home visiting project thanking its partners across the country and highlighting the positive movement in home visiting it has been able to support—launch of the Data for Performance Initiative, extension of funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, and increase in state funding and awareness of the program. Learn more about Pew's other family-focused projects, such as decreasing barriers to dental care access, [here](#).
- Pew also announced that the Ounce of Prevention Fund will host the 6th Annual National Home Visiting Summit in fall 2016. Read more [here](#).

Pay for Success (PFS)

- Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning, Libby Doggett, announced on the US Department of Education's blog *Home Room* the appointment of Janis Dubno as a PFS Fellow with the Department of Education. Read more [here](#).
- Utah's US Sen. Orrin Hatch and Chairman of the Gardner Company Kem Gardner published an op-ed in *The Salt Lake Tribune* about the success of Utah's PFS model and Senator Hatch's amendment to the Early Child Achieves Act--the Senate's version of ESEA reauthorization--allowing states to implement PFS models. Read more [here](#). Nathaniel Popper in *The New York Time's DealB%k* column and Vox' Early Childhood Education section both profiled the payout Goldman Sachs received in light of positive results from the Utah PFS model during the early stages. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- Numerous commentators weighed in on the Pay for Success model currently being utilized in Utah.
 - Nathaniel Popper then investigated the Utah PFS metrics again in DealB%k, questioning whether the structure was appropriate and the effect of the investment was overstated. Read more [here](#).
 - Bill Crim, the President and CEO of United Way of Salt Lake--one of the organizers in the PFS deal and co-payer to Goldman Sachs and other investors--stood by the program, claiming the NYT article misstates aspects of the metrics. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
 - Luke Garrott, a Salt Lake City Council member and an associate professor of political science at the University of Utah, penned an op-ed congratulating the city for investing more in pre-k but calling out the PFS structure for benefiting private capital. Read more [here](#).
 - Duke University Public Policy Professor and Director of the Center for Child and Family Policy, Ken Dodge, responded with a column in DealB%k about the need to not dismiss PFS initiatives based on recent critiques of Utah. Read more [here](#).
 - Bellweather Education Partners' Sara Mead penned an op-ed in *U.S. News and World Report* about the challenges of social impact bonds and the difficulty in identifying appropriate outcome metrics for early childhood programs. Read more [here](#).

Poverty

ZERO TO THREE released an infographic on poverty and brain development. View the infographic [here](#). Read Executive Director Matthew Melmed's op-ed in the Huffington Post about child poverty [here](#).

Mental Health

Trust for America's Health released "A Healthy Early Childhood Action Plan: Policies for a Lifetime of Well-being," a report that includes 40 policy target areas necessary for reducing toxic stress and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) in the lives of young children. Read more [here](#).

Grandparents

Generations United's National Center on Grandparents, in partnership with CFED and Citi, released "The Resounding Resiliency of Grandfamilies: Financial Stories from Older Relatives Caring for Children in Lower-Income Communities." Read more [here](#).

Suspension and Expulsion

Texas Appleseed published "Suspended Childhood: An Analysis of Exclusionary Discipline of Texas' Pre-K and Elementary School Student" that among other things found that nearly 45 percent of the 88,000 out-of-school suspensions issued in 2013-14 to pre-k through fifth grade students went to children in pre-k to second grade. Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Investment

Steve Nash, two-time NBA MVP and president of the Steve Nash Foundation, called for a greater investment in quality early learning opportunities for disadvantaged children in a new PSA with the Invest in US campaign. Watch [here](#). Educare Arizona in Phoenix hosted "Steve Nash Day" where the Phoenix Suns' basketball great Steve highlighted the schools' annual fundraising drive. Read more [here](#).

Preschool

- The current issue of NCSL's *State Legislatures Magazine* profiles preschool programs and trends around the country. Read more [here](#).
- New America's Abbie Lieberman writes about the pros and cons of targeted versus universal pre-K. Read more [here](#).
- The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) created an annotated bibliography on program quality improvements that includes selected resources to assist states in assessing their current continuous quality improvement process for preschool programs as they expand services to increase access to high quality programs. Read more [here](#).
- CEELO published "Preschool Program Quality Assurance System Discussion Guide" that was created to assist policymakers with a review of states' Preschool Program Quality Assurance Systems (PPQAS). Read more [here](#).
- *New York Magazine's* Lisa Miller wrote about the results from the Tennessee Vanderbilt study in light of other research that supports investments in high-quality early learning programs such as preschool. Read more [here](#).

Child Care

- Gillian White writes for *The Atlantic* about the contrast between the cost of child care and the fact that child care workers remain poor. Read more [here](#).
- *Politico* covers the Economic Policy Institute report on the cost of child care. Read more [here](#).

Child Nutrition

- *The Boston Globe* reports on the issue that many child care providers in Massachusetts are failing to use the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to reimburse for healthy meals and snacks either because of lack of knowledge or administrative burden. Data come from the Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children analysis. Read more [here](#).

- The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) released a new issue of its periodical e-newsletter FRAC Focus on the topic of obesity and poverty. Read more [here](#).

Technology

The New York Times' Catherine Saint Louis writes about the findings of a study in which young children are being left unsupervised with mobile devices. Read more [here](#).

Head Start

The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) updated its Head Start Resources application for Apple and Android mobile devices that includes techniques and strategies to support work in Head Start programs. Download the app [here](#).

Self-Regulation

Child Care & Early Education Research Connections published a topic of interest "Interventions to Promote Young Children's Self-Regulation and Executive Function Skills in Early Childhood Settings." Read more [here](#).

QRIS

The American Institutes for Research examined the prevalence of quality improvement supports in state and regional QRISs in a new brief, "Moving Up the Ladder: How Do States Deliver Quality Improvement Supports Within Their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems?" Read more [here](#).

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News From The States

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California

- California's incoming state Assembly speaker, Anthony Rendon, ran child care and preschool centers at the beginning of his career and shares his plans to help restore the cuts to early education programs during the recession and to address the problem with minimum wage increases impacting child care subsidy eligibility. Read more [here](#).
- Lillian Mongeau profiles California's transitional kindergarten program's age eligibility laws in The Hechinger Report and the issue that only certain children qualify for a year of preschool based on their birthday and many others do not. Read more [here](#).
- Deborah Kong, the President of Early Edge California, published an op-ed in *The Huffington Post* about the need for the state to seriously consider and commit to its plan for preschool expansion after Gov. Brown vetoed AB 47, the Preschool for All Act. Read more [here](#).
- Margaret Lavin wrote for the *San Mateo County Times* about the opening of the first Educare school in California, Educare California at Silicon Valley. Read more [here](#).
- *The Press Enterprise* Editorial Board wrote about the need to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and child care subsidies. Read more [here](#).

Colorado

- *Colorado Chalkbeat* profiles the increasing utilization of the Pyramid Plus Approach at Colorado preschools and the impact it has had on addressing the needs of children with challenging behaviors and avoiding expulsion as the main option. Read more [here](#).
 - The Executive Director of the Aspen Community Foundation penned a column in *The Aspen Times* about the founding of the Cradle to Career Initiative and the role of collective impact strategy in the city. Read more [here](#).
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Florida

- The Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee reviewed a report on the impact of job cuts to the Early Steps program and its ability to meet federal compliance and therefore is looking to propose legislation in 2016 to fix the problems. Read more [here](#).
 - The CEOs of Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend and Kids Incorporated wrote in *The Tallahassee Democrat* about the 14 local early learning coalitions in Florida that are operating or piloting QRIS programs and the need for state legislation to continue to drive the momentum toward quality child care and for local communities to continue in its absence. Read more [here](#).
 - *The National Journal* highlighted the recent report from the National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families about Latino preschoolers in Miami being more prepared for kindergarten than national averages. Read more [here](#).
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Illinois

- Governor Rauner and his administration agreed to roll back the child care eligibility restrictions put in place at the beginning of the fiscal year through emergency rule. Eligibility will be increased to 162 percent of Federal Poverty Line from 50 percent, the child support requirements will be suspended, and the restrictive background checks for relative caregivers will be suspended. Read media coverage [here](#) and a press release from early childhood advocacy organizations [here](#). The Joint Committee on Administrative Rulemaking (JCAR) voted to enact this agreement. Read more [here](#).
 - State Democrats in the House failed to pass by one vote Senate Bill 570. The legislation would have rolled back all the changes and codified in statute the child care eligibility rules at 185 percent of federal poverty line and protected the rules from similar emergency rule changes in the future. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
 - Julie Bosman with *The New York Times* reviews the background and current impact of Illinois' budget impasse. Read more [here](#). CBS Chicago reports that the state leaders agreed to meet on November 18 about the situation, however the budget summit was postponed because of an out-of-state funeral House Speaker Mike Madigan had to attend. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
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Kansas

- The Kansas education commissioner, Randy Watson, laid out the Department of Education's new, outcomes-centered vision at the department's annual conference. Read more [here](#). *The Capital-Journal* Editorial Advisory Board writes that the commissioner is correct in emphasizing that students need to be prepared for kindergarten. Read more [here](#).
- Joe Robertson for *The Kansas City Star* writes about the efforts in Tulsa Oklahoma to improve preschool programs and the hard work the city still has in front of it, in light of Kansas City's interest in voting on a property tax increase to fund expanded work. Read more [here](#).

Louisiana

- Democratic-gubernatorial candidate John Bel Edwards defeated republican-candidate Sen. David Vitter in the election at the end of November. Read more [here](#).
- Families in New Orleans are now able to sign up for preschool slots through the OneApp program that houses enrollment for all programs, up to 5,000 children. Read more [here](#).
- Many Louisiana businesses, individuals, and groups are failing to take advantage of a dollar-for-dollar refundable tax credit for donations to early learning centers in the state. Read more [here](#).
- Segan March writes for *The Shreveport Times* about experts' opinions on the benefits of universal pre-k in Louisiana. Read more [here](#).

Michigan

- WWJ Newsradio 950, the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The Kresge Foundation, hosted a special broadcast focusing on business and early childhood education. Listen [here](#).

New Mexico

- Winthrop Quigley wrote a follow up piece to his UpFront column in the *Albuquerque Journal* about what could be done to improve the lives of New Mexico's children that included early childhood education and care and nurture supports to parents. Read more [here](#).
- US Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich backed a resolution that outlines principles on how child care quality can be improved while reducing the cost. Read more [here](#).

New York

- The average annual cost of infant care would require a family of three living at the poverty line to spend over half of their income on it in New York City. Read more [here](#).

- According to *Crain's New York Business* many private preschools are facing lowered enrollment rates and consequently funding issues because of the expansion of Mayor de Blasio's preschool program in New York City. Read more [here](#).
- Success Academy Founder CEO, a charter school in New York City, promises to fight the city in court if it continues to require authority over her program in order to receive public funding. Read more [here](#).

Oklahoma

- ImpactTulsa released its second annual report finding that only about 60 percent of kindergarteners can read at or above grade level in the Tulsa area. Read more [here](#).

Washington

- Implementation is under way for the Early Start Act as advocates are in the midst of hosting meetings to help align child care licensing and standards for ECEAP, a component of the legislation. Read more [here](#).

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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.

The National Policy Digest is a bi-monthly newsletter that shares up-to-date and noteworthy developments in state and federal early childhood news, policy and funding changes, research, policy trends and analyses, upcoming events, etc. culled from diverse sources in the field. To subscribe, please contact Sharrell Hibbler (shibbler@theounce.org)



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