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Highlights

Essential Supports for Improving Early Education

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is releasing the series, Essential Supports for Improving Early Education that explores our field-tested approach to strengthening early education settings and leadership for achieving continuous quality improvement. This series provides a deep dive on what we learned during our Investing in Innovation (i3) work about how to cultivate inclusive and instructional leadership practices and systems of job-embedded professional learning. [Learn more.](#)

We are excited to share with you these two new briefs:

- [Reimagining Instructional Leadership and Organizational Conditions for Improvement: Applied Research Transforming Early Education](#) argues that we must broaden our understanding of improvement beyond the field's sole focus on classroom-level processes to the organizational processes that create conditions essential to teaching, learning and improvement.
- [Job-Embedded Professional Learning Essential to Improving Teaching and Learning in Early Education](#) makes the case that the field must abandon traditional professional development and replace it with the organizational and sustained support of job-embedded professional learning (JEPL) and details our recommendations for implementation as well as our policy recommendations.

New Survey Development Brief

The Ounce of Prevention Fund, together with the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, is pleased to share with you our co-authored brief, [Essential Organizational Supports for Early Education: The Development of a New Survey Tool to Measure Organizational Conditions](#). This paper briefly introduces the field to the need to broaden our understanding, definition and focus of quality and quality improvement, then chronicles the rigorous survey development methodology and initial pilot results we employed. [Learn more.](#)

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Federal Updates

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

The US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a national report, state reports and summary [fact sheet](#) about the work in RTT-ELC states to expand access to high-quality early learning with the \$1 billion federal investment. [The Washington Post](#) also covered the release of the report.

Child Care Health and Safety

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA) published nine new briefs on child care health and safety provisions in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. Find the new briefs at that Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System [website](#).

Early Childhood Systems

The Child Care State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) announced the nine states and territories chosen for the [Impact Project for States and Territories](#). The chosen places include Colorado, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon and South Carolina.

Homelessness and ESSA

The US Department of Education released [guidance](#) on how Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) can work to serve the nation's 1.3 million children experiencing homelessness.

Accountability and ESSA

The US Department of Education accepted over 21,000 comments from its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking addressing Accountability and State Plans in ESSA. The Ounce of Prevention Fund submitted [comments](#) with a number of partners. Additionally, over 30 national and state organizations submitted joint comments. Read more on First Five Years Fund [blog](#).

Early Childhood Workforce

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) commissioned a white paper about "[Proposed Revisions to the Definitions for the Early Childhood Workforce in the Standard Occupational Classification](#)" in order to respond to a request for comment by the Office of Management and Budget for the 2018 revision of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

Child Nutrition

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the [final rule](#) for the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Quality Preschool

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) published "[Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High Quality: A State and Local Policy Scan](#)" that reviews state

capacity of 41 states, the District of Columbia and three large cities along three clusters-enabling environment, rigorous policies and strong practices.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) published "[Best Practices in Creating and Adapting QRIS Rating Scales - Brief & Report](#)" outlining the three principles of scale development-dimensionality, item selection and item scoring.

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New Research

Classroom Quality and Social Skills

Researchers with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Utrecht University in the Netherlands published "[Classroom quality at pre-kindergarten and kindergarten and children's social skills and behavior problems](#)" in the Early Childhood Research Quarterly. The paper found associations between higher quality pre-k and kindergarten classrooms and more social skills and fewer behavior problems.

Head Start and Children with Disabilities

Researchers with Michigan State University found positive correlations between the literacy, reading and math scores of children with disabilities and their placement in Head Start in a new study published in the [Journal of Social Service Research](#).

Child Health

The Academic Pediatrics journal published a [Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center study](#) that suggests a child's address is an appropriate addition to or even substitute for current methods for identifying children at-risk for asthma.

Child Nutrition

Researchers from the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy published "[Fewer Than Half of WIC-Eligible Families Receive WIC Benefits](#)" that analyzes the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) enrollment data.

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Upcoming Events

October 13-14, 2016

The Institute for Child Success (ICS) is hosting the [Fourth Annual ICS Early Childhood Research Symposium](#) in collaboration with the University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

November 15-16, 2016

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is hosting the [Sixth National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs](#) in Washington D.C.

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News and Resources

Early Childhood Investment

Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan penned an op-ed in [The U.S. News & World Report](#) about the need for additional investment in early childhood education.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP)

The National Center on Subsidy Innovation and Accountability (NCSIA) created "[The Cost Estimation Tool for EHS-CCP Services](#)" to assist EHS-CCP grantees and partners plan.

Social Emotional Learning

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) [announced](#) the eight states selected for its two-year Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Washington will partner with CASEL "on the development of policies, learning standards and guidelines to support statewide implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL)."

Home Visiting

Looking for professional development opportunities for home visitors and supervisors? Learn more about Achieve OnDemand™- online training made by home visiting experts at the Ounce. Achieve OnDemand offers a wide breadth of directly relevant topics that address the field's most pressing concerns. Visit theOunce.org/AchieveOnDemand to learn more.

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News From The States

[AZ](#) | [CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [IN](#) | [KS](#) | [MI](#) | [NH](#) | [NM](#) |

Arizona

- At the end of July the state began enrolling children in KidsCare, the state's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), for the first time in six years when the enrollment was frozen. It is estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 children will be eligible. This change means that every state is offering a CHIP program again. Read more in [Healthcare Finance](#).
 - Educare Arizona welcomed its sixth class of children which helps the program cross the milestone of serving 1000 children since opening five years ago reports [AZBigMedia](#) .
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California

- [EdSource](#) profiles the path a child care center in California went through to move from the lowest to highest rating in California's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
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Colorado

- Anne Schimke with [Chalkbeat](#) wrote about a stakeholder event held at the governor's mansion about preschool suspension and expulsion.

- U.S. Secretary of Education John King Jr. visited Denver and spoke with over 30 state education leaders about Colorado's early childhood system progress made possible by the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. Read more in [KUNC](#) and [Chalkbeat](#).
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Florida

- The Mayor of Tallahassee, Andrew Gillum, penned an op-ed in the [Tallahassee Democrat](#) about the steps the city has taken to look at ways to improve services to children and families and how to move the work forward.
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Indiana

- The [AllIN4PreK](#) campaign shared the roadmap for expanding high-quality early learning for Indiana children, "[Success Starts Early: Indiana's Roadmap for Pre-K Expansion.](#)"
 - The [South Bend Tribune Editorial Board](#) called for support of the AllIN4Pre-K campaign that is calling for expansion of high-quality preschool.
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Kansas

- The [Kansas City Star Editorial Board](#) supports policies that invest in children and families, citing the recent Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count data release.
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Michigan

- Michigan's Children produced a "[Budget Basics Report](#)" outlining components of the FY17 state budget that support children and families.
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New Hampshire

- Director of Spark NH Laura Milliken published an op-ed in the [New Hampshire Union Leader](#) about the need for quality early childhood education in the state.
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New Mexico

- The New Mexico State Land Commissioner proposed a bill for the 2017 legislative session that would direct revenue from unleased federal subsurface mineral acreage beneath private land to a grant fund, the Early Childhood Education Land Grant Permanent Fund. Read more in [KRWG](#).
 - [Las Cruces Sun-News](#) reports the state's announcement to transfer \$3.5 million of unused pre-k funds to the Early Pre-Kindergarten pilot program, bringing the total for the program to \$10.5 million.
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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 visit our [website](#).



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