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Highlights

HHS Unveils New Head Start Program Performance Standards!

Earlier this month, the US Department of Health and Human Services announced new Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)-the first comprehensive revision since the standards were originally published in 1975 and following the June 2016 NPRM draft HSPSS released for public comment. As HHS notes, the "the updated Standards reflect current research, science and best practice. They describe high-quality service delivery so Head Start is better able to focus on outcomes for children and families. They also reduce administrative and regulatory burden and improve clarity and transparency."

- Read the [Final Rule](#) online and as well as an overview of the changes from the [Office of Head Start](#).
- Members of Congress responded to the new standards including a [joint statement](#) from Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) and Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee Chairman Todd Rokita (R-IN) and a [statement](#) from Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee
- Media coverage about the new standards include the [U.S. News & World Report](#), [Education Week](#) and the [The Wall Street Journal](#).
- Read statements from research and advocacy groups such as [First Five Years Fund](#), [New America](#) and [National Head Start Association](#).

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Federal Updates

Census Data

Last week the United States Census Bureau released its [annual data](#) on income, poverty and health insurance for the country and states and local areas in [2015](#). Data from the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement indicated that positive improvements in the three key indicators of well-being as

there were decreases in the rate of the uninsured and people living in poverty, as well as, increases in income. Data from the American Community Survey indicated that many states saw a decrease in poverty and increase in income between 2014 and 2015. Read commentary from:

- The White House's Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors [Jason Furman](#)
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' [Robert Greenstein](#), the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#), and the [National Women's Law Center](#)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

August marked the 20th anniversary of welfare reform and the creation of the TANF program and a number of news and advocacy outlets marked the occasion - including [Center for Law and Social Policy](#), [FiveThirtyEight](#), [NPR](#) and [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).

Positive Behavioral Interventions

The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services invested \$1 million in new funding to support the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Pyramid Equity Project. Instead of removing young children from their learning environment, either through suspension or expulsion, the Pyramid Equity Project aims to disseminate tools, materials and procedures that support prevention of suspension, expulsion, and discipline disparities in early learning programs by elevating the use of evidence-based practices and approaches to promote positive social, emotional and behavioral development. Two Preschool Development Grantees, the Clifton Early Learner Academy in Clifton, NJ, and Cambridge Early Learning Center in Antioch, TN, are partnering with the Pyramid Equity Project as demonstration sites. Read more from [First Five Years Fund](#).

Pay for Success

The U.S. Department of Education [announced](#) the application for its \$2.8 million Preschool Pay for Success grant competition for doing feasibility studies of utilizing Pay for Success to expand and improve early learning.

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Early Childhood Workforce

The Center for American Progress released "[Underpaid and Unequal: Racial Wage Disparities in the Early Childhood Workforce](#)," about how "the poor compensation and benefits are felt most acutely by African American women in the early childhood workforce."

Medicaid and Mental Health

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) published "[Using Medicaid to Help Young Children and Parents Access Mental Health Services: Results of a 50-State Survey](#)," that presents findings on key services:

- Early childhood mental health services in pediatric, home and early care and education settings
- Dyadic treatment
- Parenting programs
- Maternal depression screening during well-child visits

- Behavioral health case management/care coordination

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Education Commission of the States summarized the key issues education leaders and policymakers should know to implement portions of ESSA in its new publication "[ESSA: Quick Guide on Top Issues.](#)"

Student Parents

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) produced a new briefing paper, "[Child Care for Parents in College: A State-by-State Assessment](#)" that highlights the declining availability in child care centers on college campuses across the country.

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New Research

Suspensions and Expulsions

Dr. Walter Gilliam and other researchers at the Yale Child Study Center at the Yale School of Medicine published [results](#) of a study that followed the statewide Early Childhood Consultation Program (ECCP) in Connecticut and demonstrated promising results of pairing mental health consultation with preschool classrooms. Read more in the [Huffington Post](#).

Head Start

Lauren Bauer and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach analyzed the impact of Head Start on new long-term outcomes using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) in the Brookings Institute new economic analysis report "[The long-term impact of the Head Start program.](#)"

Mental Health

The International Journal of Health Services published a new study "[Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mental Health Care for Children and Young Adults.](#)" Read more from [Kaiser Health News](#).

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News and Resources

Early Childhood Investment

First Five Years Fund released its newest [state poll](#) that shows that state and federal investment in early childhood education is a top priority for Ohio voters, consistent with the last state poll in 2014. Providing greater access to quality, affordable early childhood education remains a bipartisan issue, with majorities of Republicans, Democrats and Independents saying the state should provide funding for high-quality early education programs for three- and four-year-olds from low- and middle-income families. And, nearly three-quarters of Ohio voters support a federal plan to help states and local communities provide better early childhood education.

Health and Safety

The Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System with the US Department of Health and Human Services released

Program Standards

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (NCECQA) created an online program standards [crosswalk tool](#) that is prepopulated with national early childhood program standards.

Preschool Quality

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) created the [Cost of Preschool Quality Tool \(CPQ\)](#) to assist state administrators and policymakers with information on the cost of high-quality preschool.

Early Childhood Workforce

Jessica Sager, the founder and executive director of All Our Kin, published an op-ed in [TIME Magazine](#) about the need to value early childhood educators in conjunction with the Labor Day holiday.

Presidential Election

Lillian Mongeau interviewed Democratic Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton about early education for [The Atlantic](#).

Absenteeism

Alexandra Tilsley describes on the Urban Institute's [Urban Wire](#) about the issue of prekindergarten absenteeism.

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News From The States

[CA](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [KS](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [MA](#) | [MI](#) | [NE](#) | [NH](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [TN](#) | [WA](#) | [WI](#) |

California

- First 5 LA launched the Family Strengthening Public Awareness Campaign and Parenting [website](#) to empower and support parents in Los Angeles County reports [The LA Sentinel](#).
 - Alex Johnson, the executive director for the Children's Defense Fund-California, published a [post](#) on the California Health Report about the California Children's Services (CCS) program and proposals in the legislature.
 - The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) child care policy experts argued in favor of Assembly Bill 2150 (AB 2150) that would implement key provisions of the CCDBG reauthorization changes in a new [In Focus](#) post
 - The associate director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) published an op-ed in [Education Week](#) about the new PACE report "[PreK-3 Alignment in California's Education System: Obstacles and Opportunities](#)" and steps need to be taken in California.
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Florida

- The Central Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce hosted an economic forum luncheon on "The Importance of Early Childhood Education" reports [The Palm Beach Post](#).
 - [WFTV Channel 9](#) reports on the decline in funding for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK) over the past decade.
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Illinois

- A Cook County judge dismissed the lawsuit against the state brought forward by the Pay Now Illinois Coalition on behalf of 97 social service agencies for \$161 million in missed payments and interest during the budget impasse reports [The Chicago Sun Times](#) saying it should be resolved in the appellate court. This ruling came after the Attorney General argued sovereign immunity protects the state against breach of contracts reports [Crain's Chicago Business](#).
 - The City of Chicago set up an online portal for families and caregivers to enroll children in early learning programs - including Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-k and related programs - reports [Crain's Chicago Business](#).
 - SEIU Healthcare Illinois pushed the legislation, SB 730, that looked to expand eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to families with incomes between 185% and 250% of the Federal Poverty Line. [Progress Illinois](#) reports Gov. Rauner's statement upon vetoing the legislation.
 - [Moody's Investors Service](#) is warning the state of Illinois that a second year without a comprehensive budget could signal another deterioration in Illinois' credit position.
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Indiana

- AllIN4PreK, a campaign focused on helping Indiana push forward in funding and providing high-quality preschool driven by a coalition of Indiana families, community leaders and business leaders officially launched in August. Read more from the [The South Bend Tribune](#) opinion pages, the regional president of PNC Bank, Northern Indiana in the [Journal Gazette](#), Madelene Denton in the [IndyStar](#).
 - The [Indy Star](#) reported on a gubernatorial candidate forum in which preschool was a topic of interest.
 - Eli Lilly and Co. CEO John Lechleiter and his wife, Sarah, [donated \\$5 million](#) to the United Way to be matched for a total of \$10 million. The majority will go to the United Way of Central Indiana to support the expansion of early childhood education and the Center for Working Families network in Indiana.
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Kansas

- [The Wichita Eagle Editorial Board](#) wrote about the need for the state to address the remaining gaps related to health and safety in the child care regulations.
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Louisiana

- The Louisiana Department of Education circulated a new [Early Childhood Newsletter](#) with information, guidance and resources to assist centers, teachers and children impacted by the floods.
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Maine

- [The Bangor Daily News](#) published In Focus investigative [articles](#) about the increase in infant mortality in the state despite decreases across the nation and the lack of results in home visiting expansion despite millions from the federal government to do just that.
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Massachusetts

- Lillian Mongeau highlighted the Boston pre-k program in [The Hechinger Report](#).
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Michigan

- The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation are awarding \$1.5 million to renovate a Flint elementary school into an early childhood center reports [The Philanthropy News Digest](#).
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Nebraska

- [The Council of State Governments Knowledge Center](#) highlighted Nebraska's new school readiness tax credits.
 - The founding executive director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, Samuel J. Meisels, published an op-ed in [The Omaha World-Herald](#) about the financial burden of early childhood education on parents and caregivers and the need to hold discussions about how to balance affordability with sustainable pay for the early childhood workforce.
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New Hampshire

- [The New Hampshire Business Review](#) about public support for child care and paid leave, citing a recent poll conducted on behalf of the Campaign for a Family-Friendly Economy.
 - [The New Hampshire Journal](#) highlighted the recent gubernatorial forum and the discussion on supporting and funding full-day kindergarten.
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New Mexico

- The Southwest Women's Law Center held two information gathering sessions at city hall about a proposal for paid parental and family leave in New Mexico, reports the [Las Cruces Sun-News](#).

- [The Santa Fe New Mexican](#) highlighted a recent legislative study about gains that children enrolling in the state's pre-k program see over their peers in the later grades.

New York

- George Joseph writes for [the Atlantic](#) about kindergarten suspension in New York City and how the mayor's recent proposal may still have some loopholes.

Oklahoma

- NPR's [Claudio Sanchez](#) interviewed Deborah Phillips about her recent study published in the Developmental Psychology journal that looks at the positive gains of participants in Tulsa, Oklahoma's largest head start program.

Tennessee

- The Cambridge Early Learning Center, a pre-k program operated by Metro Nashville Public Schools, was selected along with another early learning center in Clifton, N.J. to serve as a national model for how to address discriminatory school discipline practices by the US Department of Education. Read more in [Chalkbeat](#).

Washington

- The Washington State Department of Early Learning and the states Kindergarten Entry Assessment was included in the US Department of Education's report "[Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments \(KEAs\)](#)."

Wisconsin

- Wisconsin's First Lady Tonette Walker has been promoting the statewide effort to promote childhood trauma education, Fostering Futures, around the state reports [The Sawyer County Record](#).

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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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