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**Highlights**

**Secretary of Education Nominee Named**

President-Elect Donald Trump and his transition team continue to prepare for the new administration by announcing Betsy DeVos as the nominee for Secretary of Education. Read more from [Politico](#), the [74Million](#) and [Education Week](#).

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**Federal Updates**

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

The US Department of Education announced [final regulations](#) "to implement the accountability, data reporting and state plan provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)." Read about the changes in response to the extensive stakeholder feedback in the department's [press release](#). With respect to early childhood education, the new regulations include early childhood educators and leaders as a required group for stakeholder engagement.

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**Early Childhood Data**

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education released "The Integration of Early Childhood Data," a [new report](#) with state profiles that helps states better utilize early childhood data to improve the services offered to children and families.

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**Workforce Development**

- The Government Accountability Office [released a study](#) looking at state policy on whether Head Start and other early childhood educators are able to collect unemployment insurance over summer breaks. The study draws upon survey data from across the U.S.

- The Early Educator Central released a [series of five briefs](#) that build on the 2015 Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth to Eight report.

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## Suspension and Expulsion

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Service and Education published an [Information Memorandum](#) for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegates and others about the previous joint statement on preventing or dramatically limiting suspension and expulsion practices in early childhood education settings.

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## Monitoring

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture published "[Joint Statement on Coordinated Efficiencies in Monitoring and Oversight of Early Care and Education Programs](#)" that recommends that States and Territories "align monitoring policies and procedures across funding streams to promote more effective practice, reduce confusion within ECE programs and realize cost efficiencies."

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## Home Visiting

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation [released an overview](#) of grantee-led evaluations on The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. This offers important information on implementation of home visiting in diverse settings.

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## Election 2016 Responses

Following the results of November's elections, organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children and families have underscored support for investments in early childhood programs and services, reducing child poverty and ensuring that low-income children and children with the greatest needs are prioritized for service. Read statements from [First Five Years Fund](#), [Center for Law and Social Policy](#), [National Women's Law Center](#), [ZERO TO THREE](#), [Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#), [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#), the [National Center for Children and Poverty](#) and the [Coalition on Human Needs](#).

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## Administration Transition

Outgoing US Secretary of Education John King spoke to reporters about his desire for a smooth transition and hope that his successor has "a strong commitment to the historical role of the Department in protecting students' civil rights" reports [Education Week](#).

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## Policy Trends & Analysis

### Moving Forward on Early Childhood Education

To help kick-start a solution-driven conversation on early childhood education, the First Five Years Fund released its "[Early Childhood Education Policy Framework](#)." This framework provides ideas for how the Trump Administration and incoming Congress could create a well-financed continuum of high-quality early learning and care for children from birth through age 5 by improving existing programs, addressing concerns of quality and cost and building better partnerships between the federal government, states and local communities.

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### Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Massachusetts-based organization Strategies for Children highlighted on its [blog](#) an overview of the work the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) and others are doing to document the inclusion of early learning into the implementation of ESSA in the states.

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### **Project Launch**

The Project Launch Resource Team published "[Implementation of Young Child Wellness Strategies in a Unique Cohort of Local Communities](#)" that highlights the innovative strategies six Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) grantees used to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

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### **Child Care**

[Urban Institute](#) released a report on the strategies for meeting the child care needs of low-income parents who are looking to complete education and training programs. The report draws on information from 17 programs across 14 different states.

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### **Head Start**

- The First Five Years Fund published "[Head Start Program Performance Standards: Quality Component Overview](#)," an overview of the quality components of the 2016 Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) Final Rule.
  - [A Portrait of Head Start in the South](#), published by the Institute of Child Success, looks at characteristics of the families and children in Head Start programs in the southern United States.
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### **Early Learning at the State Level**

The Center for American Progress released "[Taking Action on Early Learning: 17 Executive Actions for Governors](#)" a new brief that shares state level actions and policies including developing a statewide strategic plan, using Medicaid funding for home visiting programs, and developing a centralized intake system in its list of possibilities.

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### **Medicaid**

[The Commonwealth Fund](#) and the [Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#) outline the negative impacts block granting Medicaid could have on low-income children and families.

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## **New Research**

### **Prekindergarten**

Researchers at the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy published the [results of a new study](#) that show children who were enrolled in North Carolina's early childhood programs "performed better throughout elementary school, with gains lasting through 5<sup>th</sup> grade," according to the *Raleigh News & Observer*.

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### **Family Engagement**

A new study from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation looks at the social networks of low-income fathers. This research is part of the [Parents and Children Together \(PACT\) study](#). The fathers in the study typically had small or no supportive family or friends.

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## Quality Rating Systems

RAND released an evaluation report of [Delaware Stars for Early Success](#), the state's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). The study looks at to what extent there are differences in rating tiers between center and home based care, and whether the QRIS was operating effectively.

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## Upcoming Events

### December 14, 2016

CLASP and diversitydatakids.org are hosting the webinar "[Place and Race Matter: Head Start and CCDBG Access by Race, Ethnicity, and Location.](#)"

### March 5-7, 2017

FRAC is hosting its [National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference](#) in Washington, D.C.

### June 27-29, 2017

QRIS National Learning Network is hosting the [QRIS National Meeting](#) in Dallas, TX.

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## News and Resources

### Early Childhood Development

Former Secretary of State and Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton made her first post-election public appearance at the [Children's Defense Fund's 2016 Beat the Odds Celebration](#). In her remarks she said, "I know that over the past week a lot of people have asked themselves whether America is the country we thought it was...But please listen to me when I say this: America is worth it. Our children are worth it."

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### Child Care

- [Citylab reports](#) on the need to not only make child care more affordable, but to also invest in the infrastructure to support child care facilities.
  - First Five Years Fund Executive Director Kris Perry writes in [The Hill](#) about the need to expand investments across all early childhood programs.
  - [New America](#) writes on the importance of primary caregiving and continuity of care when for infant-toddler care and development.
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### Health and Well-Being

Obesity rates for young children participating in WIC decreased in 31 states between 2010 and 2014, but increased in 4 states, according to [PR Newswire](#).

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### Prekindergarten

- On Election Day, two cities in Ohio, Dayton and Cincinnati, approved tax increases to pay for early childhood education programs. Missouri [voters rejected](#) a tax on cigarettes to fund early childhood programs.

- [NPR reports](#) on prekindergarten, and when programs are well designed and implemented, research shows that the positive effects remain.
- *New America* [provides lessons](#) on how to improve prekindergarten programs by looking to the experience of Tennessee.

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## Dual Language Learners

*Education Week* writes about the [development of English language learners](#), and specifically focuses in on the lack of research around how to define quality English-learner teaching.

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## Workforce Development

[NPR discusses](#) the low-wages child care workers earn. The piece raises the issue of how low-wages might relate to high turnover in the field.

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## News From The States

[CA](#) | [FL](#) | [GA](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [LA](#) | [MI](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [WA](#) |

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## California

- [The Los Angeles Times](#) reports on the passage of Proposition 58, which repeals and overhauls parts of 1998 legislation mandating English-only instruction now allowing public schools to develop bilingual and multi-lingual programs.
- Marin County [failed to pass](#) an increase in sales tax to support expanded child care and preschool.
- [KPCC discusses](#) a new report that analyzes child well-being across the state of California.

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## Florida

- [WFSU reports](#) on the Healthy Families Florida home visiting program in the state and its role in helping prevent abuse and neglect.

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## Georgia

- The Morgan County Family Connection received a \$37,000 grant to start the ["Morgan County Parents as Teachers Program"](#) in the community.

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## Illinois

- Illinois Action for Children produced a [series of eight videos](#) describing the various elements of the early childhood system with the intention of supporting individuals and programs working with families.
- [United Way of Lake County](#) will expand its Success by 6 home visiting program using a \$25,000 grant from Baxter International.

- [Reboot Illinois](#) is calling for the Illinois government to address the budget impasse.
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## Indiana

- ["All IN 4 Pre-K,"](#) a group of advocates, business leaders and families, is pushing to bring early childhood to the forefront.
  - *New America* reports on the [movement on preschool](#) in Indiana.
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## Louisiana

- Louisiana's Policy Institute for Children released a [new report](#) on the benefits of the state's school readiness tax credits. The report was highlighted by [The Advocate](#) and [WDSU 6 News](#).
  - A small study of neighborhoods in New Orleans shows that neighborhood stressors are associated with [biological stress in children](#).
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## Michigan

- [Star Tribune reports](#) that Michigan can use \$119 million in federal funds toward lead abatement programs in Flint and other Michigan communities.
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## New Mexico

- *Santa Fe Reporter* writes that the Mayor and city councilors are looking to [tax sugary drinks](#) to raise funds for early childhood education programs in Santa Fe.
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## New York

- Governor Andrew Cuomo announced [\\$10.4 million in state funding](#) to support the prekindergarten for 3-year-olds in 25 high needs districts.
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## Oklahoma

- *New America* looks at the benefits and costs of the [Tulsa prekindergarten program](#).
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## Washington

- [The Washington Examiner](#) looks at how the recent vote to raise the minimum wage to \$13.50 will effect child care costs.
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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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