
The Ounce of Prevention Fund [national policy team](#) wishes you and your family a safe and wonderful holiday season and a happy new year. We will see you in 2017! If you received this email from a colleague you may [subscribe online](#). If you already receive the digest and your contact information is changing, please email [Elizabeth Kenefick](#).

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Highlights

States Receive Third Round of Preschool Development Grants

The U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services announced that all 18 states awarded Preschool Development Grants will receive their third year of continuation funds. Read responses from [First Five Years Fund](#), [Education Week](#), [New America](#) and a piece in [Forbes](#).

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Federal Updates

Federal Budget

President Obama signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government funded through April 28, 2017. This CR was passed as the last one expired on December 9. The law calls for a 0.19 % cut across the board, which is on top of a historically low FY2016 budget. Read more from [CLASP](#) about this most recent federal budget action.

Infant and Toddler Mental Health

President Obama signed the recently passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which includes provisions to support mental health promotion, intervention, and treatment programs aimed at the United States' youngest children. Read [ZERO TO THREE's](#) coverage of these mental health provisions.

Head Start

The Office of Head Start will delay the compliance for background checks as laid out by the [Head Start State Performance Standards](#) until September 30, 2017. This delay will allow programs more time to implement the systems needed to comply with new background check requirements and align with the compliance date for changes stipulated by the Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization.

Child Care

The Office of Child Care released an [Information Memorandum](#) providing guidance on how to increase access to and information on using child care assistances so low-income parents may also take advantage of education and training opportunities.

Presidential Transition

President-elect Donald Trump [announced](#) his plan to nominate Dr. Tom Price as the next U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary. Read [FFYF's statement](#) on the announcement and [Education Week's coverage](#) of the Price's background.

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. *Education Week* [profiled the new rules](#).

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Head Start

- The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) released [State\(s\) of Head Start](#), a new report describing and analyzing in detail Head Start enrollment, funding, observable classroom quality and duration, staff qualifications and pay and the full range of services to children and families, state-by-state for the 2014-2015 program year, along with longitudinal data beginning with the 2006-2007 program year. Read more from [NPR](#).
 - The Office of Head Start released "[Head Start Father Engagement Birth to Five Programming Guide](#)" to aid programs in incorporating father engagement into a natural part of its programs.
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State Policy

The Ounce of Prevention Fund released its semi-annual [State Policy Update: November 2016](#). The report, which includes 23 states, builds on the budget and policy changes that have occurred over the recent legislative session and look toward 2017. It also features state early childhood policy agendas for the upcoming legislative sessions, policy opportunities and policy challenges organized by state.

Early Learning

A [new report](#) from the Education Commission of the States summarizes recommendations from some of the top education experts in the U.S. on what to prioritize for a high-quality K-3 system .

Child Welfare

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation [released a brief](#) on the use of social science research in early education to improve the child welfare system. It specifically points to the potential of early care and education for young children in the child welfare system.

Child Care

Child Care Aware of America released its [10th annual report](#) on the child care landscape across the U.S. The high cost of care across the fifty states remains a consistent trend in this year's report.

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New Research

Prekindergarten

- A [new paper](#) out from Nobel Laureate James Heckman of The Heckman Equation examines the many ways in which these high-quality programs helped participants thrive throughout life. The study estimates the long-term benefits of the Abecedarian program through age 35 and finds substantial beneficial impacts on (a) health and the quality of life, (b) the labor incomes of participants, (c) crime, (d) education and (e) the labor income of the mothers of the participants through subsidizing their childcare. Read more from the [Washington Post](#).
 - A new report released as part of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute's [study on Georgia's Pre-K Program](#) shows that the program continues to exhibit positive outcomes through the end of kindergarten. This is the first report released as part of a multi-year evaluation.
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Medicaid

A study published in [Health Affairs](#) looks at how rising health care costs have made public insurance options more appealing to families. Using Medicaid data, researchers found that low-income families are turning to Medicaid or CHIP for health coverage and away from employer-sponsored health care.

Social Emotional Development

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) released a report on the importance of family-focused therapies to help improve concerning emotional, behavioral and relationship symptoms in very young children in high-risk communities. The report calls for the engagement of pediatricians in addressing these issues.

STEM

Vanderbilt researchers released findings from a new [longitudinal study](#) that show children's math knowledge in preschool is related to later on achievements. The study's authors particularly call out the importance of focusing on comparing quantities and pattern knowledge in preschool.

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Upcoming Events

February 26-28, 2017

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC), is hosting its [Public Policy Forum](#) in Washington, DC.

March 5-7, 2017

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

March 22-23, 2017

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is hosting the 3rd annual Excellence in the Early Years: District Leadership Summit in Chicago, IL. The Summit provides an opportunity for district leaders and experts to come together from around the country to share innovative birth-through-3rd grade strategies and local practices that are helping students meet their full potential in the early years and beyond. The application to attend is now available on the [Summit website](#).

June 27-29, 2017

QRIS National Learning Network is hosting the [QRIS National Meeting](#) in Dallas, TX. [Proposals for presentations](#) are [due December 22](#).

June 28-30, 2017

The Education Commission of the States is hosting the [2017 National Forum on Education Policy](#) in San Diego, CA.

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News and Resources

Federal Transition

- [New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy team](#) reviews the records of Secretary of Education and Health and Human Services nominees, Betsy DeVos and Tom Price respectively, and what they might mean for early childhood education moving forward.
- *The Atlantic's* Melinda D. Anderson [interviewed](#) experts about the future of the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights under the Trump and DeVos administration.

Early Learning

New America looks at a [study in North Carolina](#) that finds counties with adequate funding for early childhood programs made significant gains in reading and math scores.

Workforce Development

- [St. Louis Public Radio](#) reports on an apprenticeship program in St. Louis aimed at child care workers. The program, run by the nonprofit LUME Institute, offers a combination of classroom work and training that results in a credential to provide early childhood education.
- [U.S. News and World Report](#) published a piece on the need to discuss sexism in the child care profession, and how it contributes to the low wages and a lack of prestige.

Child Care

- [NPR reports](#) on the high costs of child care, along with the challenges of finding it, for the nearly five million parents who are also attending college.
- [Governing](#) writes on how state child care subsidies are shrinking, both in terms of subsidies being offered by states and subsidies given to states from the federal government.
- National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance created the [National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations](#), a new tool "for finding and searching state and territory child care licensing, QRIS, Pre-K, and CCDF provider regulations and for finding contact information for the child care licensing agency."

Prekindergarten

- [The New York Times](#) writes about how parents and doctors should approach thinking about and treating A.D.H.D. in preschool.
- [NPR highlights](#) research that shows home visits at the beginning of the school year can help increase prekindergarten attendance rates.
- [Education Week](#) looks at research showing how the [benefits of preschool](#) last when quality programs are administered.

Head Start

[State reports](#) on how some Head Start programs are struggling to fill seats.

Public Private Partnerships

Brookings released the report "[Public-private partnerships in early childhood development: The role of publicly funded private provision](#)" that outlines how public private partnerships can be used to fund early childhood programs.

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News From The States

[AZ](#) | [AR](#) | [CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [MI](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [OR](#) | [PA](#) |

Arizona

[KTAR News reports](#) that Arizona received \$20 million from the federal Preschool Development Grant program.

Arkansas

[Talk Business & Politics](#) reports on how Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families is ramping up work on improving and increasing funding for the state's pre-K program, Arkansas Better Chance (ABC).

California

- [89.3 KPCC reports](#) on new research showing that Latino families want preschool at similar rates to as others but that there are big gaps in access to preschool services. The piece discusses this research in the context of California.

- [CBS Los Angeles writes](#) on a new report that shows that the cost of infant child care in California is only surpassed by the cost of housing. California has one of the highest costs of infant care in the country.
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Colorado

Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper [announced](#) that the state will receive an almost \$1 million grant from the federal government to support two-generation programs in the state.

Florida

WFLA [reports on a program](#) in Tampa Bay to help parents cover the costs of child care.

Illinois

- [Daily Herald reports](#) on Illinois receiving a \$20 million federal Preschool Development Grant. [The Chicago Tribune](#) discusses how these funds will go to help maintain preschool seats.
 - The Illinois State Board of Education released the [second draft](#) of the ESSA plan. Listening sessions on the plan are taking place around the state through mid-December.
 - [The Chicago Tribune reports](#) on how the Healthy Families/Wings program at One Hope United of Chicago is helping support young parents develop parenting skills.
 - [The State We're In 2016-17](#) provides an update on Illinois' performance from preschool to postsecondary and a snapshot of how the state compares nationally in terms of delivering a top-notch education to all students. This report by [Advance Illinois](#) also highlights several Illinois' communities that are working together to improve student outcomes.
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Indiana

- *91.3 WBIC* in Indiana [reports](#) on state Republican legislators' interest in expanding preschool in the state, but they want to be cautious about expansion.
 - An editorial from [Indy Star](#) encourages the state's lawmakers to "go big" on investing in early childhood during this upcoming legislative session.
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Louisiana

- [The Hechinger Report](#) writes on how plans in Louisiana to connect its early childhood programs could put financial strain on child care providers and families.
 - [Fortune](#) reports on Louisiana's relatively affordable child care costs compared to other states in the U.S.
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Maine

Senator Susan Collins of Maine [released a statement](#) on the state's receipt of a federal Preschool Development Grant.

Michigan

A blog piece from *The New York Times* looks at [Michigan's Baby Court program](#), which provides mental health therapy and wraparound services to infants.

New Mexico

[The Santa Fe New Mexican](#) reports on the Mayor of Santa Fe's abandonment of a plan to tax soda and sugary drinks to raise funds to expand early childhood programs.

New York

The Daily News reports on New York City's [new children's savings account program](#), which will help 10,000 kindergartners begin saving for college.

Oklahoma

Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum convened an ["Education Cabinet"](#) on his first day in office. The cabinet is meant to tackle education issues from early childhood, K-12 to higher education.

Oregon

- Oregon Gov. Kate Brown released her [proposed 2017-19 budget](#). Despite a \$1.7 billion budget shortfall, state-funded early childhood education programs including Preschool Promise would receive enough money to continue, plus \$7 million to improve preschool teachers' skills. Read more from the [Children's Institute](#).
 - Oregon is changing its [child care tax credits](#) for 2017 filers, adjusting the credit to help aid more low- and moderate-income families cover child care expenses.
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Pennsylvania

With one month until Philadelphia [expands its prekindergarten](#) program it is looking to fill approximately half of the seats.

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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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