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Highlights

Early Childhood Programs Prioritized in President's FY2017 Budget

The White House released President Obama's [FY2017 Budget](#) request to Congress building on his State of the Union address-including his call for 'giving everyone a fair shot at opportunity and economic security'. The FY17 budget includes a number of new and additional investments to expand access to high-quality child care and early learning programs such as:

- **Preschool Development Grants (PDG):** \$350 million, an increase of \$100 million over FY2016, that will provide a fourth year of continuation grants for the 18 states currently operating PDG grant programs and additional funding for the newly authorized PDG program under the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- **Child Care Development Block Grants (CCDBG):** \$2.96 billion in discretionary CCDBG funding, an increase of \$200 million discretionary increase and \$6.58 billion in mandatory CCDBG funding, an increase of \$3.6 billion in FY2017 and \$82 billion over the next 10 years.
- **Head Start:** \$9.6 billion, an increase of \$434 million over FY2016. This includes \$645 million to support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and other activities.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** \$463 million for IDEA Part C (for infants and toddlers), an increase of \$41 million for FY2017 and \$368 million for IDEA Section 619 (preschool grants), an increase of \$35 million for FY2017.
- **Preschool for All and Home Visiting:** \$75 billion to support high-quality preschool for all four-year-olds from low-income families and evidence-based home visiting as well as \$20 million for rural and tribal home visiting.
- **Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit:** Expansion of the credit for families with children under age five to triple the maximum credit available to \$3,000 per child and increases income eligibility threshold for families.

Read more information from the [US Department of Health and Human Services, First Five Years Fund](#) and the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#).

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Federal Updates

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

According to the [Federal Register](#) the Department of Education is collecting nominations for a negotiated rule making session committee on provisions from the ESSA about assessments and "supplement, not supplant."

Child Care

- Sen. Bob Casey and Reps. Joseph Crowley and Lois Frankel introduced [The Child Care Access to Resources for Early-learning \(CARE\) Act](#) that would invest an additional \$25 billion over five years to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).
 - Secretary of Defense Ash Carter unveiled family-friendly proposals at a Pentagon [news conference](#) including extended hours and space at military child care facilities, longer fully paid maternity leave for female service members and expanded health care coverage.
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Child Nutrition

The White House hosted a [conversation](#) with experts and direct service providers about child hunger and the role of nutrition programs like SNAP in providing for children. In conjunction with the meeting, the White House announced that the President's FY2017 Budget would propose investing \$12 billion over ten years to ending hunger during the summer with a Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for [Children \(Summer EBT\) program](#). In addition, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) will initiate a project that allows State agencies to use Medicaid data to certify students for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack wrote on the [USDA blog](#) about the struggles of rural America and the ways in which refundable tax credits like the EITC can help.

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Policy Trends and Analysis

Every Student Succeeds Act

- First Five Years Fund (FFYF) developed a [toolkit](#) for early learning advocates about the relevant provisions in ESSA, in particular the revised Preschool Development Program.
 - Center for American Progress' Education Policy team published "[ESEA Reauthorization: Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act-Toward a Coherent, Aligned Assessment System](#)" in which CAP's experts outline the changes to testing from ESSA and outline results from interviews about how to make these changes beneficial to students.
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Low Wage Working Families

- National Women's Law Center (NWLC) published "[Set Up to Fail: When Low-Wage Work Jeopardizes Parents' and Children's Success](#)," that analyzes the challenging conditions of low wage work with respect to support of children's development.

Professional Development

- The Center on International Education Benchmarking of the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) commissioned "[Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems](#)" that illustrates how British Columbia, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore developed teacher professional learning.

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New Research

Tribal Communities

The Child Care & Early Education Research Connections published a new topic of interest, "[Early Care and Education in Tribal Communities: Research to Policy Resources](#)," that highlights the federal government's partnership with tribal governments through Health and Human Services programs aimed at helping the 390,000 children under the age of nine identified as being of American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) heritage alone and the 400,000 other children that share heritage with AIAN and another race.

Mental Health Consultation

Researchers published in the *Infant Mental Health Journal* "[Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: An Evaluation of Effectiveness in a Rural Community](#)" a study supported through the Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration through Project LAUNCH.

Social Emotional Development

- The National Endowment for the Arts supported the gap analysis and literature review "[The Arts in Early Childhood: Social and Emotional Benefits of Arts Participation](#)" that synthesizes finds from 18 recent reports.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics published "[Promotion of Positive Parenting and Prevention of Socioemotional Disparities](#)," that analyzed randomized assignment of differing pediatric-based parenting program-Video Interaction Project [VIP] or Building Blocks [BB]-with a control group. The study results support programs like VIP as a prevention of social emotional problems. [Education Week](#) reviewed the study.

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Upcoming Events

February 18, 2016

The U.S. Departments of Education and Health & Human Services is hosting "Preschool Inclusion: What's the Evidence, What Gets in the Way, and What do High-Quality Programs Look Like?" [webinar](#) as part of its series on Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs.

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News and Resources

Early Childhood Investment

- Jared Bernstein, former chief economist to Vice President Biden and senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, writes in [The Washington Post](#) about the need for the nation to invest in early childhood education to avoid leaving vulnerable kids behind, calling it the 'biggest policy mistake we're continuing to make, year after year.'
 - Sesame Street's parent Sesame Workshop announced [Sesame Ventures](#), an internal team to partner with venture capital firms in investing in startups dedicated to its mission of impacting and educating children through technology.
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Preschool

- *The Seventy Four's* [Carolyn Phenicie](#) interviewed former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan about his tenure in office in which he notes that the failure to further expand preschool is one of his top three failures.
 - The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) released a new fastFACT called "[Pre-K Attendance-Why It's Important and How to Support It.](#)"
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Maternal and Child Depression

- National Center for Children in Poverty's (NCCP) Sheila Smith and the Center for Law and Social Policy's (CLASP) Olivia Golden wrote a [letter to the editor](#) published in *The New York Times* about the importance of United States Prevention Services Task Force recommendation of maternal depression screen for low-income families.
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Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)

- Exceed and the Policy Equity Group published "[Funding to Exceed: Sustaining a World-Class Early Childhood System that Supports the Well-Being and School Readiness of Rhode Island's Youngest Children](#)" for the Rhode Island Department of Education in consultation with the Rhode Island RTT-ELC Sustainability Planning Team.
 - The BUILD Initiative released chapter 8 of its e-book *Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families* titled "[Impact of the Early Learning Challenge on State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.](#)"
 - Grantees connected with RTT-ELC and the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) shared stories at the Annual Grantee Meeting through [StoryCorps-inspired interviews](#) and [Pecha Kuchas](#).
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Professional Development

- A new [online mapping tool](#) along with an accompanying discussion guide was created to support and facilitate implementation of the recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's "[Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation](#)" report released last year. Please contact Sarah Tracey (stracey@nas.edu) with questions.

Pay for Success (PFS)

- Libby Doggett, deputy assistant secretary of Policy and Early Learning in the U.S. Department of Education, and David Wilkinson, director of the White House Office of Social Innovation, argued in favor of pay for success as an innovative tool that is expanding preschool access in Utah in an [op-ed](#) published in *The Salt Lake Tribune*.
- American Enterprise Institute's Katharine B. Stevens published an opinion piece in [US News & World Report](#) arguing how pay for success has the opportunity to drive government investments to effective and results-based programs and highlighting a recent event co-sponsored with Save the Children.

Child Care

- Kathleen Davis writes for [Fast Company](#) about the history of child care in the United States.

Child Health

- The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' (CBPP) [Health Reform: Beyond the Basics](#) project published "[Key Facts You Need to Know About: Determining Household Size for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.](#)"

Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

The Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC) released a number of new resources that support cultural and linguistic responsiveness in early childhood settings including:

- [Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project: Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-Based Approach](#)
- [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook and Tip Sheets](#)
- [Indigenous Immigrant Families](#)
- [Planned Language Approach \(PLA\)](#)

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News From The States

[CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [GA](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [KS](#) | [LA](#) | [MI](#) | [NE](#) | [NH](#) | [NM](#) | [OK](#) | [WA](#) | [DC](#) |

California

- State Senator Janet Nguyen penned an op-ed in [The Orange County Register](#) about the importance of investing at birth and her support for expanding access to transitional kindergarten.
- Alia Wong writes for [The Atlantic](#) about 'the other children of Silicon Valley'-the children of the city's low-income immigrant population that are disconnected from the early education system.

Colorado

- School officials from Durango lobbied state lawmakers to fund full-day kindergarten, assisting the school district financially in providing additional early education reports [The Durango Herald](#).
- [Colorado Public Radio](#) highlighted the state's plan to increase access to a network of mental health consultants to child care centers to support the social emotional development of young children and lessen rates of expulsion.
- The non-profit Padres & Jovenes Unidos published a report highlighting inequities in access to preschool across Denver reports [The Denver Post](#).

Florida

- The president of the Early Childhood Initiative published an op-ed in [The Miami Herald](#) about the need to increase quality of Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program across the state.

Georgia

- Gov. Nathan Deal proposed to increase funding for early childhood education in the state through a [\\$34.1 million investment](#).

Illinois

- [DailyKos](#) discussed the Chicago City Colleges' consolidation of child development programs and concerns advocates have with the impact it will have on the student population's success.
 - [CNNMoney](#) profiled the closing of several of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) programs in light of the budget impasse-impacting citizens from young children to senior citizens alike.
 - House Speaker Michael J. Madigan [announced](#) that House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie will lead hearings by a new bipartisan Education Funding Task Force to help craft a plan to equitably fund education in the state.
 - Reboot Illinois published an article on [Huffington Post Chicago](#) analyzing Gov. Bruce Rauner's State of the State points around changing and improving education.
 - Mayor Emanuel announced the City of Chicago is [expanding access to preschool slots](#) by the fall of 2017.
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Indiana

- [The Times Editorial Board](#) advocates for early childhood education and highlights the additional matching funds Lake County requires to continue the On My Way Pre-K pilot.
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Kansas

- Child advocates in Kansas continue to resist Gov. Sam Brownback's proposal to move money from the Children's Initiatives Fund to the state's general fund and gained some support from Republicans during the House Appropriations Committee hearing reports [The Wichita Eagle](#).
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Louisiana

- House Concurrent Resolution 174 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session requested the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) identify funding sources of state and federal funds available in Louisiana to be used for early childhood care and education, as well as additional potential funding sources used by other states for such purpose. BESE and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) recently submitted their [report](#) to the House and Senate Committees on Education.
 - Act 364 of the 2015 Regular Legislative Session required BESE to designate the 2015-16 school year as an academic Learning Year for the new accountability system being established for all publicly funded early care and education programs in the state. The Act mandated that this year would include a three level rating system, not using letter grades. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and State Board of Education (BESE) have created [Practice Performance Profiles](#) to rate both programs and community networks as a whole. BESE and LDOE recently submitted their first required [progress report](#) to the House and Senate Committees on Education on this new system.
 - The Low-Income Investment Fund (LIIF) and JPMorgan Chase announced a [\\$6 million investment](#) in New Orleans, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to tackle poverty that include early learning programs.
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Michigan

- The Legislature cleared \$28 million today for recovery efforts in Flint Michigan, including \$2 million for [Early On intervention services](#) for children affected by lead exposure advocated for by groups including Michigan's Children. The funds will help provide for assessments of all Flint children as well as the hiring of additional Early On staff.
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Nebraska

- Martha Stoddard writes for [The Omaha World-Herald Bureau](#) that the biggest challenge for LB 889-a package of tax credits supporting high-quality early childhood programs modeled after those in Louisiana-would be the cost of \$10.1 million in FY2018, which would grow to \$29 million by 2020-21.

New Hampshire

- State Sen. David Watters introduced SB 503, legislation to allow for an alternative to funding pre-k through pay for success financing reports [SeacoastOnline.com](#).

New Mexico

- The New Mexico House of Representatives [voted in favor](#) of a \$6.3 billion budget that among other things will increase funding to early childhood education.
- Members of the House Government, Elections and Indian Affairs Committee voted against using a portion of the state's \$15 billion land grant endowment to invest in early childhood education. A similar Senate bill survived, but is more expensive and requires additional barriers to overcome notes [The Santa Fe New Mexican](#).
- Leaders of New Mexico foundations highlight the strong bipartisan and cross-industry support for high-quality home visiting services in an op-ed in [The Albuquerque Journal](#).

Oklahoma

- [The Tulsa World](#) editorial board advocates against SB 1324 claiming it would cut funding for four-year-old prekindergarten programs. The Vice-Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and bill sponsor, [Sen. Greg Treat](#), announced his legislation would not be discussed this year.
- Lillian Mongeau writes for [The Hechinger Report](#) about the success of Oklahoma's universal preschool program.

Washington

- The Providence Mount St. Vincent Nursing Home has hosted the [Intergenerational Learning Center \(ILC\)](#), a child care center and preschool, since 1991 writes [The Atlantic](#).

Washington, D.C.

- The executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, David Johns, toured the Sunshine Early Learning Center in southeast D.C. days after the call for pre-k for all in President Obama's [State of the Union address](#).

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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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