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Highlights

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) Celebrate One-Year Anniversary

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) released its one year report "[EHS-CCP: Growing the Supply of Early Learning Opportunities for More Infants and Toddlers.](#)" about the 275 grantees across the states working to increase the supply of high-quality early learning opportunities and create a continuum of care. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development Linda Smith published a [blog post](#) accompanying the release of the report.

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Federal Updates

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

ACF celebrated its 25th anniversary of bringing together child and family programs under one agency by adopting the theme "Impacting People, Affecting Change, Empowering Families" writes Acting Assistant Secretary [Mark Greenberg](#).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The first negotiated rulemaking committee on ESSA met for the third and final time on coming to an agreement on draft regulations for the "supplement, not supplant" language and assessments. Failure to reach a consensus on the two items overall would mean that the Department of Education only needs to consider the drafts as recommended proposals. Read more at *Education Week* [here](#).

FY 16 Appropriations

Members of Congress and health groups may advocate for funds in the agriculture appropriations bill to support a provision in the 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act that requires schools to provide [safe water](#) and encourage more testing for high levels of lead, cadmium and other harmful contaminants.

Immigration

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in [United States v. Texas](#), a case that challenges President Obama's executive actions that expanded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and created the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) program.

Congressional Pre-K Caucus

Democratic Reps. Joaquin Castro of Texas, Katherine Clark of Massachusetts and Republican Reps. Tom Cole of Oklahoma and Richard Hanna of New York launched the Congressional Pre-K Caucus with the help of Sesame Street stars Cookie Monster and Elmo. See more in [Education Week](#), [The Hill](#) and this [Dear Colleague Letter](#).

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Preschool

- Allison Friedman-Krauss, W. Steven Barnett, Milagros Nores co-authored "[How Much Can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps?](#)" a new report from the Center for American Progress that looks at the impact universal pre-k could have on reducing disparities in access and achievement gaps. It finds it would be a significant impact in the gap for African American and Hispanic children, as well as low-income children.
 - Katharine B. Stevens and Elizabeth English published "[Does Pre-K Work? The Research on Ten Early Childhood Programs-And What It Tells Us](#)" with the American Enterprise Institute highlighting that research shows "some early childhood programs yield particular outcomes, sometimes, for some children."
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Early Childhood Investments

Researchers with the Economic Policy Institute released "[It's time for an ambitious national investment in America's children.](#)" about the benefits on children, families, society and the economy from investments in early childhood care and education. Danielle Paquette with the [Washington Post](#) profiled the recent EPI report.

Child Care

- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) published "[Child Care Assistance Spending and Participation in 2014](#)" that includes in-depth analysis of national trends and 50-state data.
 - National Women's Law Center (NWLC) posted [state fact sheets](#) about state child care assistance policies that complement its report "[Building Blocks: State Child Care Assistance Policies in 2015.](#)"
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Black Children and Families

The Black Child Development Institute-Chicago and Black Child Development Institute-Philadelphia, in partnership with the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), released state-based reports highlighting the strengths of Black children and families titled "[Being Black is Not a Risk Factor: Statistics and Strengths-Based Solutions in the State of Illinois](#)" and "[Being Black is Not a Risk Factor: Statistics and Strengths-Based Solutions in the State of Pennsylvania.](#)"

New Research

School Readiness

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families released "[Developmental Foundations of School Readiness for Infants and Toddlers: A Research to Practice Report](#)" that reviews research on the developmental foundations of school readiness.

Work Supports Access

Researchers at the Urban Institute studied and profiled the experiences of six states in the Work Support Strategies (WSS) initiative of reducing administrative burden and streamlining eligibility systems in the new report "[Changing Policies to Streamline Access to Medicaid, SNAP, and Child Care Assistance: Findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation.](#)"

Home Visiting

ORS Impact evaluated the Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP), an intensive two-year home visiting program, in the new report "[Long-Term Academic Outcomes of Participation in the Parent-Child Home Program in King County, WA](#)" *Eye on early education* highlights some of the findings such as increased kindergarten readiness.

Child Health Care

Researchers published in the *International Journal for Equity in Health* "A cross-sectional study of parental awareness of and reasons for lack of health insurance among minority children, and the impact on health, access to care and unmet needs," in which they found over half of the parents were not aware that their children were Medicaid/CHIP-eligible.

Upcoming Events

April 28, 2016

ZERO TO THREE (ZTT) and Manatt Health are hosting "[Planting Seeds in Fertile Ground: Steps Every Policymaker Should Take to Advance Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#)" webinar for state mental health, Medicaid, public health and education officials, state infant mental health association leadership, child advocates, and legislative staff.

May 9, 2016

The 2016 HighScope Research Symposium, "[Closing the Opportunity Gap: Research & Community Efforts to Promote Children's Language-Rich Environments](#)" will be held in Detroit, Michigan.

June 1-3, 2016

ACF is hosting the [2016 Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency \(RECS\)](#) in Washington, D.C. that will focus on programs, policies and services that support low-income and vulnerable families on the path to economic self-sufficiency and well-being.

June 22-24, 2016

The Institute for Child Success (ICS), ReadyNation, and the Sorenson Impact Center are co-hosting the [Third Annual Conference of the Early Childhood Social Impact Performance Advisors](#) in Denver, Colorado.

June 29, 2016

The Education Commission of the States' is holding its [National Forum on Education Policy](#) in Washington, D.C.

July 11-13, 2016

ACF is hosting the [National Research Conference on Early Childhood](#) (formally the Head Start National Research Conference) in Washington, D.C.

July 12-14, 2016

The BUILD Initiative and the QRIS National Learning Network are hosting the [2016 QRIS National Meeting](#) in New Orleans, Louisiana.

October 13-14, 2016

ICS is hosting the fourth annual [Early Childhood Research Symposium](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina. Deadline for calls for papers is June 1, 2016.

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. The event is targeted to researchers, advocates, policymakers, and practitioners. Call for workshop proposals is [now open](#). For more information, visit [here](#).

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News and Resources

Preschool

- The Learning Policy Institute released "[The Building Blocks of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs](#)," and calls for increased investments in early learning programs in the state of California. Senior Policy Advisor for the Learning Policy Institute published a complementary op-ed on [The Huffington Post](#) and [Lillian Mongeau](#) summarized it for *Education Week*.
- The Council of Chief State School Officers released [guidelines](#) for high-quality preschool.
- Tennessee legislatures [passed a bill](#) that will require local districts to develop plans for implementing best practices in pre-k classrooms before being eligible for pre-k state funds and show how the district is improving instructional alignment.

Child Care

- Center for Community Change Action published an op-ed in [The Huffington Post](#) about America's "child care crisis."
- In the 10th article in a series investigating child care in Mississippi, [The Hechinger Report](#) highlighted the steps the military took to turn around its child care system.
- CLASP posted a recording from its "[Disparate Access: Head Start and CCDBG Data by Race and Ethnicity](#)" webinar on its Disparate Access resource page.

Kindergarten Transition

The Harvard Family Research Project published an online interactive case called ["Bridging Worlds Interactive Case: Family Engagement in the Transition to Kindergarten."](#)

Home Visiting

- The 32-year-old Parents as Teachers program will launch a pilot in Los Angeles that will connect families with University of Southern California's school of social work through virtual visits through tablets reports [Christina Samuels](#) for *Education Week*.
 - 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 www.theOunce.org/AchieveOnDemand
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Business Community

ReadyNation published ["How Your Company Can Help Parents Engage with Their Young Children"](#) and ["Harnessing the Power of Parents to Support our Youngest Learners."](#)

Early Childhood Homelessness

The Administration for Children and Families posted a [blog post](#) about the NAEYCH congressional briefing on child homelessness.

Student Parents

Leah Askarinam writes for [The Atlantic](#) about 4.8 million college students raising children (according to 2011 data) and the challenges they face-interviewing the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), CLASP and NWLC.

Workforce

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) created ["Build It Better: Indicators of Progress to Support Integrated Early Childhood Professional Development Systems"](#) that supports states engage in strategic planning, meet federal requirements for state child care plans, and work on the Institute of Medicine Transforming the Workforce report recommendations.

Maternal Depression

The United States Prevention Services Task Force (USPSTF) called for [universal depression screening](#) and treatment for all-including pregnant and postpartum mothers-which would require health insurers to cover the screening for free and provide a potential incentive for state Medicaid programs to do the same.

Child Development

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) updated its online tool, the [Young Child Risk Calculator](#) that illustrates the number of children in each state experiencing serious developmental risks.

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News From The States

[AZ](#) | [CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [MI](#) | [NE](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [OR](#) | [WA](#) | [WI](#) |

Arizona

- Several school districts in the West Valley are bringing back full-day kindergarten at no additional costs to parents after the state legislature cut funding for it in 2010 reports [The Arizona Republic](#).
 - Advocates rallied outside the capitol in support of restoring KidsCare, Arizona's child health insurance program (CHIP) that supports children of the "working" poor with incomes between 138% and 200% of the federal poverty which is above the eligibility threshold for Medicaid in the state. [955 The Mountain](#) shares the story.
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California

- After analyzing Gov. Jerry Brown's 2016-17 child care and preschool budget proposals and prior to the budget hearings, [California's Legislative Analyst's Office \(LAO\)](#) recommended that providers should offer at a minimum, part-day preschool or transitional [kindergarten programs](#) to all low-income families with full-day available to low-income families with working parents.
 - Early childhood education providers and advocates, including the Advancement Project, prepared to ask the state legislature for \$800 million for preschool and early learning programs during the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance and the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee on Education hearings reports [EdSource](#).
 - The same advocates asked for more time and consideration with regard to the Governor's early childhood block grant consolidation proposal during the Assembly [budget hearing](#).
 - American Institutes for Research (AIR) released a study examining the unmet need for preschool in California-citing that 16% or 33,209 eligible 4 year-olds are not enrolled in state or federal-funded programs [reports Education Week](#).
 - [89.3 KPCC](#) investigated the proximity of child care centers to highways finding that 169 serving nearly 10,000 children are located within the 500 feet danger zone of a freeway-the distance a 2003 state law designates as too close for new elementary and secondary schools.
 - Marketplace profiled the newest school in the Educare Learning Network, [Educare Silicon Valley](#).
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Colorado

- [ChalkBeat Colorado](#) interviewed Rosemarie Allen-professor of early childhood education at the Metropolitan State University of Denver and former Division of Child Care director-about her efforts to address the racial disparities present in suspension and expulsion rates for preschoolers through 12th grade.
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Florida

- At the beginning of March, the legislature cut \$2.4 million from the budget that was to help pay for the state's Volunteer Pre-K (VPK) program assessments through Teaching Strategies Gold and rejected a proposal to increase funding for the program reports [The Pensacola News Journal](#).
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Illinois

- [Catalyst Chicago](#) profiled the state's Innovation Zones initiative funded through the state's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant in which new strategies are used to reach new children for early learning programs.
 - The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children & Families' Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation issued a report "[Examining Child Care Subsidy Receipt: An Analysis of Matched NSECE and Illinois Administrative Data.](#)"
 - House Speaker Michael Madigan introduced legislation to create a constitutional amendment that would change to say education is a fundamental "right" - as opposed to "goal" [reports Education Week](#).
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Indiana

- Indiana Business Television interviewed United Way of Central Indiana's Vice President of Public Policy Andrew Cullen and Eli Lilly and Co. Director of State Governmental Affairs Michael O'Connor about the lessons learned and challenges ahead for the [On My Way Pre-K Program pilot](#) and the momentum building to request an expansion of the program in 2017.
 - [Chalkbeat Indiana](#) discussed long waitlist in Indianapolis for state- and city-funded preschool program slots.
 - Indiana was awarded \$10.5 million to fund the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program to help expand the state's voluntary home visiting services reports [Inside Indiana Business](#).
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Louisiana

- The [Louisiana Department of Education \(LDOE\)](#) started hosting discussions across the state on the future of Louisiana's early childhood accountability, funding and enrollment systems.
 - Louisiana Policy Institute for Children's Melanie Bronfin was quoted in [The Advocate](#) discussing the renewed budgetary threats around the state's preschool program. The Department of Education avoided a \$44 million cut during special session as the state looked to balance FY16, but three of the state's pre-k programs are under fire again.
 - The Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee has been holding a series of hearings to assess the merits of all current tax credits offered by the state including the School Readiness Tax Credits. Testimony [here](#) at the 58 minute mark.
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Maine

- The House of Representatives voted in favor of [LD 1267](#) that would increase the reimbursement rate to the 60th percentile of the market rate for child care providers accepting child care assistance subsidies, thereby increasing access to affordable high-quality child care for low-income families.
 - The Judiciary Committee is working on LD 1689 to ensure that Maine is in compliance with a new federal law that requires comprehensive background checks using fingerprints for child care providers.
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Michigan

- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced Michigan would receive [\\$8 million in federal funding](#) for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program.
 - A pediatrician at Hurley Children's Hospital and assistant professor at Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine published an op-ed in [The New York Times](#) about the Flint, Michigan lead crisis.
 - The superintendent of Portland Public Schools wrote in the [Ionia Sentinel-Standard](#) about the state's preschool program Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP).
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Nebraska

- The legislature sent to the governor's desk LB 889, which would create two-tiered income tax credits for child care and early childhood providers and staff with the amounts tied to state quality standards and experience and education, respectively. The total credits available will be capped at \$5 million, reports [The Omaha World-Herald Bureau](#). The original legislation that Omaha Sen. Heath Mello introduced had included additional tiers for parents and businesses, based on similar tax credits in Louisiana reports [The North Platte Bulletin](#).
 - The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska and Gallup conducted a the largest statewide survey about public opinion on early childhood education, finding that seven out of ten Nebraskans believe the first eight years of life are critical to success reports [The Lincoln Journal Star](#) and [Gallup](#).
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New Mexico

- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) [awarded New Mexico \\$3.57 million](#) for the state's Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program.
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New York

- The state legislature supported the health and well-being of children and families in the recent legislative session adopting paid family leave and investing in QUALITYstarsNY and full-day pre-k. However, the state also decided to apply for waivers rather than invest in implementation of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) reauthorization changes and [did not increase funding](#) for the home visiting programs.
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Oklahoma

- U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan recently visited [Tulsa Educare](#) to tour classrooms and speak with a group of local early education leaders. The school provides low-income families and their children with access to high-quality early childhood education and other important resources. Speaker Ryan and the House of Representative's Task Force on Poverty, Opportunity and Upward Mobility released their vision and mission statement, proposing early childhood education as a policy reform option for breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting upward mobility in America.

Oregon

- New America's [Amaya Garcia](#) profiled the initiatives in Portland Public Schools (PPS) to grow a pipeline of bilingual teachers.

Washington

- [The Seattle Public School District](#) announced it will offer free all-day kindergarten for all starting in fall 2016 and expand the district's pre-kindergarten program reports *Education Week*.

Wisconsin

- [The Journal Times](#) reports on the pending changes to the state's child care tiered reimbursement system that will allow funds to be transferred to parents in addition to just providers as it had been in the past, potentially decreasing the bonuses for quality providers would receive.

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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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