

Table of Contents

[Highlights](#) | [Federal Updates](#) | [Policy Trends & Analysis](#) | [New Research](#) | [Upcoming Events](#) | [News and Resources](#) | [News from the States](#) |

Highlights

Head Start

The US Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) the award of \$290 million in funding for 665 Head Start and Early Head Start programs around the US to expand the number of children attending full school day and full school year programs. [Education Week](#) reports on this funding.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Federal Updates

Promise Neighborhoods

The US Department of The US Department of Education awarded [six new grants](#) for Promise Neighborhoods. Two of the grantees are in California, one in Kentucky, one in New Jersey, one in Mississippi and one in Pennsylvania. [Read more](#) about the awards from *Education Week*.

Child Care

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families made the National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations tool available online to provide information on [licensing requirements](#).

Infant and Toddler Mental Health

Congress recently passed the 21st Century Cures bill, 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.

States Receive Third Round of Preschool Development Grants

The US 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](#).

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Policy Trends & Analysis

Tax Policy

- As Congress considers comprehensive tax reforms, First Five Years Fund proposes four actionable ways to build on early childhood investments in the brief [Tax Proposals that Support Working Families](#), highlighting that there is a significant opportunity to expand access to early childhood education by enhancing existing tax credits and deductions for families, and by adding new and innovative strategies to encourage investment in high quality programs.
 - Taxpayers that claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or additional Child Tax Credit on their tax return will have their refund delayed until at least February 15 due to the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015. The Urban Institute published a report on this change ["Delaying Tax Refunds for Earned Income Tax Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit Claimants"](#) and its impact on families and children.
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Equitable Access

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Forward Promise Initiative released two new briefs. [Early Childhood Expulsions and Suspensions Undermine Our Nation's Most Promising Agent of Opportunity and Social Justice](#) looks at expulsions and suspensions in early childhood programming in the US and differences by race and gender. [Unequal Access: Barriers to Early Childhood Education for Boys of Color](#) looks at the barriers young boys of color face in accessing quality early childhood education, such as high costs and implicit biases, and discusses solutions to these issues.

Child Care

CLASP released the report [A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies](#), which expands on previous work by CLASP that looks at differences in access to and utilization of child care subsidies and early education programs by race and ethnicity.

Infants and Toddlers

ZERO TO THREE's Policy Center has recently updated ["Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Toolkit for States"](#) to reflect national data and state policy actions from the past year. This toolkit was first released in 2015 and is intended to help state policy leaders and advocates assess the current status of services for infants, toddlers, and their families and set priorities for improvement. The online resource is divided into sections focused on four goals of a state early childhood system: good health, strong families, positive early learning experiences, and collaboration and system building.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

New Research

Behavioral Economics

A new paper in the [Journal of Applied Research on Children](#) looks at the role behavioral economics can play in offering understanding of parent-child engagement in early childhood and tools to create interventions and enhance the impact of existing programs.

Maternal Depression

A study published in the January 2017 [Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#) finds that exposure to early and sustained maternal depression increases a child's susceptibility to social-emotional problems, such as social withdrawal, difficulty regulating emotions, and less empathetic. This study follows children from birth to age 11.

Home Visiting

A new research report from [RAND](#) looks at a home visiting program in Santa Fe, New Mexico to determine whether a nurse-parent educator team can help reduce infant health care use in their first year of life. Using a randomized control clinical trial, researchers found that children assigned to the program have less health care use in their first year.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Upcoming Events

January 26, 2017

The National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement is hosting "Helping Families and Staff Maximize Tax Credits," a [webinar](#) for Head Start and Early Head Start directors, managers, and parent leaders; T/TA providers; and early childhood leaders who support child and family progress as part of the Building Foundations for Economic Mobility Webinar Series.

February 26–28, 2017

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

March 5–7, 2017

Feeding America and the Food Research & Action Center (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.

June 28–30, 2017

The Education Commission of the States will be hosting its [2017 National Forum on Education Policy](#) in San Diego on June 28–30 at the Hotel Del Coronado.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Health Care

- [Urban Institute](#) writes on the potential impact on families and children of repealing ACA.
 - The Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families is hosting a series of webinars on Medicaid and CHIP called "Back to Basics". [See the first.](#)
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Early Childhood Education

- First Five Years Fund reviews some of [2016's greatest moments](#) for high-quality early childhood education at the federal level.
 - New America outlines [10 education priorities](#) for 2017. The first priority is to expand access to early childhood education.
 - [NPR](#) predicts the education stories for 2017, including decreased funding for early childhood education at the federal level.
 - [U.S. News and World Report](#) writes a review of early childhood developments during 2016.
 - [Talk Poverty](#) reports on the legacy of President Obama supporting children and families.
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Transition

- Brookings Institute released a [memo](#) to President-elect Trump on how the components needed to build a high-quality, comprehensive early childhood system.
 - [CNN](#) reports on Representative Marsha Blackburn's (R-TN) work with Ivanka Trump to address child care costs.
 - [Fox News](#) reports on the challenges that President-elect Trump faces in trying to address child care costs in his first 100 days.
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Child Care

- [The Washington Post](#) writes on the challenges parents, children, and the country face because of the lack of affordable child care.
 - [Pacific Standard](#) reports on the low-paying jobs those with early childhood education degrees find themselves facing once they graduate.
 - [The New York Times](#) writes on co-working spaces that cater to parents' work schedule and space needs by offering child care options.
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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Education Week writes on how states can integrate early childhood into their [ESSA plans](#) through learning strategies, funding goals and engagement with local districts.

Head Start

- [U.S. News and World Report](#) writes on recent Head Start research that shows the program has improved over the last decade.
- [Education Week reports](#) on the National Institute of Early Education's Head Start report and the dramatic programmatic differences between states.

Prekindergarten

[NPR reports](#) on early childhood education lessons from 2016, looking at the promising impacts of programs when they are implemented effectively.

Pay For Success

Urban Institute offers a [toolkit](#) on Pay For Success for early childhood education programs. The toolkit offers guidance for stakeholders on how to scale high-quality, evidence-based early childhood programs.

STEM

[Education Week writes](#) on the need for more research, training, and standards in developing early childhood education STEM.

Job Posting

The American Enterprise Institute seeks a full-time research assistant to support AEI's early childhood program. The program focuses on the research, policy, and politics of early-childhood care and education (prenatal through age 4); the role of early learning in expanding opportunity for low-income Americans; and the implementation challenges of rapidly growing early-childhood education initiatives. Qualified candidates should apply at <http://bit.ly/2ifP7ru>. Please contact Katharine Stevens at katharine.stevens@aei.org with any questions.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

News From The States

[AR](#) | [CA](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [KS](#) | [LA](#) | [MI](#) | [NH](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [OR](#) | [TN](#) | [VT](#) | [DC](#) | [WI](#) |

Arkansas

[KATV](#) reports on the efforts of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families to push for expanded prekindergarten funding.

California

- Gov. Brown released his 2017-18 California state [budget proposal](#) that as Early Edge California notes, "pauses investments for an additional 3,000 State Preschool slots and per-child reimbursement rate increases for child care providers that were part of a multiyear plan. The budget proposal recognizes further increases were intended in 2017-18 and proposes pausing additional increases until 2018-19." [The California Legislative Women's Caucus](#) and [Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de Leon](#) released statements about the budget and the need for protecting child care investments.
- [89.3 KPCC](#) reports on Los Angeles County Supervisors who want to improve coordination and expand services for the area's home visiting programs.

- [EdSource](#) reports on a California Budget and Policy report that finds over one million children in the state are eligible but do not receive child care subsidies.
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Florida

- [The Herald Tribune](#) reports on Florida lagging behind nationally on a number of key measures of the state's Head Start performance.
 - [Orlando Sentinel](#) reports on the importance of investing in early education in the state.
 - [89.3 KPCC](#) writes on a new report that looks at families for whom deportation fears keep their children out of preschool.
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Illinois

- [The Illinois P-20 Council](#) adopted recommendations for the state's ESSA plan, which included recommendations for the Illinois Early Learning Council.
 - Illinois Social Service Providers continue to push forward on [suing the state](#) for over \$160 million in overdue payments from the state during the budget impasse.
 - [WREX](#) reports on how changes to Illinois' child care eligibility laws are affecting college students' ability to pay for child care.
 - Beginning January 16, Illinois Public Media will make [PBS Kids](#) available 24/7.
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Indiana

- Expanding funding for prekindergarten in Indiana will be an important topic in the state's [2017 General Assembly](#).
 - [The Indy Star](#) reports on early education advocates requesting Indiana to spend at least \$50 million on prekindergarten.
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Kansas

[The Kansas City Star](#) reports on how plans to increase the number of required training hours for child care providers may lead to increased costs for parents.

Louisiana

- [The Greater Baton Rouge Business Report](#) discusses findings from the National Institute of Early Education Research report on Head Start, which shows Louisiana falls below the national average in per pupil funding for Head Start.
 - [The Times Picayune](#) reports on local Louisiana child care experts who refute the idea that Louisiana has affordable child care.
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Michigan

- [The PBS Newshour](#) discusses the important role education plays in the wake of Flint's water crisis.

- The [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) donated \$675,000 to Kent County's Head Start program. The funding will go toward helping staff earn degrees and launch a parent leadership program.
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New Hampshire

Early Learning NH and CCA For Social Good announced the intention to launch a customized version of the ECE Shared Resources platform available to members of the State Early Learning Alliance (SELA). Read the [press release](#) for more information.

New Mexico

- [Albuquerque Journal](#) reports on the role home visiting plays in reducing medical costs for newborns.
 - [The Santa Fe New Mexican](#) writes on a recent Head Start report showing New Mexico falls below national averages on a number of Head Start quality indicators.
 - New Mexico's Democratic legislators proposed a state constitutional amendment to provide funding for early childhood education programs. The funding would come from the state's largest permanent fund.
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New York

- Governor Andrew Cuomo is reportedly interested in raising the state's [child care tax credit](#) for families making between \$60,000 and \$150,000.
 - [The Buffalo News](#) published an editorial on how rising child care costs are making it harder for low-income families to work.
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Oklahoma

[The New York Times'](#) Nicholas Kristof writes on the work of philanthropist George Kaiser to invest in Tulsa's early childhood services.

Oregon

[The Oregonian](#) writes on school district poverty rates across the state, noting that the lowest poverty rates were in a combination of rural and suburban districts.

Tennessee

[The Chattanooga](#) reports on the city's recent budget that includes \$100,000 to pilot a program offering early childhood education and child care to parents who want to return to work.

Vermont

[Vermont Business](#) writes on a recent report assessing child care affordability issues across the state.

Washington, DC

- [New America](#) assesses Washington, DC's strategy for improving child care.

- [CLASP](#) writes on the progressive paid family and medical leave law recently passed by the DC council.

Wisconsin

[The Capital Times](#) reports on the role home visiting plays in preparing kindergarteners for success in school.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

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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