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Highlights

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

The Senate Finance Committee held a markup of the *Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act (S 1827)* that would extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program and [transition it to a state-federal partnership](#) and will now move to the Senate to vote. A [similar bill](#) introduced in the House Energy and Commerce Committee, *Helping Ensure Access for Little Ones, Toddlers, and Hopeful Youth by Keeping Insurance Delivery Stable (Healthy KIDS) Act of 2017*, would also extend the Child Health Insurance Program, and add additional cuts, but also package with \$1 billion in funding to Puerto Rico. This comes after Congress failed to reauthorize CHIP before the end of the fiscal year last month, which [Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#) noted would have the fiscal effect of causing the program to run out of funding before the end of 2017. Read analysis of the House bill from [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).

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Federal Updates

Home Visiting

Despite bipartisan support and legislative movement in both the House and Senate, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program expired at the end of the federal fiscal year last month, leaving programs and children and families at risk. Last month the House passed [HR 2824 Increasing Opportunity through Evidence-Based Home Visiting Act](#) and the Senate had introduced [S 1829 Strong Families Act of 2017](#). Both of which would reauthorize the program for 5 years and provide additional funding, although as [Education Week's Christina Samuels](#) highlights there were some discrepancies in the approach to funding the bill. [The Center for American Progress](#) outlined the number of children and families at risk of losing services given the expiration of the program.

2016 National Survey of Children's Health

The United States Census Bureau released the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), detailing findings on child physical and mental health, access to care, quality education, and family. The survey aims to provide an interdisciplinary and in-depth outlook on the state of adolescent quality of life. Compared to other years, the 2016 data [differed in methodology](#); The National Survey of Children's Health will also be combined with [National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs \(NS-CSHCN\)](#) in the 2016 report. Findings from this survey have been reported by [National Public Radio](#) and

Policy Trends & Analysis

Teacher Pay Inequity

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment reveals how some states are attempting to narrow the pay and benefits gap between equally qualified pre-kindergarten teachers and kindergarten and elementary school teachers in a new companion piece "[Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons from Seven States and Cities](#)" to a previously [proposed framework](#) and overview of the [current landscape](#).

Infants and Toddlers

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and ZERO TO THREE released a set of publications in their series "[Building Strong Foundations: Advancing Comprehensive Policies for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)" regarding the importance of intervention, child care, and early head start in family outcomes and targets for policymakers.

- "[Early Head Start: A Critical Support for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)" details Early Head Start programs and their significance as the only federal program targeting early education for low-income babies and toddlers.
 - "[Child Care Assistance: A Critical Support for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)" promotes early child care as a massive aid to families, particularly low-income, and a booster of toddler education and development.
 - "[Early Intervention: A Critical Support for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)" discusses the significance of early intervention, particularly in infants or toddlers with developmental delays, as a facilitator of positive and beneficial child development.
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Current Standards and Assessment

The RAND corporation recently released a report entitled "[U.S. Teachers' Support of Their State Standards and Assessments](#)" suggesting the majority of United States mathematics and English language teachers do not support state standards for teaching. Primary findings suggest that difficulty of the standards and lack of appropriateness for students with disabilities are contributing factors to teachers' disapproval. Read more on the report from [Teacher Beat](#).

New Research

Early Childhood and the Justice System

According to a [study](#) from the University of Southern California's Children's Data Network, the prevalence of past child protection in youth involved in the juvenile justice system is high. Specifically, many of the children in LA probation youth were referred in early childhood and had at least one referral for suspected maltreatment. Gender and racial differences were also found. More details from the [Children's Data Network](#) and [Southern California Public Radio](#).

News and Resources

ECE Directory

The National Association for the Education of Young Children debuted a new resource, the [Early Childhood Higher Education Directory](#). This website provides a comprehensive list of every childhood degree program in regionally-accredited institutions in the United States and its territories.

Medicaid

The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), with support from the Alliance for Early Success, has developed a new issue brief, "[Medicaid Financing of Home Visiting Services for Women, Children, and Families](#)" that explores Medicaid financing authorities and mechanisms that states are using to support home visiting services, as well as emerging opportunities to integrate home visiting into state health reform efforts.

Attendance

The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation [released a brief](#) that examines absence policies and practices in North Carolina. The report details the significance of chronic absence in educational outcome, its effectiveness as a measure for school quality and success, rates of absence, and recommendations for future steps.

Early Literacy

Max Larkin from [WBUR reports](#) on a website tool to promote literacy and to help parents enhance reading and personalize it to the needs of the child.

Childhood Trauma

[National Public Radio's Zach Hyman writes](#) about Sesame Street's new initiative called "Sesame Street in Communities" which aims to help young children cope with Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs.

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News From The States

[AZ](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [PA](#) | [WI](#) |

Arizona

- [Arizona Public Media's Christopher Conover reports](#) on Tucson's leaders introducing legislation to raise the city sales tax to fund early childhood education programs.
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Florida

- Governor Rick Scott announces that Florida school will accept [20,000 Puerto Rican Students](#).
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Illinois

- [Rachel Droze from Fox Illinois reports](#) on Illinois' state budget and its current plan for child care programs.
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Louisiana

- [The 74 Million reports](#) on Educare's success in closing the Achievement Gap in New Orleans.

- Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and the Louisiana Department of Health recently released the [Early Childhood Risk and Reach in Louisiana Report](#), highlighting childhood well-being and early childhood education in Louisiana.

Maine

- [Bangor Daily News' Matthew Stone chronicles](#) Governor Paul LePage administration's efforts to have local school districts to provide special education services for 3- to 5-year-olds with disabilities and developmental delays who currently receive the support through a state program.
- [Patty Wight from Maine Public Radio examines](#) Maine's Early Child Care system.

New York

- Rebecca Mead describes Mayor Bill De Blasio's universal pre-k initiative in [The New Yorker](#).

Oklahoma

- [Tulsa World's Samuel Hardiman reports](#) on family foundation and its attempt to break the cycle of poverty.

Pennsylvania

- [Jason Gottesman writes for City and State PA](#) detailing the House's new bill that will allow people to identify quality day care centers.

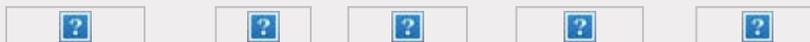
Wisconsin

- [Brenda Iasevoli reports](#) a new curriculum introduced by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that prioritizes kindness and emotion regulation.

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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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