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**Highlights**

**Senate Continues Confirmation Process for Secretary Nominees**

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) held a [hearing](#) on the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education on January 17. Despite petitions by Senate Democrats to hold a second hearing, the committee vote is now scheduled for January 31. Meanwhile the Senate HELP committee also held an initial hearing on the nomination of [Rep. Tom Price](#) for Secretary of Health and Human Services - which was followed by a hearing in the committee with jurisdiction over the nomination, the Senate Finance Committee. After the hearings [New America](#) updated its original blog post about what these two nominations would mean for early childhood education.

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**Federal Updates**

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

The US Department of Education, under former President Obama, withdrew a proposed regulation on the "supplement not supplant" provision in Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act. This is a defeat for civil rights groups hoping to ensure poor and minority students receiving a deserving share of the federal funds. Read more from [Politico](#).

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**Family Engagement**

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning Research and Evaluation [released a report](#) looking at family engagement in health services in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

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**Home Visiting**

The US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a [joint statement](#) on how improving collaboration between the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C programs.

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## 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 U.S. to expand the number of children attending full school day and full school year programs. [Education Week](#) reports on this funding. [First Five Years Fund](#) provides commentary on the announcement.

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## 2016 Early Childhood Development Accomplishments

The US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families released a report highlighting administration accomplishments in early childhood over the past year. The report discusses the release of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule. It will be posted on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) [website](#) when 508 compliant-in the meantime, email [ekenefick@theounce.org](mailto:ekenefick@theounce.org) for a pdf copy.

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## Health Care

The deadline to purchase health insurance coverage for 2017 through the federal and state marketplaces is midnight, January 31<sup>st</sup>. See [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) for more information on how to enroll before the deadline. Individuals and families with qualifying life events (i.e. change in job, move across state lines, marriage, birth of a child, and more) may be eligible to purchase coverage in the marketplace after this deadline through a [Special Enrollment Period](#).

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## Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

January 27 was national EITC Awareness Day. Read about 10 reasons to love the EITC from [CLASP](#), which includes #8 "The EITC improves long-term outcomes for recipients' children. Studies have proven that the EITC and other working-family tax credits improve child achievement and long-term educational attainment, increase earnings in the next generation, and lead to positive health outcomes."

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## Policy Trends & Analysis

### Home Visiting

ZERO TO THREE [released the report](#) Integrating Home Visiting in State and Tribal Early Childhood Systems, offering strategies for integrating home visiting into existing systems.

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### Tax Policy

The Early Childhood Action Tank, a consortium of early childhood organizations and advocates, [released of a comprehensive tax reform plan](#) to improve early childhood education with recommendations around tax credits and deductions, municipal and private activity bonds, Pay for Success, and more. The group includes First Five Years Fund, Save the Children Action Network, XL Catlin, Goldman Sachs, PNC Financial Services Group, Pearson, First Focus, Institute for Child Success and the YMCA.

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### Child Care

CLASP [released two new reports](#) demonstrating the need for increased investments in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

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## Human Services

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families [released a guide](#) on the importance of and providing trauma-informed human services.

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## New Research

### Child Poverty

[New research](#) from University of California Berkeley demonstrates that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the most effective poverty-fighting tool, lifting 4.8 million children out of poverty in 2015.

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### Racial Equity

Wilder Research, Development and Training, and the University of Minnesota, [released a report](#) on developing an early childhood system rooted in racial equity.

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### Head Start

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Planning Research and Evaluation released a report on [developing a tool](#) to examine teachers' use of ongoing assessment of children to individualize their instruction.

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## Upcoming Events

### 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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-3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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## News and Resources

### Infant and Toddler

ZERO TO THREE [provides an agenda](#) for the new administration and Congress on infant and toddler issues.

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### US Department of Education

- *Education Week* reports on [six education policy issue areas](#) where President Trump's nominee for Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos, views are still unclear.
  - [NPR reports](#) on former Education Secretary Margaret Spellings' advice to Betsy DeVos.
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### Early Childhood

- Mark Shriver, President of Save the Children Action Network, released a piece on the need to expand early childhood education in the [Huffington Post](#).
  - Brookings [released a report](#) on how to ensure outcome-based financing in early childhood development interventions.
  - [U.S. News and World Report](#) writes on the legacy of the Obama Administration on early childhood.
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### Home Visiting

- National Conference on State Legislatures created a [new webpage](#) on home visiting.
  - [The Chronicle of Social Change](#) reported that despite threats to the Affordable Care Act, MIECHV could see increased funding.
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### Child Care

- [CNN reports](#) on President Trump's push to pass a child care tax credit and six weeks of protected maternity leave.
  - [State reports](#) on how there are not enough child care services to meet the needs in the US.
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### State of the State Addresses

Education Commission of the States [offers an overview](#) of state education-related proposals in governors' addresses.

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### Early Childhood Listserv

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) offers ["Resources within Reason"](#) a new bi-monthly, one-way listserv. Each issue focuses on a topic of interest to individuals who support young children and their families, with emphasis on children with or at risk for disabilities.

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## News From The States

[CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [LA](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [OR](#) | [DC](#) |

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### California

- [89.3 KPCC reports](#) that Governor Jerry Brown's budget removes \$226 million promised for early childhood expansion in the 2016 budget.
- [EdSource reports](#) on early childhood advocates concerns over Governor Brown's budget proposal.
- [New America writes](#) on California's experiment with its Transitional Kindergarten program and how it may be working.
- [The Los Angeles Times](#) reports on how increases in the minimum wage this year may remove some families from child care subsidy eligibility.

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### Colorado

- [The Denver Post reports](#) that tuition support for the Denver Preschool Program will increase in the 2017-2018 school year through an extension of a heightened sales tax.

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### Florida

- [The Miami Herald](#) published a piece on choosing a preschool with advice from medical professionals.

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### Illinois

- Initially, Illinois Senate promised a vote on a [compromised budget](#) Wednesday, January 25, but eventually postponed plans to [continue negotiations](#) with plans for a potential vote in early February.
- Education Week reports on [recently signed legislation](#) to ease requirements for out-of-state teachers to address teacher shortages.

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### Indiana

- Governor Eric Holcomb called for [doubling the state's investment](#) in pre-kindergarten to \$20 million.
- According to [WBIC](#) House Republicans and Governor Holcomb may disagree about whether new investments in pre-kindergarten should go toward expanding services to other parts of the state or improving the services in the five-county pilot.

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### Louisiana

- The CEO of Entergy New Orleans, Charles Rice, wrote an editorial in [The Times-Picayune](#) supporting the expansion of early care and education services.
- The Louisiana Department of Education [released a report](#) looking at the state's early childhood accountability system and data.

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## New Mexico

- [The Santa Fe New Mexican](#) reports on improvements made to the state's home visiting program.
- [The New Mexico Kids Count Data Book](#), released in mid-January, shows improvements to children's health but not much change in family economic well-being.
- New Mexico State Senator Michael Padilla is planning on introducing a bill to merge the state's infant and early childhood programs, which are currently housed under different state agencies.
- [KSFR \(Santa Fe Public Radio\)](#) reports on the soda tax proposal to increase the number of children enrolled in pre-kindergarten across the state.

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## New York

- Governor Andrew Cuomo's [New York state budget](#) calls for an expanded child care tax credit and \$1 billion in spending for public schools.
- The New York City Department of Education released "[quality snapshots](#)" of pre-kindergarten programs across the city. *Education Week* offers insights on the [release](#).
- New York City has begun [accepting applications](#) for 2017-2018 slots. This will mark the third year of the pre-kindergarten program, which is currently serving 70,430 children across the city.

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## Oregon

- [Eye on Early Education](#) features discussion of "The Early Link Podcast" from the Children's Institute that looks into early childhood issues around the state.

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## Washington, DC

- [Greater Greater Washington reports](#) on the pre-kindergarten lottery system in Washington, DC and how to navigate the process.
- Inauguration Day caused child care closures across the city, requiring some parents to scramble for alternatives according to [The Washington Post](#).

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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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