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**Highlights**

**American Health Care Act (AHCA) Pulled Before Vote**

Republicans in the US House of Representatives introduced the American Health Care Act and subsequent changes through amendments in their effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Those efforts came to a halt for the time being as the legislation was pulled from a floor vote on March 24. Read statements from [Families USA](#), [Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#) and [CLASP](#).

At the outset the bill would no longer mandate health care coverage, transition the current income-based subsidies to fixed tax credits based on age and make cuts and substantial structural changes to the Medicaid program. The Congressional Budget Office [projected](#) the bill would leave 24 million uninsured. As negotiations continued there were also discussions around repealing the Essential Health Benefits put in place by the ACA. Read statements on the impact AHCA would have had on children and families from [Georgetown's Center for Children and Families](#), [CLASP](#) and [ZERO TO THREE](#).

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**Federal Updates**

**Home Visiting Reauthorization Underway**

- The US House of Representatives began the reauthorization process for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) with a hearing in front of the [House Ways and Means Committee](#). Committee members heard testimonies on the importance and efficacy of home visiting programs, including from Ounce of Prevention Fund President Diana Rauner. Watch [highlights](#) from the hearing.
- The national [Home Visiting Coalition](#) kicked off its campaign with the intention of ensuring that the "successful, evidence-based program is not

just continued but also expanded so that even more at-risk families in all 50 states can benefit from home visiting."

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### **Proposed Presidential FY2018 Budget**

President Trump released his [proposed FY2018 budget](#), which reveals details about spending priorities-including very deep cuts to non-defense discretionary programs pared with a \$54 billion increase in defense spending. The budget identified early care and education as a high priority for the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), but it does not address the funding levels for either Early Head Start/Head Start or the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) directly, and cuts the overall HHS budget by \$15.1 billion or 18%.

The budget is a blueprint and Congress now takes the next step. Read statements from [CLASP](#) and the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) on how the budget would affect low-income and poor families and children.

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### **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

The US Senate voted to rescind accountability rules in ESSA that President Obama Administration's had put into place to use school ratings and student report cards to [identify and help](#) struggling schools. The National Governors Association published an [FAQ](#) on what this means for states in writing their state plans.

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### **Child Care**

Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the [Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit Enhancement Act](#) to increase claimable expenses and maximum tax credit however it does not make the credit refundable. This comes as [news](#) and [reports](#) indicate that President Trump's potential child care plan would primarily help wealthy families.

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### **Immigration Enforcement**

US Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly confirmed that President Trump's administration is considering separating migrant parents from their children crossing together at the US-Mexico border illegally according to [Politico](#). [CLASP](#) and [Eye on Early Education](#) provide resources and guidance on how to support parents and families as immigration enforcement as deportation fears increase.

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### **Tax Reform**

There are continued discussions of federal tax reform out of Washington, DC, but [The Hill](#) reports that there mounting obstacles to making reform happen quickly. [U.S. News and World Report](#) writes on the potential for tax reform to help children across the US.

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## **Policy Trends & Analysis**

### **Child Poverty and Tax Policy**

The US Child Poverty Action Group released the report [Family Tax Policy: A Path Forward to Lifting Children Out of Poverty](#), which offers policymakers guidance on how to use tax reform to help vulnerable US children in poverty.

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### **Children's Health Coverage**

- The Kaiser Family Foundation released a [new brief](#) reviewing the importance of federal programs that fund children's health coverage and the potential negative consequences of cutting funding to these programs.
- Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families and the American Academy of Pediatrics released a series of [state factsheets](#) on the children's health coverage.

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## Latino Families

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families released a new series of briefs, "[La Familia: Latino Families Strong and Stable, Despite Limited Resources](#)," that provides a demographic look at Latino fathers, the development of young Latino boys, and the experience of low-income Hispanic mothers with young children.

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## ESSA

New America produced [Unlocking ESSA's Potential to Support Early Learning](#), which provides a guide on ESSA, what it does, and what implications it has for early learning.

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## Workforce

The University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment [published a brief](#) on shared challenges but different systems in terms of educator expectations, qualifications and wages.

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## New Research

### Child Care

A new study in [Early Childhood Research Quarterly](#) looks at child care subsidies and the stability and quality of child care arrangements. The researchers find that subsidies produced no difference in the stability of child care arrangements and that families typically have multiple child care arrangements regardless of whether or not they receive a subsidy. In addition, the study finds that those receiving subsidies also experienced on average a higher quality of care.

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### Kindergarten

A new study, [Kids Today: The Rise in Children's Academic Skills at Kindergarten Entry](#), uses national data sets to look at the school readiness of children entering kindergarten in 2010 compared with 1998. The researchers find that students in the 2010 cohort entered kindergarten with stronger math and literacy skills, but showed mixed outcomes on behavior. Improvements in academic skill readiness were particularly pronounced for Black children.

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### Early Math Education

MDRC released a brief ["Counting on Early Math Skills,"](#) looking at the outcomes of early math education programs and children who received the Making Pre-k Count curriculum in preschool, High 5s curriculum in Kindergarten, or both. The authors find that that the programs generally had a positive impact on children's development outcomes.

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### PACT

The US Administration for Children & Families (ACF), Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) released a new report, ["Providing Financial Support for Children: Views](#)

[and Experiences of Low-Income Fathers in the PACT Evaluation.](#)" The report provides in-depth interviews with low-income fathers in fatherhood programs, documenting their challenges with economic stability and meeting child support requirements and experiencing disconnects between paying for child support and seeing their children.

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## Upcoming Events

### May 2, 2017

ZERO TO THREE is holding [Strolling Thunder](#) on May 2, 2018. This is an advocacy event to bring babies and families to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress.

### June 27-29, 2017

The 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.

### January 31-February 2, 2018

Save the Date for the [Ounce of Prevention Fund Home Visiting Summit](#) January 31-February 2, 2018 at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, DC.

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## News and Resources

### Early Childhood

- The National Conference of State Legislatures has an ["Early Education and Child Care Bill Tracking Database"](#) to stay updated on the recent state early childhood policy developments. In addition, the [Alliance for Early Success](#) provides a two-part look at state policy developments both in the Legislative and Executive Branches of state houses.
- [New America](#) writes on the importance of social networks for low-income fathers in order to fully engage as parents.
- [The American Enterprise Institute](#) provides an update on the array of early learning options state Governors are pursuing in 2017.
- [The 74 Million](#) published an interview with former Secretary of Education John King where he discusses the current administration, his previous work at the Department of Education, and his new role at Ed Trust.
- [The Stanford Social Innovation Review](#) writes on the potential of impact bonds to support early childhood development by improving services and building data sharing systems.
- [The Washington Post](#) reports on a gap that exists between what educators of young children know about teaching that policymakers do not pay enough attention to.
- The Bernard van Leer Foundation [released a report](#), Early Childhood Matters, which highlights key issues and promising comprehensive solutions for early childhood.

- New America writes [an analysis of how the country should approach building a strong, supportive system for children and families](#).

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## Child Care

- [Brookings](#) released a report on why the federal government should be involved in subsidizing child care and how it should go about funding it.
- The US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care (OCC) released [resource guides](#) on consumer education for infant and toddler child care.
- OCC's office of Technical Assistance [released resources](#) on state early childhood systems and program integration.
- [Market Watch](#) reports that families save on average \$9,000 by living in the suburbs simply because child care is much more expensive in cities.
- [PBS News Hour](#) reports on the high quality of child care that military families have access to, and that helps provide them with peace of mind.
- [The New York Times](#) wrote a piece about Ivanka Trump and her efforts to try and bridge party differences through child care.
- [NY Magazine](#) reflects on what it means to strike from child care as part of March 8's International Women's Day Strike, and [Huffington Post](#) published a piece on what a day without child care workers, which is often considered "women's work" looks like.
- [U.S. News and Work Report writes](#) on how the US lags behind other countries in terms of its child care policy.

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## Preschool

- [The Washington Post](#) published an article that discussed the gains that preschool programs provide, but went on to say that the gains can fade quickly because of challenging home environments and mediocre early elementary programs.
- [The Hechinger Report](#) writes on why state preschool programs are particularly small to non-existent in Mountain States and New Hampshire.

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## Early Childhood Workforce

- [Education Week writes](#) on how Head Start could be an innovator for addressing early childhood workforce challenges.
- [Vox reports](#) on the low-wages of child care workers.
- [CBS News reports](#) on parents who are pushing for higher wages for child care workers.

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## Dual-Language Learners

[New America writes](#) on how the language diversity in dual-language learners affects their academic trajectories.

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## Mental Health

The National Center for Children in Poverty [provided an update](#) to the 2016 50-state survey on how Medicaid can be used to help young children and parents access mental health services.

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## Children's Health Coverage

- [Education Week discusses](#) what's at stake for schools with the potential changes to the health care laws.
- [The Bipartisan Policy Center](#) wrote about the importance of preserving the Children's Health Insurance Program.

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## Child Development

[89.3 KPCC interviewed](#) Dr. Patricia Kuhl, co-director of the University of Washington Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, on her current research around early exposure to music and early language development.

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## QRIS

ACF OPRE released the report "[Measures Used in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems \(QRIS\) Validation Studies.](#)" which provides information on the types of validation studies happening and the types of indicators used.

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## News From The States

[AR](#) | [AZ](#) | [CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [GA](#) | [IL](#) | [IN](#) | [KS](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [MI](#) | [NE](#) | [NH](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [OK](#) | [OR](#) | [TN](#) | [DC](#) | [WI](#) |

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## Arkansas

- The [Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#) writes that the Arkansas House Bill 1545, which would remove a state commission's authority to regulate child care centers, cleared House committee.
- [Fox16.com](#) reports on educators from across Arkansas advocating for increase funding for pre-kindergarten programs.

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## Arizona

- [AZ Central](#) published an op-ed from the state's next superintendent of public instruction in which they advocate expanding to full-day kindergarten.

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## California

- [ABC10.com reports](#) on California Assembly Bill 60 (AB60) that would make changes to child care income eligibility levels to help make the program available to more families.
- [EdSource reports](#) on California's newly formed Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education, which will look into creating a long-range plan to meet families' child care needs.
- [89.3 KPCC highlights](#) a recent report showing that the biggest wealth gap for families with young children in the state is in Los Angeles.

- The Early Learning Lab in California [published two new pieces](#), one covering opportunities to advance early childhood workforce quality and a second looking at opportunities to [support dual-language learners](#) in the state.
  - [Children Now](#) released a report on advancing a policy vision for children in California. [EdSource wrote](#) on the report, citing the need for policymakers to devote more attention to infants and toddlers.
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## Colorado

- [Rocky Mountain PBS News](#) reports on House Bill 1210 that would limit out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for children in state-funded preschool programs or in early elementary grades.
  - [CBS Denver](#) reports on a state bill that would seeks to increase families' child care options.
  - [Chalkbeat writes](#) on the federal and private funding behind Adams County's Project LAUNCH program that works to improve young children's mental health.
  - [Chalkbeat](#) reports on how men in [Colorado's early childhood workforce](#) are finding their voices through storytelling.
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## Florida

- [PalmBeachPost.com](#) writes on the work of YWCA to serve women and children in the community.
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## Georgia

- [AJC.com reports](#) on Senate Bill 5, which would increase funding to state pre-kindergarten programs. It passed the Senate unanimously.
  - The [Ledger-Enquirer](#) writes about Georgia's Boost program that helps students pay for child care early and how it's helped students at Columbus State University.
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## Illinois

- The [Chicago Tribune](#) reports that Chicago Public Schools tells principals not to allow immigration enforcement in schools without warrants.
  - [DNA Info](#) reports that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) requested that a Cook County court judge for the state to pay the district more money or CPS would need to close 20 days early.
  - The [News Tribune](#) writes that state budget impasse threatens local pre-kindergarten programs.
  - [93.5 FM WTAX](#) reports on Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Tony Smith, and his testimony before the Senate Education Committee to encourage the General Assembly to not cut the ISBE budget.
  - [The JournalStar](#) writes on a conference in Peoria that looks at the impact of trauma on young kids.
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## Indiana

- [93.1 FM WIBC](#) reports that Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb wants to get more money to expand state pre-kindergarten programs. Currently, the state House and Senate have passed separate bills. [WFYI Indianapolis](#) reports that the Senate-approved bill cut funding increases from \$10 million to \$3 million. Advocates of pre-kindergarten programs are trying to [persuade the Senate](#) to increase funding.
  - [93.1 FM WIBC reports](#) that the United Way of Central Indiana announced the first recipients of a total of \$950,000 to help some of the state's most vulnerable families.
  - [The Indy Channel](#) writes about the impact of a Goodwill Nurse-Family Partnership program on mothers in the community.
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## Kansas

- Education advocates in Kansas are [pushing for more funding](#) for state early education programs after the Kansas Supreme Court declared that one-quarter of students in grades K-12 are behind in reading and math.
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## Louisiana

- The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) unanimously approved the proposed revisions to the School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) bonus payments structure. Now the revisions go to the House Ways and Means and Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committees of the Louisiana Legislature for final approval. The Legislature will convene on April 10. If approved, the changes will go into effect in 2018. These revisions will align the tax credits to the new rating system for all publicly funded early care and education programs, which was mandated by Act 3 of 2012.
  - The [Louisiana Department of Education announced](#) changes to the state's Child Care Assistance Program eligibility rules that take effect immediately.
  - [The Greater Baton Rouge Business Report](#) writes about the importance of school and child care tax credits to benefit the workforce development.
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## Maine

- [Bangor Daily News' Maine Focus](#) began its new article series, Forgotten Maine Workers, with a piece on the state's failure to take advantage of all available federal funds for child care assistance.
  - [WLBZ 2 reports](#) that in reaction to increased reports of preschool expulsions, advocates are pushing for programs that offer children greater support.
  - [Portland Press Herald](#) reports on the role importance of funding early childhood programs for longer-term national security issues.
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## Michigan

- [Michigan Radio](#) reports on efforts to designate Flint as a "promise zone," which would help raise funding to support more young people in pursuing higher education.
- [The Detroit News](#) published a piece advocating for helping working families by making the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit partially refundable.

- [Michigan Chronicle](#) reports on the Head Start Early Childhood Innovation Fund Collaborative's \$1.5 million in award grants to nine Head Start grantees to support parent engagement and teacher recruitment and retention work.
  - [Macomb Daily News](#) reports on Michigan Senate Bill 182, which seeks to require child care providers to have state-issued identification in order to receive child care assistance payments.
  - [Crain's Detroit](#) considers how Michigan should approach making child care more affordable.
  - [The Detroit Free Press](#) reports that Governor Rick Snyder's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Commission recommends universal preschool to 4-year-olds and making community college free.
  - [The Holland Sentinel](#) reports on House Bill 4250, which would require schools to offer kindergarten that is the same length of time as other elementary grades and lower the state's compulsory age for attending school from 6 to 5 years old.
  - [mLive](#) writes that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded the Kent School Services Network a two-year, \$300,000 grant to improve preschool attendance and work to ensure children are kindergarten ready.
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## Nebraska

- [The Grand Island Independent](#) reports that Susan Sarver, director of workforce planning and a development for the Buffett Early Child Institute, calls for a new Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission to make recommendations for improving the states early childhood workforce.
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## New Hampshire

- [Concord Monitor](#) reports that Concord, New Hampshire's school board voted on a budget that does not expand kindergarten to full-day.
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## New Mexico

- [The Santa Fe New Mexican](#) reports that on May 2 Santa Fe voters will vote on whether or not to impose a tax on sugary drinks to raise funds for early childhood education programs.
  - [U.S. News and World Report](#) writes that New Mexico anti-poverty advocates are disappointed with the Democratic-controlled legislature's lack of efforts to tackle poverty.
  - [The Taos News](#) reports on policy changes needed in the state to help improve child welfare.
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## New York

- [Education Week](#) writes on looking for deeper learning in preschool in New York City's expansion.
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## Oklahoma

- [Tulsa World reports](#) that local Tulsa early childhood advocates representing Community Action Project of Tulsa and George Kaiser Family Foundation testified before the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education.
- [The Oklahoman](#) writes how state early childhood advocates are promoting collaboration in order to meet challenges.
- [Tulsa World](#) reports on the local Impact Tulsa report, which shows that students in the city are making academic progress but racial and socioeconomic gaps continue.

## Oregon

- Oregon Senate Republican Deputy Leader, Tim Knopp, introduced [Senate Bill 594](#), which seeks to expand the state's child care credit.

## Tennessee

- [Chalkbeat](#) reports that Tennessee's Department of Education is now tying preschool [funding to teacher quality and evaluation](#) in order to address a Vanderbilt University study of the state's Voluntary Pre-k program that showed fadeout and worse early elementary school outcomes for participants.
- [The Tennessean](#) reports on the introduction of a [new state bill](#) that would prohibit suspension or expulsion in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten unless students engage in violent behavior.

## Washington, DC

- Pyper Davis, executive director of Educare Washington, DC [testified](#) before the US House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human services and Education on the importance of access to high-quality early childhood education programs.

## Wisconsin

- [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) reports on the variety of factors causing the shortage of preschool teachers in Wisconsin.
- [WKOW](#) reports on the impact of poverty and racial disparities are having in the state.
- [Wisconsin State Journal](#) writes on the effect that unaffordable child care and lack of health supports has on the state's workforce.
- [Milwaukee Courier](#) published a piece from Secretary of Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families, Eloise Anderson, on the new proposals to ease the child care cliff.
- [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) reports on calls from Milwaukee's Policy Chief and Northwestern Mutual CEO to invest in early childhood education at the state level.

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