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Highlights

Happy 25th Anniversary to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

[President Obama](#), US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and numerous other elected officials and civil rights organizations celebrated the 25th anniversary of the passage of the [ADA](#), which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities -- including in schools where all children have the right to high-quality education.

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Federal Updates

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Sen. Bob Casey introduced the *Access to Healthy Food for Young Children Act of 2015* that would improve and expand the CACFP program by reducing the threshold for receiving assistance from 50% of the community eligible for free or reduced price school lunches to 40% and allowing family child care homes to serve a third meal. Read about these and other changes in a bill summary [here](#) and media coverage [here](#).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, Senate Ranking Member Patty Murray, and House Ranking Member Bobby Scott met to discuss the differences in the ESEA reauthorization bills and agreed to recommend Rep. Kline to chair the conference committee. Read more [here](#).

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

- The National Center on Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships (NCEHS-CCP) is seeking ideas, requests, questions and suggestions as it works to support the more than 270 new EHS-CC Partnerships effectively implement programs. Read more [here](#).

- The Office of Head Start (OHS) within ACF announced the 12 Regional Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) contracts awarded for the next five years. In addition to the previous specialists (early childhood, infant/toddler and preschool, and grantee) the contracts now include health and systems specialists. Read more [here](#).
- The Office of Child Care within the ACF convened stakeholders from Regional Offices, State Advisory Councils, Head Start Collaboration Offices, Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grantees, and several national organization at the 2015 State and Territory Administrators Meeting (STAM). Read more [here](#).
- Staff from ACF's Office of Early Childhood Development presented at the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)'s national conference, discussing early childhood efforts by ACF and the Office of Early Childhood Development. Read more about the efforts [here](#).
- Too Small to Fail, in partnership with HHS and the US Department of Education, released the toolkit "Talk, Read, Sing Together, Every Day!," a result of the 2014 White House convening on the "word gap" aimed at enriching early language experiences. Read more [here](#).

Medicaid

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed laws creating Medicaid and Medicare - protecting the health of millions of Americans. [President Obama](#), the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#), and numerous national organizations celebrated its birthday.

Data Privacy

Chairman Todd Rokita and Ranking Member Marcia Fudge of the House Education and Workforce Committee Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education introduced the *Student Privacy Protection Act* to modernize privacy protections. Read more [here](#).

White House Council of Economic Advisors

President Obama intends to nominate University of Texas at Austin economist Sandra Black to the three-member White House Council of Economic Advisers. She will replace Betsey Stevenson, who will return to the University of Michigan. Ms. Black has researched various topics within early childhood development and inter-generational mobility. Read more [here](#).

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Policy Trends and Analysis

Child Well-Being

The Annie E. Casey Foundation published its annual *2015 KIDS COUNT Data Book* that ranks states on 16 indicators related to child well-being as well as economic well-being, education, health and family and community. According to the report, 1.7 million more children live in low-income, working families now than during the recent Great Recession. In the states, Minnesota and New Hampshire hold the top two spots for overall child well-being. Read more [here](#).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

New America and First Five Years Fund (FFYF) broke down components of the Senate's *Every Child Achieves Act* (ECAA) that recently passed and would reauthorize ESEA. Read more [here](#) and [here](#). Center for American Progress' Katie Hamm published in US News & World Reports an op-ed on why ESEA reauthorization should include access to high-quality child care. Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Finance

The Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) released a report outlining innovative financing options for early childhood education at the federal and state and local levels. Categories include incentivizing private dollars and reforming tax credits. Read more [here](#). President of SCAN, Mark Shriver, outlined the report in a piece for *The Huffington Post*. Read more [here](#).

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New Research

Child Care

The Urban Institute studied child care arrangements for low-income, working mothers with nonstandard work schedules in its new publication, "Who Minds the Kids When Mom Works a Nonstandard Schedule?". According to the report, the mothers with nonstandard work schedules use any type of child care more than mothers with standard schedules, as well as use multiple arrangements including partners and other relatives. Read more [here](#). *CBS Money Watch* and *Forbes* reported on the study and its finding that one out of five parents with children under 13 years old work nonstandard schedules. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

The RAND Corporation, in partnership with the Delaware Office of Early Learning, evaluated the state's QRIS for early learning and care programs, Delaware Starts for Early Success, and recently released its Year Two report that looks at whether additional providers are joining and providers are advancing in the system. Read more [here](#).

Family Engagement

Researchers from the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) and the Catholic University of America released, "Supporting Parent Engagement in Linguistically Diverse Families to Promote Young Children: Implications for Early Care and Education," that

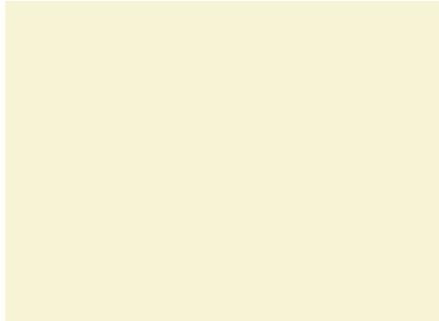
highlights ways in which research can inform policies in this arena. For example, the report recommends establishing program requirements and quality standards that address families whose home language is not English. Read more [here](#).

Poverty and Brain Development

Researchers from Duke University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison studied the brain development of children in poverty and its association with academic achievement by tracking hundreds of children over the course of six years (2001-2007). Published in *JAMA Pediatrics* the authors found children in poverty exhibited structural differences in their brain and also scored lower on achievement tests. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

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Upcoming Events



News and Resources

Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS)

The QRIS National Learning Network and the BUILD Initiative hosted the 2015 QRIS National Meeting, "Higher Ground - Taking Quality to Scale!" in Washington, DC, last month. Read the agenda at a glance and access other conference materials [here](#).

Child Mental Health

ZERO TO THREE posted a blog piece about the new Pixar and Disney movie "Inside Out" and its relevance to parents of babies and toddlers. Read more [here](#).

Head Start

The executive director of the National Head Start Association (NHSA) published an op-ed in *The Hill* about the recently-published Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) by the US Department of Health and Human Services on the updated Head Start Performance

Standards and the issue of meeting the new requirements without the additional investment needed to avoid cutting access to children. Read more [here](#).

Preschool

- The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) hosted a webinar on its report "State Pre-K Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Policymakers in Revising Policy to Increase Access for High Needs Children," with a representative from the Virginia House Appropriations Committee who talked about eligibility revisions to the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Watch [here](#).
 - New America summarizes the findings from the Bellwether Education Partners, the Fordham Institute, and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools report, "Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration." Read more [here](#).
 - The president and chief executive of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools published a post in *U.S. News & World Report's* Knowledge Bank about the three factors for the next pre-K initiative: High-quality and the link to training, choice and access, and school readiness and transitions. Read more [here](#).
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Early Childhood Investment

- *Inside Philanthropy* profiled the Bezos Family Foundation's work in early childhood education including its new grantees such as Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors in California and its longest-term grantees such as the Harvard Center on the Developing Child. Read more [here](#).
 - *Inside Philanthropy* discussed the increased interest by the Gates Foundation in early childhood education as discussed in a recent interview with Bill and Melinda Gates in *New York Times* columnist Nicolas Kristof's column. Read more [here](#).
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Special Education

New America reviews a research report produced by the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research called "Impact of North Carolina's Early Childhood Initiatives on Special Education Placements in Third Grade" and highlights positive early intervention impacts in the state. Read more [here](#).

Access Inequality

The White House released a report about the economic impact on men of color of closing the education gap, beginning with access to early childhood education. Read more [here](#).

Child Health

The Office of Head Start's National Center on Health published its Head Start Health Services June Newsletter on the topic of child asthma. Read more [here](#).

Workforce Development

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) announced the creation of a new initiative with Lumina Foundation and 40 other organizations on how to transform the nation's highly-diverse and fragmented education and workforce credentialing system. Read more [here](#).

Language Development

New America interviews Karen Beeman, an education consultant specializing in biliteracy and bilingual education, in its series from the Dual Language Learners National Work Group "Spreading the Word(s)". Read more [here](#).

Child Assessments

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) presented at the National Association of Elementary School Principals Conference on the topic "Making PreK-3rd Grade Assessments Matter." Read more [here](#).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) discussed Sen. Casey's new bill to improve the CACFP program, Access to Healthy Food for Young Children Act of 2015. Read more [here](#).

Research to Practice

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes Senior Research Fellow Jim Squires, Ph.D., presented at the Mississippi Early Childhood Conference "Making Informed Decisions: An Administrator's Guide to Understanding Early Education Research." Read more [here](#).

Technology

CEELO released an annotated bibliography on using technology in early childhood classrooms. Read more [here](#).

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News From The States

AZ | CA | GA | IL | LA | NE | NM | NY | OR | WA |

Arizona

The Children's Action Alliance commented on the findings from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* that ranks Arizona 46th in child well-being. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

California

- California State Superintendent Tom Torlakson and the California Department of Education released "A Blueprint for Great Schools Version 2.0" that builds upon the state's 2011 education blueprint. Read more [here](#).
 - The San Diego Unified School District is beginning enhanced enrollment outreach for its government-subsidized preschool and childhood development center slots to avoid having empty slots as with the previous year. Read more [here](#).
 - An anonymous donor gave a \$34 million gift to improve education in Oakland, a portion of which will go to early education teacher training and materials. Read more [here](#).
 - First 5 California is looking for new funding sources as the tobacco tax revenue declines from a decrease in people smoking. Read more [here](#).
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Georgia

- Now in its 23rd year, Georgia's voluntary pre-K program will enroll 84,000 4-year-olds. Read more [here](#).
 - Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) launched the Kids Online Administrative Licensing Application (KOALA) network for child care providers to fulfill administrative requirements online. Read more [here](#).
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Illinois

- The *Chicago Sun-Times'* Mark Brown unpacks Gov. Rauner's emergency rule changes to eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and the impact on new participants now deemed ineligible. Brown also examines the financial stability of non-profits as children transition into elementary school, leaving behind empty seats. Read more [here](#).
 - *The Daily Chronicle* profiles child care centers bracing for the CCAP changes. Read more [here](#).
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Louisiana

- In response to the federal "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, Baton Rouge launched an initiative to help improve the school readiness of young black and Latino boys and help them achieve greater success in adulthood. Read more [here](#).
 - Louisiana ranked 48th in overall child well-being according to the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as 28% of children lived in poverty in the state in 2013, up from 25% in 2008. Read more [here](#).
 - The Louisiana Department of Education presented at the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council meeting in late July about major proposed improvements to the eligibility and funding rates for the Louisiana Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) will make final decisions on the changes during August meetings. Read the presentation overview of the proposed changes [here](#) or a draft of the proposed revisions to Bulletin 139 on CCAP policies [here](#).
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Nebraska

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is helping the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and respective school districts and child care centers save \$1.2 million in administrative costs tied to distributing domestically-grown USDA donated foods. Read more [here](#).

New Mexico

New Mexico ranked 49th in child well-being for the second time in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Book. New Mexico Voices for Children highlighted the importance of early learning, as well as two generational approaches that would include parent training. Read more [here](#).

New York

- New York City is planning to pay a \$2,500 signing bonus and \$3,500 retention bonus to prekindergarten teachers at community-based early childhood centers in an effort to bridge the salary gap between centers and school district teachers. Stakeholders were concerned about quality when a large portion of the pre-k program slots had to be filled by early childhood centers. Read more [here](#).
 - Chirlane McCray, New York city's first lady, continued to promote her "Talk to Your Baby" initiative she launched with Hillary Clinton earlier this year by visiting various libraries. Read more [here](#).
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Oregon

- In an interview with the *Hood River News* editorial board, Gov. Kate Brown discussed her passion for early childhood education and some of the changes in the Oregon Promise affordable education bill. Read more [here](#).
- New America highlights the work the Centennial School District in Portland, Ore., has undergone to accommodate its increasingly diverse student body that speak 52 different languages and also transition to providing students and families with wraparound services. Read more [here](#) about these efforts including Lynch Wood Elementary School's early childhood program.
- Oregon's Chief Education Officer Nancy Golden advocates for a seamless path from cradle to career according to the *East Oregonian*. Read more [here](#).

Washington

- Jackie Bezos penned an op-ed in *The Seattle Times* about the proposed King County initiative Best Start for Kids that would invest in early learning programs and continue to support children along a continuum. Read more [here](#).
- Organizations in Seattle are creating pre-k programs that would operate entirely outside-on private islands or public parks-but as it stands, these programs do not qualify for subsidized tuition. Read more [here](#).

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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 contact Sharrell Hibbler (shibbler@theounce.org)