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Highlights

The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council Release Landmark Report on Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce

The new report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, assesses the current landscape of early education professionals' skills and strategies, outlines what best practices and brain science suggests it should be, and plans how to bridge the gap. In doing so, it reinforces the work of the early childhood policy and advocacy community. Read more [here](#) and read the New America Foundation's response to it [here](#).

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Federal Updates

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

On April 16 President Obama signed into law an extension of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV or home visiting) Program through September 2017, at an annual level of \$400 million. The US House of Representatives included it in the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (the "Doc Fix"). Read the White House Office of Management and Budget's blog post on the importance of the program [here](#) and [here](#).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Sens. Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray delivered on their promise to mark up an ESEA rewrite in the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. After months of brokering, the HELP Committee unanimously approved the Every Child Achieves Act. Included in the amendments passed was a bipartisan provision for "Early Learning Alignment and Improvement Grants" from Sens. Murray and Isakson. Read more about the unveiling of the plan [here](#), the passage of the rewrite [here](#) and [here](#) and the new early learning provision [here](#).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The US Department of Education (ED) issued a final rule on April 28 clarifying aspects of the maintenance of effort (MOE) provision in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Effective July 2015, school districts that cut special education funding and fail to meet their MOE requirement will not be able to use the lowered funding level as the MOE base moving forward except under certain circumstances. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources held a hearing "Next Steps for Welfare Reform: Ideas to Improve Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to Help More Families Find Work and Escape Poverty." Witnesses from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) and APSHA testimonies addressed the program's interaction with the recently reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Read more [here](#).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The comment period for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposed rule change to the CACFP meal patterns for children and adults in day care (80 FR 2037) has been extended from April 15, 2015 to May 27, 2015. This is the first time since 1968 that the meal patterns have been significantly revised. Read more [here](#).

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Policy Trends and Analysis

Early Childhood Investment

- The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP)'s Family Income Support Team released analysis of states' use of federal and state funds under the TANF Block Grant in 2013. Nationally, states used 16 % of total TANF and maintenance of effort (MOE) funds on child care, but within states the share ranged between 0-69 %. CBPP noted that the total amount of \$5 billion was the lowest in over a decade. Read more [here](#).
- The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) released its annual budget book on federal education investments, "Education Matters: Investing in America's Future." Included is an overview of the President's FY16 budget, an analysis of education cuts since FY10 and a breakdown different education funding programs. Read more [here](#).
- The National Women's Law Center compiled all mentions of early care and education in the 2015 State of the State addresses for a total of 27 governors (14 Democrats and 13 Republicans) raising the issue in their remarks. Read more [here](#).

Child Care Policy

- As part of the multi-state Work Support Strategies Project, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the Urban Institute released a report on the implication of job hours and schedules for state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) policy choices. The report outlines the following policy areas as burdensome to parents and CCDF agencies and potentially harmful to children: eligibility minimum hour work requirements, job schedule and hours verification, and matching child care and work hours. Read more [here](#).
- CLASP released its annual analysis of national and state child care assistance spending and participation for FY13 reporting that spending continued to decline to an 11-year low (\$11.3 billion) and, similarly, participation to a 15-year low (fewer than 1.46 million in an average month). Read more [here](#).
- New America Foundation's Family-Centered Social Policy Initiative released its first report, "Strengthening Ties: The Case for Building a Social Policy Centered on Families," calling for new frameworks for analyzing the impact of policies on families as a whole. Read more [here](#).

Preschool

The US Department of Education (ED) published a report outlining access to preschool across the country and called for strong investments in high-quality early education and a reauthorization of ESEA that "reflect real equity of opportunity, starting with our youngest children." Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Policy

Zero to Three re-released its 2009 resource "Innovation in Infant and Toddler State Policies" with eight strategies for coordinating infant and toddler services. Read more [here](#).

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Early Head Start

The US Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF)'s Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation's (OPRE) Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project released a first look at the impact of Early Head Start on child maltreatment, finding among other things that children in Early Head Start had fewer child welfare encounters between the ages of 5 and 9 years old compared to the control group. Read more [here](#).

Head Start

- OPRE and the Urban Institute released "Understanding Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement in Head Start: Preliminary Findings." This extensive literature review is the first part of a study on the Head Start Leadership, Excellence, and Data Systems (LEADS) and provides six themes of continuous quality improvement. Read more [here](#).
- OPRE also released its full report from the Use of Technology to Support Head Start Practice project. Read more [here](#).

Skill Acquisition

OPRE and the Urban Institute released "Understanding Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement in Head Start: Preliminary Findings." This extensive literature review is the first part of a study on the Head Start Leadership, Excellence, and Data Systems (LEADS) and provides six themes of continuous quality improvement. Read more [here](#).

Home Visiting

OPRE in conjunction with MDRC and other research partners presented initial findings from the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation (MIHOPE). This first report from the legislatively mandated national evaluation of MIECHV includes baseline characteristics of stakeholders and needs assessments of states participating. Read more [here](#).

Mental Health

OPRE summarized current available research on the impact of trauma on infants and toddlers, as well as intervention strategies for protecting these children, in a new research-to-practice brief. It also outlined how early childhood systems can become trauma-informed. Read more [here](#).

Head Start

MDRC analyzed data from the Head Start Impact Study (HSIS) to compare the effects between Head Start Centers, as well as versus other local alternatives on children's cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. Read more [here](#).

Child Care Policy

Researchers examined the association between children's social-emotional outcomes and the discontinuity of care stemming from common child care center practices of temporary room assignments for both children and teachers. Read more [here](#).

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Upcoming Events

May 10-16

The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) is celebrating **National Black Child Development Week 2015: Lift Up Learning**. In conjunction with their Affiliate Network and partners, NBCDI is highlighting the importance of literacy and systems of support.

[Learn More>](#)

May 18

The US Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF)'s Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) is hosting a series of webinars on the **National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)**. The first webinar, held May 8, reviewed the NSECE study design. The second webinar (May 18, 2-3:30pm EST) will go over key definitions and sample characteristics from the available data sets.

[Register Here>](#)

May 22

Registration is open through Friday, May 22 for a new session of full-learning series offered through **Achieve OnDemand™ - Online Professional Development for Home Visitors**. These series include Home Visiting Foundations, Domestic Violence in Home Visiting, Trauma-Informed Practice and Infant Mental Health. The series follow a sequential learning experience and include a self-paced course, a virtual instructor-led course, interactive webinars, and more. Learn more by visiting [Achieve OnDemand](#) or calling 312.453.1993.

[Register Here>](#)

May 28

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Fostering School Success for English Learners is hosting a public information gathering session in Washington, DC (and live online) as a preliminary step for completing their study and consensus report on "**how evidence can inform policies that impact Dual Language Learners (DLL), future research, and practices in the range of settings where DLLs learn, grow, and develop from birth through grade 12.**" Read the agenda [here](#).

[Learn More>](#)

June 22-24

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is hosting the **2015 National Family and Community Engagement Conference** in Chicago, Illinois.

[Learn More>](#)

Other News, Announcements and Resources

Child Care

- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) produced a guide for states on implementing the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Read more [here](#). Materials from the webinar on the report are available [here](#).
- The National Conference of State Legislatures produced a policy primer on the CCDBG reauthorization for state legislatures. Read more [here](#).
- The National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement released two new resources from its Benchmarks for Quality Improvement project-"Measuring Progress in State and Territory Program Quality Improvement Efforts" and "BQI Self-Assessment Tool." Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- The United Nations released a report, "Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016" on the gap between equality laws and the realities that take place, as well as solutions to closing the gap including access to affordable child care. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- *The New York Times* editorial board discussed the prevalence and impact of low wages for low-income working families and how programs such as child care that enable parents to work indicates the social welfare system is functioning to a point. Read more [here](#).
- The Director of Project on Deep Poverty at the Georgetown Center on Poverty wrote an op-ed in *The Hill* about Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reauthorization needing to focus on employment and child well-being outcomes. Read more [here](#).

Child Development

- The Brookings Institution's Senior Fellow, Richard Reeves, discussed the importance of parental attachment in child development. Read more [here](#).
- *Education Week* debuted a new series on scientific advancements in children's brain science called "Ask A Scientist" with an overview of how young children can develop empathy through clapping. Read more [here](#).

Diversity and Early Learning

The Century Foundation and the Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) released a report arguing for more diversity in center-based pre-K programs. Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Business Champions

ReadyNation's new report "Business Leader Actions to Support Early Childhood: A Global Imperative; A Local Opportunity" highlights positive examples of small and large organizations and business leaders around the world supporting children's path to being healthy and productive adults. Read more [here](#).

Early Childhood Policy

- The National Governor's Association (NGA) announced the five states it will support in improving early childhood education and care access and quality. The states selected are: Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, and Rhode Island. Read more [here](#).
- NYT columnist Nick Kristof penned a piece on education reform suggesting reformers should focus more on early childhood. Read more [here](#).
- University of Western Ontario Economics Professor Elizabeth Caucutt discussed why poor children perform worse in school in an article for *The Washington Post*. She outlined the need for programs that provide access to essential early childhood learning and informing parents of the importance of those investments. Read more [here](#).
- Common Sense Media launched its newest effort, Common Sense Kids Action, as a vehicle for becoming a voice for educational technology and children's policy, more generally. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Early Childhood Instruction

The National Institute for Early Education Research, *Preschool Matters...Today!* blog included a summary of the debate on the use of Common Core in early education. Read more [here](#).

Early Learning Investment

A grantee of the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Social Innovation Fund's (SIF) Pay for Success program, Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc., announced the first cohort of seven awardees for providing its technical assistance services to assess implementation feasibility of the Pay for Success program. Multiple grantees will focus on children and family issues including California, which wants to expand home visiting in order to improve maternal and child outcomes. Read more [here](#).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Read more reactions to the ESEA drafts [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Home Visiting

- A *Huffington Post* reporter wrote an in-depth piece about home visiting titled, "This May Be The Most Effective Anti-Poverty Program In America." Read more [here](#).
- Parents as Teachers penned its support for the extension of federal funding for the MIECHV program. Read more [here](#).
- A post on the *Health Affairs Academic Journal* blog urges the medical community to adopt two-generational strategies including home visiting. Read more [here](#).

Language Development

- The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) created an annotated bibliography of resources on effective teaching and learning for dual language learners (DLL) in early childhood programs. Read more [here](#).
- Sarah D. Sparks claimed in *Education Week* that interpretations of the research findings that introduced the "30 million-word" gap have often failed to focus on what type of language is used for early childhood development in the article, "Key to Vocabulary Gap is Quality of Conversation, Not Dearth of Words." Read more [here](#).
- The Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting included discussion on

new findings about the association between reading exposure prior to kindergarten and brain development supporting early reading skills. Read more [here](#).

Quality Improvements

Child Trends released "A Blueprint for Early Care and Education Quality Improvement Initiatives: Final Report," which asserts, that for quality improvements to be meaningful and sustained, they must be based on clearly defined goals, a specific model and theory of change, and capacity-building strategies aimed at ongoing improvement. Read more [here](#).

Workforce Development

According to *Education Week*, ACT Inc. released a new report showing interest in teaching is waning among high school students with young men especially uninterested in becoming early childhood educators. Read more [here](#).

Federal Leaders

- President Obama visited a private town hall discussion at ImaginOn in North Carolina where he discussed the importance of quality child care for the health of our nation's economy and the possibility of tax reform as a way to ensure it. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- The Fordham Institute has started Eduwatch 2016, a series on the education policy stances of current 2016 presidential candidates. Read past education-related quotes more [here](#).

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News From The States

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California

- The California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) approved \$190 million for early education quality improvement system, First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive). Read more [here](#).
- The California State Legislative Education Committee voted in favor of the Preschool for All Act (AB 47). The amended legislation would require access to the state preschool program for all eligible children who wish to enroll no later than January 1, 2017, and it would be the intent of the legislature to provide sufficient funding in the budget. Read more [here](#).
- California's new representative from the 31st District, Pete Aguilar, penned an op-ed on "Changes needed for middle class to thrive," including as one of his points, investment in early childhood education. Read more [here](#).

Colorado

- The Colorado Children's Campaign reports that child poverty has decreased in Colorado for the first time in five years—from 18% in 2012 to 17% in 2013). Read more [here](#).
- *The Durango Herald* published a letter to the editor about paying child care workers adequate wages. Read more [here](#).

Florida

- The News Service of Florida outlined the many initiatives that died in the state's legislative session including a bill to tweak the recently-overhauled child welfare system. Read more [here](#).

Georgia

- Georgia became the 41st state to require insurance companies to include autism therapy for children 6 years old and younger after Gov. Nathan Deal signed legislation earlier this month. Read more [here](#).
- Earlier this year, Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), with support from the Goizueta Foundation, launched Conversations on Early Childhood and Public Policy. In conjunction with this, early childhood advocates made their case for kindergarten readiness at a forum sponsored by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. Read more [here](#).
- The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (GBPI) released a new report on child care assistance in Georgia that focuses on increasing access to affordable, high-quality child care. Read more [here](#).

Illinois

- ReadyNation released a report that stated Illinois could be short on qualified workers for open positions, and increases in early childhood investments offer a long-term solution to the problem. Read more [here](#).
- Gov. Bruce Rauner plans to restore \$26 million to spending freezes to service grants this year after new revenue forecasts estimated larger state coffers for the year. Services to be restored include autism treatment and assistance to the homeless. Read more [here](#).

Louisiana

- For the third straight year Medicaid expansion died in the state's House and Senate panels. Read more [here](#).

Maine

- The Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVACP) will oversee a new early childhood education program in the Skowhegan School Administrative District (SAD 54) and in other rural communities in Maine as a result of a \$6 million federal grant to support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs in Maine. About 200 families with infants and toddlers will be served over the 4.5 year grant. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Michigan

- Michigan's Children produced a Budgets Basics overview detailing Gov. Rick Snyder's budget recommendations that will impact young children and their families. Read more [here](#).
- Michigan's Children also published recommendations on how to improve third grade literacy. Read more [here](#).
- On May 5, Michigan voters voted "no" on Proposal 1 to raise revenues to fix the state's roads while also supporting education and low-income families. If

it had been approved, Prop 1 would have increased funding for the School Aid Fund while reinstating the Earned Income Tax Credit, in addition to raising \$1.2 billion for roads. Early childhood advocates are concerned that the legislature will likely identify a road-funding source that will redirect dollars currently funding important programs serving children, youth and families. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Nebraska

- The founding executive director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska penned an op-ed in the *Omaha Daily Herald* about the impact of early childhood education on the achievement gap. Read more [here](#).
- A Retired US Air Force Major General and a state senator and US Air Force veteran co-authored an op-ed in the *Grand Island Independent* about the connection between early childhood education and national security. Read more [here](#).

New Mexico

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico hosted an early childhood development and health symposium featuring Sen. Tom Udall, who outlined the disastrous impact of the Republican-backed federal budget proposals on children. Read more [here](#).

New York

- Parents of students in pre-K programs may be able to serve on New York's Community Education Councils (CEC), the parent advisory boards charged with evaluating the district's educational programs, after Brooklyn legislators proposed new legislation to change the current rules of only kindergarten to 8th grade parents. Read more [here](#).
- During the first round of admissions for New York City's universal pre-k program, almost 69,000 families from every borough applied. It is about 10,000 more than total enrollment from last year. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- Capital New York interviewed Josh Wallack, New York City's pre-kindergarten implementation chief, about the challenges for year 2 of the universal pre-k program. Read more [here](#).

Oregon

- The *East Oregonian* documents the financial impact on school districts of implementing full-day kindergarten. Read more [here](#).
- An Oregon nonprofit group, the Children's Institute, hosted Harvard lecturer Karen Mapps at its annual luncheon. At the event she discussed the importance of family-school partnerships during school reform efforts. Read more [here](#).
- Oregon's US Sen. Ron Wyden and the executive director of the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon published an op-ed on the passage of MIECHV. Read more [here](#).

Virginia

- Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe published an opinion in *US News & World Report* about the critical need for early childhood investments. Read more [here](#).

Washington

- *The Seattle Times* wrote an editorial encouraging state legislators to fund the Early Start Act that aims to expand the state's early childhood learning programs and not to succumb to budget battles. Read more [here](#).

Washington, DC

- The number of applicants to preschools in the district is on the rise, according to a blog post on Greater Greater Washington. Read more [here](#).

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The Ounce of Prevention Fund gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age 5.

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 Eleanore McKee (emckee@theounce.org)



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33 West Monroe Street Suite 2400

Chicago, IL 60603 · 312.922.3863

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