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Highlights

State Early Childhood Advancements in Pacific Northwest

State legislative sessions in Washington and Oregon approved numerous large investments that will improve and expand early learning in the Pacific Northwest. Washington State Gov. Jay Inslee signed the Early Start Act into law, which is the largest component of a \$158 million investment of new dollars for early learning for the next biennium and creates many critical changes including the establishment of 12-month authorization for child care subsidies and direction of investments to high-quality early childhood services. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan released a [statement](#) praising the act and Washington State's Children's Alliance [outlined](#) the provisions. In Oregon, the state legislature approved multiple investments to improve and expand early learning for the 2015-2017 biennium including a \$27 million to increase access to high-quality preschool, a \$9.5 million investment to expand voluntary home visiting, and \$5 million investment to increase grants that connect early learning to early grades. Read the Children Institute's blog post on the legislative victories [here](#).

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Federal Updates

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- Earlier this month the US House of Representatives passed the Student Success Act, its version of ESEA reauthorization, with a 218 to 213 vote. Read more [here](#).
- Last week, the Senate passed Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA) of 2015 81 to 17, reauthorizing ESEA for the first time since 2001. Sens. Murray and Isakson included the Early Learning Alignment and Improvements Grants Amendment (ELAIG) that dedicates funding for states that propose to improve coordination, quality and access for early childhood education prior to floor debate and it remained in the final version. Numerous additional amendments were reviewed including an early childhood education one proposed by Sen. Bob Casey called the Strong Start for America's Children Amendment. Failing to pass, this amendment would have increased investments in high-quality early learning through federal/state partnerships by authorizing and funding Strong Start and the Preschool Development Grants for five years. Read more US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's statement on the passage [here](#) and about Sen. Casey's amendment [here](#).

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee released a discussion draft of [legislation](#) to reauthorize the TANF program for the first time since 2005 in addition to numerous [bills](#) aimed at improving employment and self-sufficiency. The Subcommittee on Human Resources also held a [hearing](#) on the discussion draft and welfare reform proposals. Read House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Charles Boustany's opening statement [here](#) and a *National Journal* article [here](#).

US Department of Health and Human Services

- The US Department of Health and Human Services, Offices of Child Care and Head Start launched a new web portal called Early Educator Central: Pathways to Credentials and Degrees for Infant-Toddler Educators that includes online courses and other resources. Read more [here](#).
 - The Office of Head Start released the 2015 edition of the Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual that is now organized around three phases of emergency planning: preparedness, response, and recovery. Read more [here](#).
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Policy Trends and Analysis

Preschool

The Fordham Institute released a new report, "Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration," that examines 36 states with both charter schools and state-funded pre-K programs. It finds that common barriers include low funding, small pre-K programs, barriers to kindergarten enrollment, and local district monopolies on pre-K funds. Read more [here](#).

Child Care

Child Care Aware® of America released its 2015 state-by-state fact sheets on information from state Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies and other state agencies on the use, supply, cost and child care workforce provided by CCR&R. Read more [here](#).

Early Learning Challenge Grant

BUILD released chapters five and six of its e-book, *Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families*, about P-3 reform and using child standards and assessments to improve systems of learning. Read more [here](#).

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New Research

Early Head Start

Using data from the Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES),

the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation studied the association between classroom and home visit quality with child and parent outcomes in its new report, "Early Head Start Home Visits and Classrooms: Stability, Predictors, and Thresholds of Quality." Read more [here](#).

Child Care

During a four-year, mixed-methods study of select child care subsidy programs in Illinois and New York, researchers from the Urban Institute, Mathematica Policy Research, and the University of Chicago interviewed new entrants to the child care subsidy program about their experiences with the program and recommendations for improvements. Read more [here](#).

Migrant Head Start

Researchers from Michigan State University published a new study in *Health & Social Work* about the effect of enrolling in Migrant Head Start on children's weight outcomes. Using data on Children in the Michigan Migrant Head Start program they found there was a lower probability of children having obesity if they enrolled for multiple years compared to those who attended only one year. Read more [here](#).

Child Health

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine released a multinational study, "Bedtime Routines for Young Children: A Dose-Dependent Association with Sleep Outcomes," that finds regular bedtime routines are associated with multiple positive outcomes including daytime behavior problems, as perceived by mothers. Read more [here](#).

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Upcoming Events

July 21 (archived)

Approaches to State Prekindergarten Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Policymakers webinar

[Learn More >](#)

July 23

Early Childhood Screenings Ensure a Healthy Start in Life: What's Happening in the States to Improve Screening Rates? in Washington, DC

[Learn More >](#)

July 29

Fiscal Analysis Model for Early Childhood Services #2, webinar

July 29

Supporting Organizational Readiness to Address Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, webinar series

[Learn More>](#)

[Learn More >](#)

News and Resources

Early Childhood Investment

- President Obama and Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley separately called for increased investments in early childhood education as a component of larger criminal justice reform. Read the President's statement [here](#) and about the governor's [here](#).
- Sens. Orrin Hatch and Michael Bennet penned an op-ed in The Hill about the need for America to 'invest in what works' and their ESEA amendment creating an innovation fund similar to Pay for Success models. Read more [here](#).
- Leaders from LEGO Education, Rovio Entertainment Ltd., and H&M Conscious Foundation wrote in *The Huffington Post* about the investment their companies are making in early childhood development in the Nordic countries and the call for other companies and countries to do the same. Read more [here](#).
- David Bank discussed the decision to pull funding for the first US social impact bond that was set up in New York to reduce recidivism and address the fate of future programs that are investing in programs such as early childhood education. Read more [here](#).

Preschool

- Mike Krzyzewski-Coach K-head coach of Duke University's Men's Basketball Team and founder of the Emily Krzyzewski Center in Durham, North Carolina penned an op-ed in *Roll Call* about the importance of increasing access to high-quality preschool in partnership with Champions for America's Future, a network of sports leaders championing proven investments in youth. Read more [here](#).
- *The Washington Post* interviewed Nobel Prize Economist James Heckman about his thoughts on the recently released paper "Early Childhood Education by MOOC: Lessons from Sesame Street" and Sesame Street's power as a complement, but not a replacement of quality early childhood education. Read more [here](#).
- The college searching website Noodle has added a section for searching preschool programs according to the *Boston Business Journal*. Read more [here](#).

Child Care

- Emily Peck with *The Huffington Post* profiles the cultural shift toward accepting working moms and contrasts it with the lack of policy change in that arena including paid leave and better access to and quality of child care. Read more [here](#).
- *The Washington Post's* Plum Line discussed Senator Bob Casey's ESEA

amendment for universal pre-K and other instances that show universal child care is gaining traction with the Democratic Party. Read more [here](#).

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

- Child Trends released a new report "Elevating Quality Rating Improvement System Communications: How to Improve Outreach to and Engagement with Providers, Parents, Policymakers, and the Public" based on interviews with QRIS administrators in nine states including California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Minnesota, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin. Read more [here](#).
 - Child Care & Early Education Research Connections published a new "topic of interest" about research and research about QRIS. Read more [here](#).
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Child Assessments

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation funded Mathematica to study the use of ongoing assessments by teachers in early childhood. Three reports were published this month:

- "[What does it Mean to use Ongoing Assessment to Individualize Instruction in Early Childhood?](#),"
 - "[What Do We Know About How Early Childhood Teachers Use Ongoing Assessment?](#),"
 - and "[Tailored Teaching: The Need for Stronger Evidence About Early Childhood Teachers' Use of Ongoing Assessment to Individualize Instruction.](#)"
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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](#).

Early Childhood State Policy

- Lillian Mongeau analyzed the state legislative session with regard to early childhood education policy in *Education Week*. Read more [here](#).
 - New America reviewed state legislative changes related to early childhood policies in Minnesota and Texas. Read more [here](#).
 - The Journal of Research in Childhood Education published a new report, "Arizona's 'Success by Six' Legislative Package: A Historic Case of Strategic Framing," that uses strategic frame analysis to review the passage of Arizona's state preschool program. Read more [here](#).
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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](#).

Presidential Election 2016

The Fordham Institute continued Eduwatch 2016 with quotes from former Virginia Sen. and Democratic presidential candidate Jim Webb. Read more [here](#).

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News From The States

[AZ](#) | [CA](#) | [CO](#) | [FL](#) | [IL](#) | [NY](#) | [OR](#) | [WA](#) | [WI](#) |

Arizona

Despite budget FY2017 budget deliberations not beginning until next year, advocates-led by the Children's Action Alliance-have started pushing for funding restorations to programs serving children in light of the state's \$250 million surplus. Read more [here](#).

California

- Raising California Together in partnership with the Service Employees International Union is working to pass California State Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de León's bill SB 548 that would unionize in-home child care providers. Unionization was not included in the recently-signed budget deal, but there was a pay increase for some providers of 4.5%. Read more [here](#).
 - The Advancement Project released a report about disparities in access to licensed child care in Los Angeles County, finding that low-income communities faced the largest shortage. First 5 LA funded the new report, "The Early Care and Education Landscape in Los Angeles County: Access, Workforce, and Quality." Read more [here](#).
 - *EdSource* highlights the introduction of mid-year transitional kindergarten classes in California that were created after law required kindergartners to be 5 years old by Sept. 1. The classes are geared toward children who turn five after this date and are not already participating in the full-year transitional program. Read more [here](#). Additionally, the recently signed FY2016 will increase the number of seats available for transitional kindergarten. Read more [here](#).
 - The American Civil Liberties Union, Public Advocates and the law firm Covington & Burlington LLP filed a lawsuit against the Los Angeles Unified School District claiming it violated state law by spending money meant for foster care and English Language learners on special education instead. Read more [here](#).
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Colorado

The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County reports on how the inability to pay a living wage to child care providers is reducing the availability of qualified staff and increasing the

waiting list rolls. Read more [here](#).

Florida

The *Tallahassee Democrat* outlines some of the legislative wins and failures in Florida related to early education—a bill aimed at raising voluntary pre-kindergarten health and safety standards failed as did efforts to increase the programs funding, however the school readiness program got a \$5 million nonrecurring increase to reduce waiting lists of subsidized child care. Read more [here](#).

Illinois

- The Illinois House and Senate failed to completely override Gov. Rauner's veto of a new state budget. The legislature was able to pass a one-month stopgap budget to pay for essential services but the governor has stated he would not sign it. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
 - The Presbyterian Church Day Care Center discusses the impact of Gov. Rauner's emergency administrative changes to the state's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in the *Jacksonville Journal Courier*. Read more [here](#).
 - Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Public Library announced a new mobile early learning program that will increase enrichment opportunities for childhood centers in high-need communities. The Chicago Museum of Science and Industry helped design the curriculum in alignment with Early Head Start standards. Read more [here](#).
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New York

- Safety and integrity concerns led Mayor Bill de Blasio's staff to revoke nine pre-kindergarten center contracts and delay the start dates at 36 additional ones (out of about 1,700 sites total) only a few days before the start of school. Read more [here](#).
 - Bruce Fuller of UC Berkeley analyzed New York City's preschool landscape, finding almost 19,000 children have no access to public preschool. Read more [here](#).
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Oregon

- The state legislature approved multiple investments to improve and expand early learning for the 2015-2017 biennium including a \$27 million to increase access to high-quality preschool, a \$9.5 million investment to expand voluntary home visiting, and \$5 million investment to increase grants that connect early learning to early grades. Read the Children Institute's blog post on the legislative victories [here](#) and media coverage of the new bills [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- Gov. Kate Brown wrote an op-ed in *The Oregonian* about the 2015 legislative session accomplishments in light of her three policy and budget priorities which included 'enhance the well-being of working families, expanding opportunities for Oregonians to thrive' and the changes increasing access to affordable, high-quality child care and preschool options. Read more [here](#).

- The US Department of Education's Office of Early Learning awarded a four-year \$1.5 million grant to Oregon State University-Cascades researcher Shannon Lipscomb to study preschoolers exposed to trauma. Read more [here](#).

Washington

Gov. Jay Inslee signed the Early Start Act into law at the beginning of the month which makes it officially the largest component of a \$158 million investment of new dollars for early learning for the next biennium. Among other critical changes, it establishes 12-month authorization for child care subsidies regardless of changes in family circumstances and directs investments to quality programs and services. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan released a [statement](#) praising the act and Education Week covered the new legislation [here](#). Read a statement by Washington State's children, youth and families advocacy group, Children's Alliance, [here](#).

Wisconsin

Gov. Scott Walker signed the FY2016 budget multiple days late and in advance of his 2016 presidential campaign announcement. 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 Eleanore McKee (emckee@theounce.org)