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Highlights

Despite Rule Changes, States Begin Submitting Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plans

President Trump [signed legislation](#) overturning ESSA regulations that laid out how states should carry out the education legislation and requirements for teacher training programs.

Despite this change, states are moving forward with submitting their ESSA State Plans to the US Department of Education with fewer than 20 states turning in plans by the first deadline, April 3. The second deadline is September 18. [The 74 million](#) assembled education experts to assess state plans thus far.

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Federal Updates

Home Visiting

The US House of Representatives hosted an informational hearing on the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) in front of the [Ways and Means Committee](#).

Special Education

The US Supreme Court ruled that school districts must provide an Individualized Education Program that is "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances" in a unanimous decision that is seen as a victory for special education advocates. [Politico](#) reports on the ruling and its potential consequences and [SCOTUSBlog](#) provided analysis.

Head Start

US Rep. Jim Banks of Indiana [introduced a bill](#) to give states greater control over Head Start regulations and standards. The [National Head Start Association \(NHSA\)](#) issued a statement in response.

Homelessness

Sen. Diane Feinstein and Sen. Rob Portman introduced the [Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2017](#) to help communities better address long-term homelessness. [First Focus](#) provides a Fact Sheet on the proposed legislation.

Child Care

[The Hill reports](#) that President Trump continues to pledge a plan for affordable child care, but others in his administration are hesitant on pushing forward given what happened in Congress on [health care reform](#). [Vox](#) assesses how the president's child care plan would affect families most in need.

Tax Reform

President Trump and Congress continue to state that tax reform and infrastructure proposals are forthcoming; however, priorities and details of those plans remain uncertain. [The Hill](#) reports on calls from state and local governments for the administration to detail its tax plan and the [potential to combine](#) tax reform, infrastructure, and healthcare legislation.

Health and Safety

[The Washington Post](#) reports on changes at the Environmental Protection Agency that remove protections that kept children safe from lead.

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%. [Education Week](#) reports on early childhood advocates work to prioritize early care and education in the forthcoming budget debates.

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Suspension and Expulsion

- The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) [published a report](#) offering states information and resources in developing early childhood policies relating to suspension and expulsions.
 - The Center for American Progress [reviews critical problems](#) with preschool suspension.
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Early Care and Education

The US Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) released a report, ["Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education \(ECE\): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers."](#)

Child Care

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment and the Economic Policy Institute published a new report "[What does good child care reform look like?](#)" that assesses the barriers to providing affordable, high-quality early child care and education and how to assess potential solutions.

ESSA

New America published a new brief "[Painting the ESSA Canvas Four Ideas for States to Think Big on Educator Quality](#)" that dives into how states can support educators and professional development systems.

Food Assistance

The US Department of Agriculture published "[The Food Assistance Landscape: FY2016 Annual Report.](#)" which found that in 2016 WIC participation fell 4% to an average of 7.7 million participants a month.

Homelessness

The US Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation released a [new brief](#) assessing the well-being of young children who experience homelessness.

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New Research

Young Fathers

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) [released a report](#) Changing Systems & Practice that looks at how to better support young fathers under age 25.

Child Care

A [new study](#) from the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) looks at the gendered effects of universal child care in Quebec, finding significant differences in development and social outcomes for boys and girls despite similar levels of access. [The Atlantic](#) reports on these findings.

Food Insecurity

A recent [child development study](#) finds that food insecurity in early childhood affects school readiness in kindergarten and that the earlier a child experiences food insecurity the less ready for kindergarten they are. [NPR reports](#) on these findings.

Early Education

Researchers assessed participation in the [Abecedarian Project](#) in North Carolina and found that children who participated in this high-quality early education intervention were more likely to have better longer-term relationships with their parents.

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Upcoming Events

April 19, 2017

CLASP is hosting a webinar at 2pm ET: "Supporting Young Children in Immigrant Families: What Early Childhood Stakeholders Need to Know About the New Immigration Orders." [Register](#) to join.

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 at the Hotel Del Coronado.

January 31-February 2, 2018

The Ounce of Prevention Fund is hosting the Seventh National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs will take place in Washington, DC. The call for proposals is now open until May 24. For further details on workshop proposals, visit the [Summit website](#).

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News and Resources

Early Childhood

- [Brookings released a brief](#) looking at the potential for high-quality early childhood education programs.
- Stanley McChrystal, a retired Army General, published an op-ed in [The New York Times](#) on the importance of *PBS* for children.
- [US News and World Report](#) published an op-ed from Save the Children Action Network President, Mark Shriver, on the importance of early learning.
- [Ready Nation](#) published a report detailing the importance of social-emotional skill development for workforce success.

Child Care

- [Forbes reports](#) on how to simplify and target tax subsidies to help cover child care costs.
- [The Center for American Progress writes](#) on how state and local officials can advocate for child care.

Preschool

- [Education Week](#) talks with early childhood educator Erika Christakis about what preschoolers need from adults.
- [The Boston Globe](#) takes a look at how quality is defined in Boston's preschool programs.
- [The New York Times](#) discusses the merits and challenges of requiring preschool teachers to have college degrees.

Home Visiting

Achieve OnDemand™ is [opening up enrollment](#) now for a new self-paced training titled "Building Engaging and Collaborative Relationships with Families." Topics covered include the stages of the home visitor-family relationship; the characteristics and benefits of a shared learning environment; the impact of relationships on each other and much more.

Early Childhood Workforce

[US News and World Reports writes](#) on the need to improve the early childhood workforce and training system.

Infants

- [Business Insider](#) reports that infant mortality rates are declining across the US but racial disparities remain stark.
 - [NPR reports](#) on state efforts to promote safe sleep practices by giving new parents boxes.
 - [Cities Speak features a post](#) by Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges and her efforts to invest in children during their earliest years.
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Poverty

[The Seattle Times reports](#) that Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen spoke about the need to provide children with resources to avoid the enduring effects of poverty.

Paid Family and Medical Leave

[Pew Research Center](#) released a report on attitudes in the US toward paid leave.

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News From The States

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Arkansas

- [Arkansas Matters](#) reports on state budget debates over increasing funding for preschool programs in the state.
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Arizona

- [Tuscon.com writes](#) that Arizona spends just under 50% of its federal TANF money on child safety programs, exceeding the national average of around 7 percent ().
 - [The Arizona Republic reports](#) that the Tempe City Council is considering a proposal to fund preschool programs for low-income children in the city with \$3 million in new funds.
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California

- [The California Budget & Policy Center](#) assesses the effects of President Trump's proposed child care plan on California families.
 - [Daily Times Leader writes](#) on First Five LA's new report on preschool quality and outcomes in Los Angeles.
 - [New America profiles](#) one Oakland elementary school principal who believes in connecting with families through early childhood programs before the children arrive in school.
 - [Education Week discusses](#) what it means to be kindergarten ready with representatives from the Stanford-San Francisco Unified School District partnership.
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Colorado

- [Chalkbeat reports](#) on the uncertain prospects for a Colorado state bill to limit early childhood expulsions and suspensions.
 - [Colorado Public Radio reports](#) on the effects of the Nurse Family Partnership program in Denver.
 - [Arvada Colorado published](#) an op-ed from State Rep. Jessie Danielson on the importance of expanding child care options in the state.
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Florida

- [The Tampa Bay Times reports](#) on a Florida House Bill that would put into place measures to monitor student gains in preschool.
 - Alachua County in Florida [issued a request for proposals](#) for their Healthy Baby Home Visit Program.
 - [The Miami Herald published](#) a letter to the editor highlighting importance of expanding school readiness programs across the state.
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Illinois

- The Build Initiative published an [evaluation report](#) on Illinois' Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge and the state's implementation.
 - [The Windy City Times reports](#) on the release of Heartland Alliance's [2017 Illinois Poverty report](#).
 - [The Chicago Sun-Times published](#) an op-ed from US Sen. Dick Durbin and US Rep. Danny Davis in which they discuss their [new bill](#) aimed at helping children suffering from trauma.
 - [The St. Louis Post Dispatch reports](#) that school districts in Metro East and Southern Illinois are suing the state for not providing enough funding.
 - [The Daily Herald reports](#) that Illinois submitted its ESSA to the US Department of Education in early April. The plan outlines how the state will evaluate and support schools under the new law.
 - [PNC invests](#) over \$150,000 in local Chicago preschool classrooms.
 - [The Edwardsville Intelligencer](#) reports on how Head Start programs in East St. Louis are using robots to help build children's social emotional skills.
 - [Voices for Illinois Children discusses](#) the benefits of doubling the state's Earned Income Tax Credit.
 - [WBEZ reports](#) on President Trump's proposed budget and its potential effects on after school programs.
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Indiana

- [The Chicago Tribune reports](#) on efforts to fund a statewide preschool program.
 - [Education Week reports](#) that the Indiana Senate approved \$3 million in funding for expanding the state's preschool program, falling short of the \$10 million Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb requested.
 - [The Indianapolis Business Journal reports](#) on the immediate positive effects the state's preschool pilot is having on families and children.
 - [US News and World Report writes](#) about Indiana University's plan to invest \$500,000 in the school's child care services.
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Kansas

- [The Wichita Eagle writes](#) that the state is looking into ways to better measure kindergarten readiness.
 - [The Topeka Capital-Journal reports](#) that the Kansas Senate passed a bill to promote safe sleep practices in child care facilities.
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Louisiana

- [Education Week writes](#) about efforts in Louisiana to assess and devise better child care teacher preparation.
 - [The Greater Baton Rouge Business Report writes](#) on how a coalition of early childhood advocates is calling for more early care and education funding across the state.
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Maine

- [The Bangor Daily News](#) profiles the state's child care program, its lack of support for working mothers, and untapped funds.
 - [The Portland Press Herald published](#) an editorial the state's weakening child care program.
 - [The Maine Children's Alliance posted](#) on its blog about how the Connecticut Early Childhood Consultation Program (ECCP) can help improve children's social emotional learning.
 - [The Bangor Daily News reports](#) on efforts to rebuild the number of nurses in the state who make home visits and respond to disease outbreaks.
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Massachusetts

- [The Boston Globe reports](#) that Governor Charlie Baker is allotting over \$28 million in found money to increase rates for child care providers serving low-income children.
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Michigan

- [The Chronicle of Social Change](#) highlights Michigan's \$11 million Head Start Innovation fund.

- [mLive](#) and [NBC 25 News](#) report on funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services for local Head Start programs.
 - [Crain's Detroit reports](#) on PNC Foundation's funding of Head Start and preschool program requests on Donorschoose.org for sites across Michigan.
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Nebraska

- [The Omaha World Herald reports](#) that Nebraska's state budget shortfall has leaders pushing forward legislation to keep child care subsidy rates flat.
 - [News Channel Nebraska reports](#) on the potential negative effects of cutting child care subsidy funding.
 - [Scottsbluff Star Herald reports](#) on the Buffett Early Childhood Institute's recent findings that across the state, both rural and urban Nebraskans support early care and education programs.
 - [The York News-Times reports](#) on Nebraska's "The Learning Child" program and its success in helping prepare children for school.
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New Hampshire

- [New Hampshire Public Radio](#) reports on budget clashes in the state over full-day kindergarten funding.
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New Mexico

- [The New Mexican reports](#) on the United Way's plan to renovate a local public school to add a preschool center.
 - [The New Mexican](#) reports on [efforts to encourage Santa Fe](#) to use \$15.5 million in surplus for preschool funding rather than a soda tax.
 - [The Albuquerque Journal reports](#) that New Mexico has the highest rate of Medicaid funded births in the US.
 - [The New Mexican](#) reports on how President Trump's proposed budget [may impact funding](#) for local projects.
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New York

- [Chalkbeat reports on a study](#) that finds children in New York City are healthier since the start of the city's Pre-K For All program.
 - [Niagara Frontier Publications](#) reports on successful efforts to save child care funding for Erie County.
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Oklahoma

- [Tulsa World reports](#) that Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin connects the need for criminal justice reform with supporting children in the state.
- [New America profiles](#) Oklahoma, Missouri, and Virginia in their efforts to better support the state's early childhood workforce.

Pennsylvania

- [The Republic reports](#) on tensions between the beverage industry and the city of Philadelphia after the recently implemented citywide soda tax to cover preschool.
- The Penn Institute for Urban Research [reports on efforts](#) to improve the evidence base for preschool in Philadelphia.

Tennessee

- *Chalkbeat* reports that Tennessee will keep [funding earmarked for preschool](#) after suggesting it might allow localities to use the money however they would like.

Washington, DC

- New America writes on how Washington, DC is [leading in improving access](#) and instructional quality in its preschool programs.
- *The Washington Post* reports on DC's [recent regulation](#) to require child care workers to have college degrees, the first in the country.
- [The Washington Sun reports](#) on Mayor Muriel Bowser's proposal to increase child care investments by \$15.3 million .

Wisconsin

- [The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published](#) an op-ed from Brookings Senior Fellow, Ron Haskins, on Governor Scott Walker's plan to reduce poverty in the state through investing in home visiting programs and making changes to the state's EITC rules.

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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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