

**Table of Contents**

[Highlights](#) | [Federal Updates](#) | [Policy Trends & Analysis](#) | [New Research](#) | [Upcoming Events](#) | [News and Resources](#) | [News from the States](#) |

**Highlights**

**Congress Passes Omnibus Spending Bill, Including Increases for Early Care and Education**

Congress agreed to a federal omnibus spending bill that includes increases in funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant (\$95 million), Head Start (\$85 million) and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (\$5 million) while maintaining funding levels for Preschool Development Grants for FY2017. [Education Week](#) reports that it also includes small increases for Title I education spending along with special education. Read statements from [First Five Years Fund](#) and [CLASP](#) on the short-term spending deal.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

**Federal Updates**

**Healthcare**

The US House of Representatives passed the [American Health Care Act \(AHCA\)](#) by a vote of 217 to 213 earlier this month, sending the legislation to the Senate for debate. Among other things, the bill in its current form rolls back the Affordable Care Act expansion of Medicaid in addition to restructuring the program through a per capita cap and provides states the ability to waive out of a number of provisions including essential benefits protections. Read statements from [ZERO TO THREE](#), [Georgetown University Health Policy Institute's Center for Children and Families](#) and [CLASP](#) on AHCA's passage and its potential effects on low-income children and families.

**Child Care**

President Trump is now looking into potential reforms to the child and dependent care credit, including proposals to make it refundable. [The Washington Post](#) and [Market Watch report](#) on the potential of this plan and the [Tax Policy Center](#) assesses what a refundable child care tax credit might mean for low-income families.

## Suspension and Expulsion

The US Department of Health and Human Services proposed eliminating from the National Child Health Survey a question about suspension or expulsion in preschool settings, reports [Sarah Sparks](#) with *Education Week*. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights [coordinated comments](#) from advocacy and research groups in opposition to the proposed change in addition to members of the "Standing Together" Coalition that also submitted comments.

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## School Lunch

The Trump Administration is rolling back an [Obama administration-era rule](#) that that put more restrictions on school lunches regarding whole grains, salt and milk.

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## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The US Department of Education announced that 17 state ESSA plans passed the department's initial completeness check and are moving forward to the peer review round. [Read more](#) from *Education Week*.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

## Policy Trends & Analysis

### State Childhood Spending

Urban Institute released the report "[Unequal Playing Field? State Differences in Spending on Children in 2013.](#)" which finds that states spending over \$10,000 or more concentrated in the Northeast and states spending \$7,000 or less are usually in the South and West. [NBC writes](#) on the paper's findings, noting that almost half of Latino children live in "low spending states."

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### Low-Income Families

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) published a brief, "[Strong at the Broken Places.](#)" which looks at the resiliency of low-income parents and the effect this can have on building social-emotional skills in young children.

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### Home Visiting

The Council for a Strong America released the report "[Parenting Works: The Public Safety and Economic Benefits of Home Visiting.](#)" outlining the reach and effects of current home visiting funding in the US.

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### Childhood Trauma

Child Trends and NCCP released the report "[Helping Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: Policies and Strategies for Early Care and Education.](#)" which looks at early childhood trauma, its effects, strategies and systems to support young children who have experienced trauma, and policy recommendations to support trauma-informed early childhood education.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

## New Research

### Social Mobility

*Science* recently published a new research article "[The fading American dream: Trends in absolute income mobility since 1940](#)" from Raj Chetty, et al. Researchers find that rates of

absolute income mobility, or the fraction of children earning more than their parents, has declined from 90% in 1940 to 50% for children born in the 1980s.

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## Child Welfare

In the journal, *Pediatrics*, the study "[Community Poverty and Child Abuse Fatalities in the United States](#)" finds that counties with the highest poverty concentrations had over three times the rate of child abuse fatalities when compared with counties with the lowest poverty concentration.

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## Child Care

IZA Institute of Labor Economics released a paper, "[The Demand for Teacher Characteristics in the Market for Child Care: Evidence from a Field Experiment](#)," that assesses what child care centers look for in hiring teachers. As [reported in Education Week](#), centers primarily look for early childhood experience but on average do not value higher academic performance (as indicated by GPA) or bachelor's degrees over associate's degrees.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

## Upcoming Events

### May 17, 2017

An ad hoc committee under the auspices of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will hold its [third public session](#) in Washington, DC about its work to study how to fund early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten entry.

### May 23 and 31, 2017

The National Home Visiting Summit's Communities of Practice announced the formation of three separate peer learning communities dedicated to the pressing issues in the home visiting field. Learn more and [sign up](#) for the remaining May discussions: Health Services (May 23) and Professional Development (May 31).

### June 27-29, 2017

QRIS National Learning Network is hosting the [QRIS National Meeting](#) in Dallas, TX.

### 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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[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

## News and Resources

### Home Visiting

The National Home Visiting Coalition is organizing a [congressional sign-on letter](#) in support of reauthorizing the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program for a term of five years with increased funding from \$400 million annually to \$800 million annually before funding expires in September 2017.

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### Health Care

- [Kaiser Health News](#) writes that CHIP provides children with chronic conditions better support than state ACA plans.
  - Georgetown University Health Policy Institute's Center for Children and Families published [new maps](#) that detail Medicaid and CHIP enrollment by congressional district.
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## 100 Days Update

- [Fast Company](#) looks at how President Trump's Administration and policies pushed forward in the first 100 days have affected women and families.
  - [EdSource](#) executive director Louis Freedberg writes that in the first 100 days, President Trump has fallen short on his education and child care pledges.
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## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Two new resources, one from the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) and another from the [Learning Policy Institute](#), look at how ESSA can help states plan and promote social and emotional learning in schools.
  - [New America writes](#) on how ESSA can help support smooth transitions between preschool and early elementary grades.
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## Early Childhood

- [New America published](#) an action agenda for local leaders to bring early learning and family engagement into the digital age.
  - [The Huffington Post](#) published a piece from Bakari Sellers on the need to make early childhood education a bipartisan issue.
  - [The Huffington Post published an article](#) outlining the proposals that would help improve health and well-being protections for US children.
  - [Education Week writes](#) on the role networks play in supporting children.
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## Child Care

- [US News & World Report published](#) a piece by *The Hechinger Report's* Matt Krupnick on how child care on college campuses has not grown to meet the rise of student parents.
- [The Washington Post reports](#) on Ivanka Trump's statement that for half of US families the single largest expense is child care, and the nuances that this does not take into account.
- [The Center for American Progress](#) writes on the five questions that the administration needs to answer about child care and its most recent proposal.
- [The New York Times published](#) a Letter to the Editor by Geoffrey Nagle, the president and CEO of the Erikson Institute, on the need to design a tax benefit to support both young children and quality care.
- Federal Reserve Chair [Janet Yellen discussed](#) the policies, such as child care and paid leave that would help women work and contribute to growing the economy.
- University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy [published a brief](#) looking at how child care expenses can push families into poverty.

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## Preschool

- [NPR reports](#) on the recently released [Brooking's report](#) on the science and research behind preschool.
- NIEER's Richard Kasmin writes on the importance of [equal teacher compensation](#) policies in preschool.
- *The New York Times* Editorial Board [published an op-ed](#) on the importance of preschool in light of Mayor Bill de Blasio's recent proposal to expand preschool to 3-year-olds.
- The Brookings Institute's Grover J. "Russ" Whitehurst writes about [rigorous preschool research](#) and its relationship to policymaking.

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## Two-Generation Strategies

[NPR reports](#) on the potential of a two-generation strategy in Oklahoma, Career Advance, which provides children with Head Start and parents with quality job training.

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## Infants

ZERO TO THREE Executive Director Matthew Melmed published in [The Huffington Post](#) a piece on the importance of supporting parents and caregivers to improve infant brain development.

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## Poverty

- [Vox discusses](#) child poverty in the US and the potential of a cash child benefit program.
- The Brookings Institution [held a discussion](#) of child poverty and the programs in the US to address poverty.

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## Professional Development

*Education Week* reports on [professional development for preschool teachers](#) on teaching early math skills.

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## Child Welfare

[The Chronicle of Social Change](#) writes on the need for advocates to push for more child welfare funding to protect vulnerable families.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

## News From The States

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

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## Arizona

- [The East Valley Tribune reports](#) that Tempe will offer a free preschool program targeting children living in poverty.

## California

- [89.3 KPCC reports](#) that Gov. Jerry Brown's revised budget proposal restored \$500 million in early childhood funding that was cut in his initial budget plan.
  - [A bill](#) in California's Assembly Appropriations Committee would establish a \$100 million state-funded home visiting program, the CalWORKS Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program.
  - [The Mercury News](#) writes that Menlo Park is set to expand free preschool for families in need.
  - [NBC Bay Area writes](#) that parents in South San Francisco are lining up to try and secure a child care slot.
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## Colorado

- [The Denver Post writes](#) on the changing poverty rate for children in Colorado, which dropped to 15% but remains high for black and Latino children.
  - [The Daily Record reports](#) on openings in Early Head Start and home visiting programs in Fremont County.
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## Illinois

- The leaders of the Ounce of Prevention Fund and Illinois Action for Children, First Lady Diana Rauner and Maria Whelan respectively, published [an op-ed in The Chicago Tribune](#) in favor of HB 2663 that would prohibit the expulsion of children from early childhood education programs at schools that receive State Board of Education grants or those licensed by the Department of Child and Family Services.
  - [The Telegraph reports](#) that First Lady Diana Rauner launched Illinois Family Connects, a pilot home visiting program, in Fremont, IL that provides a universal newborn support system.
  - [New America writes](#) on a [new brief from Abt Associates](#) that looks at early care and education participation patterns for Hispanic children.
  - [The State Journal-Register writes](#) about growing concerns about preschool expulsion practices in Illinois.
  - [Education Week reports](#) that Illinois is looking to overhaul teacher-licensing requirements by no longer requiring some standardized tests.
  - [The Southern Illinoisan reports](#) that preschool services in Williamson County are currently at risk because of state funding that has yet to be received.
  - [DNA Info writes](#) that Chicago Public Schools still does not have a plan on how to fill its budget gap but still plans to finish off the regular academic year, backing off earlier statements that suggested the year might be ended early to save money.
  - [The Gazette-Democrat writes](#) that a group of prosecutors, police chiefs, and sheriffs are highlighting the impact of the state budget impasse on funding for early childhood programs that prevent crime.
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## Indiana

- [Indiana Public Media](#) writes what to know about the recently signed preschool expansion bill.
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## Kansas

- [The Topeka Capital-Journal](#) Editorial Board writes on the importance of early literacy for long-term cognitive and social development.
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## Louisiana

- The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children [released a new report](#) that assesses the economic impact of child care on the state and its workforce. [The Best of New Orleans](#) and [WAFB](#) report on this new report.
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## Maine

- [The Portland Press Herald](#) writes on how childhood poverty is hurting Maine businesses.
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## Michigan

- [The New York Times reports](#) that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is donating \$51 million over five years to public schools in Battle Creek, Michigan, home of the foundation.
  - [Michigan Public Radio reports](#) on a new report from the [Michigan League for Public Policy](#) on how much it takes to make ends meet in Michigan.
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## Nebraska

- [The Lincoln Journal Star profiles](#) a local mother and her advocacy efforts for early childhood education and care programs.
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## New Hampshire

- [The Concord Monitor writes](#) on the high costs of child care and how they can push people into poverty.
  - [The Concord Monitor reports](#) that the New Hampshire House approved a measure to deliver money to expand full-day kindergarten.
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## New Mexico

- [The Shelby Report](#) reports that Santa Fe voters voted down a two-cent per ounce tax on soda and sugary drinks that would have gone toward funding a citywide preschool program.
  - [KOB4 writes](#) that efforts to fund statewide preschool through money from the permanent fund.
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## New York

- [NPR reports](#) on the research behind Mayor Bill de Blasio's proposal to expand preschool for 3-year-olds.
  - [CBS New York writes](#) that some groups of parents in Manhattan are concerned that their children are being assigned to preschool programs too far from home.
  - [Chalkbeat reports](#) that New York City's preschool program received recognition as a "Top 25 Innovations in American Government" from The Ash Center at Harvard University.
  - [Governor Andrew Cuomo announced](#) \$6.5 million to expand mental health services across New York State.
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## Oklahoma

- [The Oklahoman](#) reports that the state's Department of Human Services is making progress toward reducing child care maltreatment problems in the state.
  - [The Enid News & Eagle writes](#) on an intergenerational preschool program in Enid, Oklahoma that creates programming to engage with residents of a local nursing home.
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## Tennessee

- [The Times Free Press writes](#) on how trauma in early childhood can have long-term developmental consequences for children.
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## Washington, DC

- [Washington ABC7 reports](#) on Mayor Muriel Bowser's plans to address DC's child care shortage.
  - [WTOP reports](#) on ZERO TO THREE's inaugural "Strolling Thunder" to advocate for policy and programs that incorporate the science of early childhood development.
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## Wisconsin

- [The Capital Times reports](#) on a new early childhood zone on Madison's north side to address larger achievement gaps.
  - [The Daily Tribune published an op-ed](#) from former Green Bay Packer NFL player Ahman Green on the importance of renewing and expanding funding for Home Visiting.
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[Back to Table of Contents](#)<sup>^</sup>

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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