



National Policy Digest

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Highlights

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorized

Congress negotiated a deal to reopen the government after a brief shutdown earlier this month. The deal included the passage of a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) that would fund programs at FY2017 levels through February 8. It also included an extension of CHIP for a full six years after the program funding had lapsed for 114 days. Read commentary about it from research and advocacy organizations-[Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#), [Families USA](#) and [First Focus](#).

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Federal Updates

FY2018 Budget

The recently passed CR only funds the government through early February leaving Congress still with the goal of finalizing an omnibus appropriations bill for the rest of FY2018 and coming to agreement on funding for Community Health Centers, reauthorizing the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, and immigration relief or an agreement on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Read more from [The New York Times](#).

Head Start

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) released a notice that it is lowering the Head Start center-based service duration requirements that were established by the Head Start Performance Standards from 50% to 0%, effectively making the requirement to increase program instruction to full-time for half of a program's enrollment voluntary. The [decision](#) articulated a lack of additional funding as the rationale for this change.

Medicaid

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued [new federal guidance](#) involving state imposition of Medicaid-related consequences on those unable to find work. The Center for American Progress (CAP) [released findings](#) in response to the new regulation that support 6.3 million Americans losing health insurance. Additionally, [CAP estimates](#) that as a result of this loss and the connection between parental coverage and child welfare, children's health and well-being will also be heavily impacted. Supporting information [detailed in the New York Times](#).

Poverty

The US Department of Health and Human Services released its annual update to the [federal poverty guidelines](#) to account for last year's Consumer Price Index increase in prices.

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Child Policy

The Children's Defense Fund released a new report, [The State of America's Children@ 2017](#), summarizing the status of America's children at the end of 2017. The report provides a comprehensive view of child policy in 11 areas: child population, child poverty, income and wealth inequality, housing and homelessness, child hunger and nutrition, child health, early childhood, education, child welfare, juvenile justice and gun violence. Additionally, the report has [corresponding fact sheets](#) that break down individual state policies.

Child Care

- Child Care Aware dives into the true cost of child care around the United States with a comprehensive and detailed report, recently [released on their website in full](#).
- A new report "[Undervalued: A Brief History of Women's Care Work and Child Care Policy in the United States](#)" released by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) focuses on the necessity to raise wages for those working in child care. The [full](#)

[report](#) goes into detail regarding the history of women in the labor force and its relationship to child care.

- NWLC also [issued a release](#) addressing gaps in state child care assistance. A [fact sheet](#) on this report can also be found on the NWLC website.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Head Start Association (NHSA) recently released a publication entitled "[New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\): A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies, Head Start Programs and the Early Childhood Field.](#)" The toolkit will provide state and local educational stakeholders with the appropriate tools to successfully meet the statute's new requirements and support young children in their schooling.

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New Research

Literacy

A [recent brief](#) written for the International Literacy Association by the former assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education Susan B. Neuman details vital steps for strengthening pre-k literacy. In particular, the brief highlights the necessity of rich adult interactions and playtime in order for children to master reading skills. Additional details found on [Education Week's Early Years blog](#).

Pregnancy

[Research](#) from the University of New Mexico shows how stress in mothers can affect baby growth across mammal species. Researchers found that [prenatal stress](#) affects offspring growth rates depending on the timing of the stressor.

Toddler Care

[New research published](#) in the journal of *Early Education and Development* links harsh parenting and emotion regulation across toddlerhood, including the moderating role of teacher sensitivity in child care.

Breastfeeding

New research from Kaiser Permanente Northern California's division of research suggests breastfeeding might have preventative effects for type 2 diabetes [reports U.S. News and World Report](#).

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News and Resources

Teachers

[The New York Times Magazine published](#) an in-depth article about the conundrum between the value we place on preschool teachers and the pay that they receive. [Researchers and staff of the Urban Institute responded](#) to the article with an overview of education requirements and salary on teacher diversity.

ZERO TO THREE

ZERO TO THREE released a [Spanish version](#) of the Survey for Families with Children under 3 Years Old, a survey tool that policy leaders or advocates can use to better understand families' experiences accessing health, early learning, and family support services.

Early Childhood Workforce

New America recently [introduced a new blog](#), Moving Beyond False Choices for Early Childhood Educators, delving into the complexities between preparation and education, compensation and status, and the field's diversity and inclusivity.

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News From The States

[CA](#) | [GA](#) | [IL](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [MI](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [WA](#) |

California

- *KPCC*, California's public news outlet, [highlights a number of state bills](#) introduced that will impact 4-year olds in California including SB 837 that calls for universal preschool.
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Georgia

- Georgia State University's Center for State and Local Finance [published a study](#) about the impact Head Start programs in the state have on economic output in rural areas and the whole state.
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Illinois

- *Northern Public Radio* reports that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) voted to ask the Illinois General Assembly for nearly \$16 billion for its FY2019 budget, which represents a \$7.2 billion increase over previous years.
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Louisiana

- Michael Oliver, the chief executive officer of the Committee of 100 for Economic Development in Louisiana, published an op-ed in [The Shreveport Times](#) about the business case for early childhood education.

Maine

- Tara Williams, the executive director for the Maine Association for the Education of Young Children wrote an op-ed in the [Bangor Daily News](#) addressing the relaxation of safety requirements on Maine's shortage of child care.

Michigan

- [WWMT West Michigan](#) highlights the impacts of stalled MIECHV funding at the federal level on programs in Michigan.

New Mexico

- [US Senator Martin Heinrich comments](#) on findings of the 2017 New Mexico KIDS COUNT Data Book and called for action to create economic opportunities and address the needs of both vulnerable children and parents.

New York

- [Chalkbeat](#) covers the announcement that New York City will offer an additional 33 dual-language pre-k programs.

Washington

- [The Chronicle for Social Change's](#) Jeremy Loudanback interviews Ross Hunter, the new head of the revamped Washington Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

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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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