

Table of Contents

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

Highlights

Administration Released Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request

The Trump Administration released its [FY2019 funding proposal](#), outlining the administration's priorities and proposed changes to the federal budget. Major department funding cut highlights of the proposed request include a 5% decrease to Department of Education, an 11% increase to the Department of Health and Human Services, a 14% cut to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a 29% cut to the State Department. The administration's proposal is only the first step in the appropriations process, as Congress and its appropriation committees will move forward bills with proposed funding levels.

- Read a [press briefing](#) from the White House discussing the 2019 budget proposal.
- Media coverage of the release with additional information includes [The Atlantic](#) and [The Washington Post](#).
- For additional analyses on the impact of the cuts on children and families, the Center for American Progress released a [series of fact sheets](#), the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [released a report](#) and [Coalition on Human Needs released a report](#).
- See additional statements on the budget's impact on children and families from [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) and [First Focus](#).

Federal Updates

Home Visiting and Health Insurance

The February federal budget deal included reauthorization for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) for five years as well as an additional four years for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), bringing its total extension to ten years. Read more from the [First Five Years Fund](#) and the [Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#).

Child Care

The budget deal also included an agreement to provide an additional \$5.8 billion over two years in discretionary funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)-effectively doubling the program's discretionary funding and paving the way for implementing important quality improvements to child care that were included in the 2014 reauthorization of the program. Read more from the [Center for Law and Social Policy](#), [National Women's Law Center](#).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

One component of the administration's FY2019 budget request proposes a massive overhaul of SNAP by reducing the amount of money allotted to lower-income families to help them buy groceries and replacing the cash benefits with direct mailings of food. The new budget also includes a \$215 million cut to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides nutrition assistance to a combined nearly 8 million pregnant women, infants and children. Read discussions of the proposed SNAP legislation alterations in [The Atlantic](#) and [National Public Radio](#).

Immigration

[Vox](#) and [Reuters](#) shared details of a draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that indicates the administration is considering changes to the definition of "public charge." The changes could increase the capability of the government "to bar immigrants from entering the US, obtaining a visa, or becoming a lawful permanent resident (green-card holder)" by expanding the list of government services that go into the consideration of someone being deemed a public charge to include educational benefits like Head Start, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and more.

Policy Trends & Analysis

Child Care

The Center for American Progress' Simon Workman published a new report, ["Where Does Your Child Care Dollars Go?: Understanding the True Cost of Quality Early Childhood Education."](#) focusing on understanding the true cost of quality early education and where program fees are spent in order to inform those who may be paying for these services.

Nutrition

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) [released its most recent School Breakfast Scorecard](#), analyses of national School Breakfast Program data from 2016-2017. Findings highlight an increasing number of low-income children who participate, however, there is still a large number of low-income children who could benefit from the program. In a companion report [School Breakfast: Making it Work in Large School Districts](#), 22 of 75 large school districts served 70 low-income children with school breakfast for every 100 children receiving school lunch. [FRAC's Etienne Melcher discusses](#) these findings, as well as the critical role breakfast plays in children's lives.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

New Research

Family Outcomes

The Administration of Children and Families [released an analysis](#) highlighting family and child outcomes from 2014-2015 during the first year of Head Start.

Language

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology [released a study](#) detailing how a conversation between an adult and a child alters a child's brain.
 - The American Association for the Advancement of Science's (AAAS) publication Science [featured new research](#) from the University of California supporting infant understanding of human language, even when they can't speak it themselves. Overall, the [research presents](#) a consideration for a critical development window in language learning for children.
 - The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) also [released two publications](#) providing a nationally representative profile of dual language learners in early head start.
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Immigration

The Urban Institute released a new brief "[Expanding Preschool Access for Children of Immigrants](#)" that profiles immigrant children's participation in four state-funded preschool initiatives in four communities: Dearborn, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; King County, Washington; and Houston, Texas. Overall, the research supports an expansion for these children, and recommends state and policymakers to follow in order to provide a good head start for these children and to improve relations between programs and communities.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

News and Resources

Preschool

[Annamarya Scaccia writes](#) for *Motherly* and *Huffington Post* about a recent study published in *JAMA Pediatrics* on the benefits of early childhood education later in life.

Financing ECE

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, with the support of an ad hoc committee, released "[Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education](#)" which concludes "that transforming the financing structure for early care and education to meet the needs of all children and families will require greater coordination among financing mechanisms, as well as significant mobilization of financing and other resources across the public and private sectors" and offers recommendations for the field.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

News From The States

[CO](#) | [GA](#) | [LA](#) | [ME](#) | [MA](#) | [NM](#) | [OR](#) | [RI](#) | [WA](#) |

Colorado

- [Chalkbeat discusses](#) what the opportunity for Colorado to receive additional federal child care funding would mean for the child care assistance for low-income families.

Georgia

- Savannah's Mayor Eddie DeLoach indicated that improving early childhood education was a priority in his state of the city speech according to [Savannah Now](#).

Louisiana

- Melanie Bronfin, executive director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, [wrote an op-ed for *The Advocate*](#) about the importance of making access to quality early child care more prevalent in the state and called attention to the efforts by business groups and legislators to raise the issue. *The Advocate* [profiled these efforts](#)--including events by the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce and Louisiana Association of Business and Industry as part of Louisiana Early Ed Week.
- [American Press writes](#) about a new tuition-funded program that seeks to ease the burden of high early childcare cost in the state.
- [The Times-Picayune Editorial Board spotlights](#) the role of preschool in child development and the economy of Louisiana and calls on legislators to make funding pre-k a priority
- A Baton Rouge physician, Claude J. Tellis, [writes a letter to *The Advocate*](#) supporting investment in child care.

Maine

- [The Portland Press Herald published](#) a letter to the editor from a Cumberland County sheriff supporting the child care safety requirements that some are in opposition too and want to weaken.

Massachusetts

- The Massachusetts Head Start Association plans to push for increase funding for the state supplement to the Head Start program to \$12 million in FY2019 [reports WWLP](#).

New Mexico

- Russel Contreras writes for the [Star Telegram](#) about a proposal to expand early child education in New Mexico that some groups and citizens believe was unsupported due to racism.

Oregon

- [The Oregonian reports](#) on new research supporting that 5-year old children who live in the state are on average less prepared to attend kindergarten than children from the year before.

Rhode Island

- Rhode Island KIDS Count released "[Maternal Depression in Rhode Island: Two Generations at Risk](#)" which chronicles maternal depression in the state.

Washington

- Outside evaluations of the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) are finding that the program is scoring low on measures of teacher quality. Ann Dornfeld writes for [KUOW](#) about the lessons the program's implementers are learning with respect to getting the program off the ground quickly and addressing the low instructional support with more intensive coaching.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

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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