



National Policy Digest

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Highlights

Omnibus Budget Includes Historic Funding Increases for Federal Early Learning & Care Programs

Last week, Congress approved an omnibus spending package to fund the government through the end of September 2018, which includes a bipartisan provision to increase funding for the Child Care Development Block Grants (CCDBG) program to \$5.226 billion--the single largest increase to CCDBG in the program's history. This represents an increase of \$2.37 billion over FY2017 levels and effectively doubles the program's discretionary funding. The crucial funding increase will allow states to implement important quality improvements to child care programs that will better support children's development and education. There were also increases for Early Head Start/Head Start, Child Care Means Parents in School, IDEA Part B Preschool Grants and IDEA Part C Grants for Infants and Families. The Preschool Development Grants were continued for another year at \$250 million and there were \$5 million allocated to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, representing the first-ever

federal investment towards this particular opportunity. Find a chart with specifics about the funding increases [here](#).

- Media coverage of the omnibus includes [The Hill](#), [The New York Times](#) and [The Chronicle of Social Change](#).
- Read statements from [First Five Years Fund](#), [National Head Start Association](#), [Center for Law and Social Policy](#), [ZERO TO THREE](#) and the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#). [New America](#) also profiled the increases.

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Trauma-Informed Care

[ZERO TO THREE](#) recently released a report highlighting the effectiveness of their "Safe Babies Court Team" approach, which links families with support and services they need to support positive child development. The report also provides recommendations to better support implementing and sustaining the approach in communities.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

First Five Years Fund published its latest addition to its ESSA toolkit of resources, "[Early Learning in State ESSA Plans: Implementation Snapshot](#)" that provides an early look at where states are leveraging ESSA to develop new or bolster ongoing early childhood education efforts.

Immigration

The Center for Law and Social Policy released two companion reports about the impact of proposed immigration policy changes is affecting young children. "[Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children](#)" is based on 150 interviews of early child care and early education professionals in six states-California, Georgia, Illinois, New Mexico, North Carolina and Pennsylvania- and indicates fear of deportation, interruption of daily routine, decreasing access to health services, lack of resources and economic instability as massive themes and concerns for children's long-term well-being. "[Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education](#)" describes professionals that care for young children in immigrant families, their perception on how families are coping with the issues and provides guidance for supporting the early childhood workforce.

Childcare Cost

[Forbes](#) talks about the rising cost of child care and its ability to preclude American adults from maintaining and seeking employment. [NBC](#) also discusses this impact of high child care costs across the United States, citing the newly released report, "[Millennial Generation: How the Changing Economic Environment Impacts Parents' Ability to Afford Child Care](#)" from Child Care Aware.

Online Learning

[The Network for Public Education](#) released a report detailing online learning for parents. The report, "[Online Learning: What Every Parent Should Know](#)" extensively reviews the available

research literature discussing online learning and provides answers to common questions regarding internet education.

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New Research

Well-Child Visits

[EurekAlert!](#) details research from the University of Pittsburgh published in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine that indicates the opportunity to deliver basic health care interventions for new mothers between pregnancies at well child visits.

STEM

A new report released by The Center for Childhood Creativity at the Bay Area Discovery Museum reviewed more than 150 studies and found that kids capable of developing complex thinking skills before they are able to speak. The authors of "[The Roots of STEM Success](#)" also found different kinds of child play crucial for developing skills in STEM fields. More from [Hechinger Report](#).

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News and Resources

Home Visiting

- Christina Novoa writes for [InsideSources](#) detailing the substantial amount of research linking early experiences to brain development and the significance of the recent reinstatement of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program for families, particularly low-income households.
 - Check out this month's Achieve OnDemand™ online learning offerings for home visitors and supervisors. Each month there is a new set of live, one-hour webinars facilitated by home visiting experts. You can also take advantage of self-paced trainings that cover critical topics such as home visiting foundations, trauma-informed practice, infant mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, ASQ-3™ and more. Visit our [website](#) for a full listing.
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Early Learning

The Teaching Channel, from *Education Week*, [released a video](#) detailing strategies to improve early learning math skills.

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News From The States

[FL](#) | [IL](#) | [KS](#) | [LA](#) | [MA](#) | [MI](#) | [NE](#) | [NJ](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [TN](#) | [DC](#) | [VT](#) |

Florida

- [House Bill CS/CS/HB 1091 Early Learning \(Grall, R-Vero Beach\)](#) passed the Florida Legislature on a bipartisan and nearly unanimous vote and has been sent to Governor Scott for his signature. The landmark bill is considered to be the most impactful childcare legislation since the in School Readiness Act (Florida's subsidized childcare program) passed in 1999. The new law will require the Florida Office of Early Learning (OEL) to adopt program accountability measures, including a provider and program assessment of teacher-child interactions, in order to begin to weed out the lowest performing providers and to establish a baseline for improvement and performance-based reimbursement. An appropriation of \$6 million in federal CCDBG trust fund dollars will pay for these baseline assessments. The law will also require the OEL to identify an observation-based child outcome measure to strengthen quality improvement strategies, improve early childhood teaching practices and increase positive child outcomes.

Illinois

- [PBS NewsHour highlights](#) efforts in Chicago to increase the quality of science instruction for young children by boosting the science literacy and confidence of early educators.
- [WGN](#) tells the story of a retired preschool teacher who brings mobile preschool to five sites on the South Side of Chicago every week, providing roughly 275 children with free early education.

Kansas

- Superintendents from Seaman Unified School District, Hoisington and Coffeyville spoke in front of the Kansas House Education Budget Committee about the need for investment in early childhood education reports [The Topeka Capital-Journal](#).

Louisiana

- [The Times-Picayune Editorial Board](#) supported HB 513 that would dedicate \$10 million in the Unclaimed Property Leverage Fund to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund with a priority to spend on the Child Care Assistance Program waitlist. The opinion piece quotes Louisiana Policy Institute for Children's director Melanie Bronfin.
- [Baton Rouge's The Advocate](#) outlines Governor John Bel Edwards' recent remarks on how better preparing children from birth to kindergarten is a key to improving Louisiana's education achievement.

Massachusetts

- [National Public Radio's Carrie Jung examines](#) ongoing efforts in Boston to expand play-based activities beyond pre-k.
 - [Dorchester Today](#) features a piece focusing on the Jumpstart program and the effect on early literacy development for children of low-income families in Massachusetts.
 - Governor Charlie Baker filed legislation increasing safety precautions for early education providers in order to comply with the new federal child care regulations around with background check procedures reports [The Republic](#).
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Michigan

- [Kimberly Hayes Taylor of Chalkbeat](#) details Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder's plan to add \$5 million in state funds which would increase the availability EarlyOn, a program that provides help for children with learning disabilities or delays from birth to age 3.
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Nebraska

- The Buffett Early Childhood Institute [released its second year evaluation](#) of the state's Superintendent's Early Childhood Plan and reports implementation is going well.
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New Jersey

- [NJ Spotlight](#) briefs on a discussion on the governor's education budget which includes an \$83 million increase in preschool funding, the first step in a four-year phase-in to fully fund preschool expansion per the state's 2008 school funding formula.
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New Mexico

- [The Santa Fe New Mexican profiles](#) the persistent efforts by lawmakers and advocates in New Mexico to fund prekindergarten and other programs from the state's Land Grant Permanent Fund.
 - Georgetown psychology professor Deborah Phillips writes an [op-ed for the Rio Grande Sun](#) discussing the role of pre-k programs in New Mexico, and research that links participation in state-funded pre-k and advanced reading and math skills later on in childhood.
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New York

- [Orchard Park Bee writes](#) on state senators Jacobs and Gallivan writing a letter to the state Senate Majority Leader requesting funding for the Facilitated Enrollment Child Care Subsidy in Erie County, a program which helps low- and moderate-income working parents attain affordable child care.

Tennessee

- Fire and police unions in Memphis proposed voting on a half percent sales tax hike in order to fund pre-k in the city reports [WBRC Fox 6 News](#). This comes after the Mayor of Memphis announced a \$6 million increase to pre-k funding.

Washington, DC

- Jennifer Garner visited Educare DC before heading to the hill to testify before the Senate Finance Committee as a trustee of Save the Children [reports the Washington Post](#).

Vermont

- [The Times Argus](#) reports on advocates who lobbied at the State House for more investment in early care and learning during the Rally for Kids on Early Childhood Day.

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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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