
National Policy Digest

Vol. 7, Issue 10 May 16-31, 2018

Table of Contents

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

Federal Policy Updates

Farm Bill

Last month the US House of Representatives failed to pass H.R. 2-the [Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018](#) by a vote of 198-213. Advocacy and research groups like [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), [Food Research & Action Center](#) and [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) noted the impact proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formally known as food stamps) would have on children and families.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The House Committee on Ways and Means [passed H.R. 5861](#), a TANF reauthorization bill out of committee without the support of Democratic colleagues. The bill requires that a minimum of 25 percent of existing funds be spent on cash assistance, work activities, and other "core activities" as well as limiting spending to families below 200% of the federal poverty live. The bill would also make child poverty reduction an official goal of TANF. The Ways and Means Committee [majority](#) and [minority](#) released statements. Read more from [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) and [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

Policy Trends & Analysis

Preschool

W. Steven Barnett, GG Weisenfeld and Ellen Frede wrote a blog post highlighting the fact that cities are becoming leaders in expanding preschool-citing a recent report from CityHealth that looks at key policies for improving quality of life including access to high-quality preschool. The [authors noted](#) that all initiatives shared the common concern of early learning for school readiness, development and lifelong health, addressing inequality of access to preschool and skills at kindergarten entry, and the high cost of quality preschool programs.

Early Educator Perceptions

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) sought to understand K-3 perceptions regarding their own influence in the early education continuum through new market research. [Highlighted by New America](#), NAEYC found that on average two-thirds of these instructors considered themselves to be early childhood educators with the percentage declining as the grade level increases.

Early Educator Data

[New America looks](#) at a new report highlighting the deficit of hard data in early childhood care. [The Workforce Data Deficit: Who it Harms How it Can be Overcome](#), from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California Berkeley, discusses the preclusion of effective policy solutions from this paucity of research.

[Back to Table of Contents ^](#)

New Research

Education Inequality

[Quartz discusses](#) research from the University of Michigan looking at the potential impact schools may have in closing the achievement gap between poor and wealthy children-like the ability to foster children's curiosity.

Pregnancy

[Child Trends looks](#) at research suggesting the significance of male presence in preventing pregnancy. Ultimately, many initiatives to reduce teen pregnancy revolve around women, when policy and prevention program efforts should also spend time focusing on men.

Child Development

[MedicalXpress highlights](#) research on developmental language disorder (DLD) from the University of Kansas. The study, through the Word & Sound Learning Lab at UK, uses book readings a means to teach children affected by DLD new words.

Child Obesity

Brown University epidemiologists found that children who are classified as on the threshold of obesity or overweight had lower perceptual reasoning and working memory scores in the first two years of life than lean children when tested at ages 5 and 8. Read more from [EurekAlert](#).

Immigration

[Early Childhood Research Quarterly features](#) research looking at the role of parental cognitive stimulation and early care and education in school readiness. In particular, this study concentrates on children of Hispanic immigrants compared to their peers.

[Back to Table of Contents ^](#)

News and Resources

Early Childhood Investment

Gary Community Investments announced 15 winners for its Early Childhood Innovation Prize's "Top Ideas"-or rather "solutions with the greatest potential to positively impact the lives of young children"-that will share \$1 million in funding. Additional "Promising Ideas" were recognized. Read the [official announcement](#) and an article from [Chalkbeat](#) to learn more about the winners.

Family Income

Christina Gibson-Davis and Christine Percheski, professors at Duke and Northwestern respectively, published an [op-ed in The New York Times](#) about income inequality and its impact on children and families.

Kindergarten Readiness

Rolling out several initiatives, PBS's SVP and GM Leslie Rotenberg is quoted as saying at the PBS Annual Meeting "we are planting our flag firmly on a single goal: kindergarten readiness for all children across America" [reports the Current](#).

Immigration

[The Center for Law and Social Policy's Rebecca Ullrich](#) discusses the burden of arrest and deportation on immigrant families, and the little-known sensitive location policy that applies to early education programs.

[Back to Table of Contents](#) ^

News From The States

[AZ](#) | [CA](#) | [HI](#) | [IL](#) | [KS](#) | [LA](#) | [MI](#) | [MN](#) | [NM](#) | [NY](#) | [PA](#) | [WI](#) |

Arizona

- Governor Hutchinson announces that the state's child care voucher program will expand by 70% with the additional federal child care funding, [reports the Arkansas Times](#).
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California

- [A rally supporting increased childcare access](#) will be held at the capitol on May 29. Cecilia Aguiar-Curry is hosting the gathering in support of Assembly Bill 2292, which is requesting \$1 billion to fund new and renovated facilities for child care. The bill seeks to increase reimbursement rates and create a grant program to expand care for infants and implement early childhood education programs.
- The Chronicle of Social Change, the Children's Defense Fund-California and the Children's Partnership sponsored a gubernatorial forum dedicated to children and family issues that was attended by candidates John Chiang, Delaine Eastin and

Antonio Villaragosa. [Read more about the event.](#)

Hawaii

- [Civil Beat](#) and [the Star Advertiser](#) look at a recent study from Child Care Aware which found that half of the 66,000 children in Hawaii under age 6 who have both parents in the work force are not receiving high-quality, affordable child care. Along with a discrepancy of 30,000 licensed child care slots, examination of early childhood policy is key in this state.
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Illinois

- The Illinois General Assembly passed and Governor Rauner signed the FY19 state budget which includes increased or level funding for several early learning programs. Read a [press release](#) from the Ounce of Prevention Fund for more details on the increases to the Early Childhood Block Grant and re-appropriation of early childhood capital funds.
 - The General Assembly also passed several bills that await for signature by the governor. HB4965, which moves the time for redetermination of eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program from 6 months to 12 months, to provide more stability for children in their care setting. SB1829, which provides a five-year, time-limited solution to the Preschool for All (PFA) teacher shortage by allowing Gateways Level 5-credentialed teachers to teach in PFA classrooms. And SB3536, which will create the opportunity for PFA teachers in community-based settings to gain entry into alternative licensure programs to work toward their teacher licenses.
 - [Chicago Tonight shares](#) a recent study that examines the longitudinal impacts of the CPS closures in 2013. Findings indicate that both kids from shuttered schools and welcome schools saw negative effects on test scores.
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Kansas

- [The Wichita Eagle discusses](#) the stalemate of infant mortality rates in Hispanic households.
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Louisiana

- The governor signed Representative Stephanie Hiferty's legislation that establishes a two-year study commission to develop a longitudinal plan for early care and education in Louisiana and provides for possible pilot programs. [House Bill 676](#) passed unanimously through the House and the Senate.
- [House Bill 513](#), by Representative Steve Carter, sought to dedicate \$10 million of the annual sale of unclaimed property to the Child Care Assistance Program, which currently has 5,200 children on the waiting list. The committee decided to hold the bill, which means it will not be passed this session, but the committee added the \$10 million to the "below the line" items in the state budget (i.e., items that are not funded with current revenues).
- Results show positive perspectives of Louisiana parents of early childhood centers in a recent survey conducted by the Louisiana Department of Education, the United Way of Southeast Louisiana, and Women United. Read more from [The Daily Advertiser](#).

Michigan

- [MLive](#) looks at the discrepancy of financial aid for childcare in families with children ages three and under versus those with children who qualify for the Great Start Readiness Program at age 4.

Minnesota

- The [Star Tribune](#) details a statement from republican state and federal officials on the commitment to double-down on child care providers who commit fraud.
- A new survey conducted by the Minnesota Association of Child Care Providers (MACCP) shows that the majority of Minnesota child care providers have considered quitting their position reports [the Globe](#).

New Mexico

- [The Republic](#) examines the current race for governor in terms of early education.
- [The Albuquerque Journal](#) reports on Governor Martinez announcing \$10 million more for state pre-k in the upcoming 2018-19 school year.

New York

- [CNN looks](#) at New York congressional candidate Liuba Grechen Shirley and her dedication to use campaign funds for child care.

Pennsylvania

- The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services launched a new Children's Health Insurance Program public awareness campaign, [reports Fox43](#).

Wisconsin

- [The Superior Telegram highlights](#) an urge of trauma-informed care throughout the city of Wisconsin.

[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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