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Highlights

Children and Media Research Advancement Act

The [Children and Media Research Advancement Act \(CAMRA\)](#) is a bipartisan bill that proposes to allocate \$95 million to the National Institutes of Health to "study the health and developmental effects of technology on infants, children and adolescents."

"Technology" includes but is not limited to social media, video games, mobile devices and virtual reality. The bill mandates that the research concentrates on the effects technology has on three components of development: cognitive, physical and social-emotional.

[Education Week reports](#) that CAMRA Act is currently in the Senate waiting to be reviewed by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions. The bill has gathered support from Facebook, the Internet Association and other media organizations.

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Policy Trends & Analysis

Indispensables for Quality Pre-k

The Alliance for Early Success [launched a website](#) that details three practices and three policies that providers, advocates and policymakers should focus on when trying to better the experiences, services and resources for preschool-aged children. Each practice and policy has a page with recent studies that support the efforts and explain the benefits of passing more policies that align with the recommendations in these studies. The three policies center on topics such as allocating increased, predictable, sustainable funding for high-quality teachings and learning, providing educators with professional learning, and [promoting continuous quality improvements](#) and continuous learning from birth to 3rd grade.

Drug Overdose Death Toll Increases

In October 2017, President Trump declared the Opioid crisis a ["Health Emergency."](#) as it was estimated that 42,249 people [died of opioid overdose in 2016](#) and that every 25 minutes a [baby is born with opioid addiction](#). This month the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released](#) state by state data on reported and estimated drug overdose death tolls from 2017 and the percentage change of deaths between January of 2017 and January 2018. For example, North Carolina is predicted to see a 22% increase of drug overdose deaths from 2017 to 2018, deepening the strain on family welfare resources across the state.

Helping Families with Drug Addiction

Former Representative Mary Bono (R-CA) wrote an [opinion column on The Hill](#) this

month that asks "what will happen to kids deeply impacted by this [opioid] epidemic?" Bono explains that home visiting programs, which help families to strengthen their parenting strategies and create a safe environment for children from birth to 4, build strong relationships with families as part of their methods. Therefore, staff who enter the home are in a unique position to help families dealing with drug addiction to seek treatment. She also highlights that two-generation childcare centers could also help parents dealing with drug addiction through modeling positive caregiver-child relationships. She stressed the importance of Head Start/Early Head Start and other similar programs for children going through this traumatic experience. High-quality early childhood education centers can provide stable environments and nurturing relationships to children experiencing toxic stress and trauma as a result of the opioid crisis.

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New Research

New Interactive Online Tool for Infant and Toddlers Data

The Urban Institute [launched an Infant/Toddler Data Tool](#) to help inform policymakers and advocates at the state and local level. The interactive data tool provides information about the number of children under age 2 living in each state, race/ethnicity and citizenship status. It also provides data on the family characteristics such as home language, income, number of parents, education and employment, among other factors.

Tracking Education Policy

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) has an [online interactive tool](#) that tracks current state policy, and archives education policy from 1996 to 2016 for each state. In June, ECS [launched the individual state profiles](#) that provide information on state statutes and rules and regulations that support different components of K-3rd grade education. Some of the key findings from the 50-state comparison show that only 18 states and Washington, DC have policies that guide the transition from pre-k to kindergarten, and that only [13 states and Washington, DC are required to provide full-day kindergarten](#).

Psychological Distress in ECE Workforce

A recent study, conducted by Child Trends, found that early childhood education teachers experience less psychological distress when they worked in a setting that cultivates teamwork, respect and stability. It was also noted that teachers with lower household income tended to report higher levels of psychological distress. This analysis was [conducted with data](#) from the National Survey of Early Care and Education, which is part of the Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis Project (2005-2018) and sponsored by OPRE.

Integrating Head Start and QRIS

[The BUILD Initiative published a brief](#) in July that highlights five states and their strategies for how to integrate Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) at the state or local level. The brief also describes key components for a successful integration and benefits that the states and Head Start have experienced from the process. This brief also included resources that can help states discuss or improve integration between Head Start and QRIS.

Engaging Fathers

Last month, The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) [published a research study](#) that evaluated a smartphone-based application (DadTime) intended to remind fathers to attend the Responsible Fatherhood program and to help them apply what they learned in the program to their daily interactions with their children. MDRC conducted the evaluation and found that fathers did not like the point earning system (gamification) to track their progress. Fathers suggested to change it into a tree that grows, where fathers earn leaves instead of points. The report also discusses why an application was selected over other methods of communication such as text messages.

Building Bridges and Bonds (B3) will soon release a publication that describes how DadTime was implemented in the father program.

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News and Resources

Elevating ECE Workforce

Last month, Bright Horizons announced it will launch the Early Education Degree Achievement Plan, which will cover college tuition and other school expenses for full-time employees who would like to pursue an associate or bachelor's degree. [Education Week reports](#) that the company currently has a college tuition reimbursement program. However, the CEO of Bright Horizons, Stephen Kramer, explained that not a lot of employees are participating in the reimbursement program because employees cannot afford to pay for college tuition upfront and wait to be reimbursed at a later time. As a requirement of the Early Education Degree Achievement Plan, the employee must work for Bright Horizons for at least 18 months after completing their degree, otherwise, they will be responsible to repay tuition and other expenses to Bright Horizons. Kramer pointed out that although this program will cost millions of dollars, he think of the cost as "an investment rather than an expense."

Why Do Parents Spend So Much on Child Care, yet Early Childhood Educators Earn so Little?

Child Care Aware of America and The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley [produced a short video](#) that tries to answer: Why do parents spend so much on child care, yet early childhood educators earn so little? The video also breaks down different steps that policymakers, parents and educators can do to advocate for more public investment on early childhood education.

Recommended CCDBG Webinars/Blogs

The Build Initiative, in partnership with ZERO TO THREE and the Center of Law and Social Policy (CLASP), are conducting a [series of webinars and blogs](#) about the different components of Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Last month, CLASP and the National Women's Law Center collaborated to [produce guidelines and suggestions](#) on how providers could collect data to document access to childcare.

Training and Technical Assistance Opportunity for Correctional Facilities

According to the Urban Institute, almost 5 million children living in the US have experienced having a parent incarcerated. The Urban Institute is [hosting an informational webinar](#) for correctional facilities and organizations interested in receiving training and technical assistance that aims to facilitate communication between incarcerated parents and their children.

#GetReadyForKindergartenMonth

August is the month observed nationwide to prepare children for kindergarten. Search #GetReadyForKindergartenMonth on social media to learn more about what other organizations are doing to get families ready for kindergarten!

ZERO TO THREE Annual Conference

The annual conference hosted by ZERO TO THREE will start on October 3-5, 2018 in Denver, Colorado. For more information [visit their website](#).

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Alabama

- Dothan City Schools Superintendent Dr. Phyllis Edwards [presented several long range proposals](#) to school board members to expand the city's early education program and include toddlers and babies. The board is not expected to vote on her proposals until October or November.
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Louisiana

- **State-wide CLASS Scores.** The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children published a report in mid-July called [CLASS Matters: Increasing Quality in Louisiana Early Childhood](#). In an effort to unify all early childhood programs for children birth to age 4, Louisiana passed the ECE Act of 2012, which mandated childcare programs to not only to align their teaching models, but also their data collection methods for accountability purposes. This report provides state-wide analysis of the Classroom Assessment Scoring Systems (CLASS) data collected in the first two years of implementing the ECE Act (2015 and 2016). Researchers found that two factors tended to yield higher CLASS scores: lower child-teacher ratios and teachers with higher levels of education. The report also included an analysis of interviews of stakeholders, such as staff at child care centers, and resource and referral agencies.
 - **Seats for Children on Child Care Assistance Waiting List.** [The Louisiana Department of Education announced](#) that 4,500 children will be removed from the waiting list for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and be provided child care services. This was made possible through the additional one-time funding from the federal Office of Child Care, which allocated \$39 million to Louisiana in order to increase slots for children to attend child care centers. However, about 2,500 children will remain in the waiting list and it is predicted that once the funding runs out, the waiting list will increase once again to 7,000 children.
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Maine

- **Social-Emotional Development.** [Bill LD 1321](#) in which is "An Act to Promote Social and Emotional Learning and Development in Early Childhood" passed in Maine's Senate (30 to 4 in favor). Last month, [the House also voted 83 to 60 in favor](#). However, it was 13 votes short of the 96 votes needed for the bill to pass. [Charley Martin-Berry, who is the executive director of the Community Caring Collaborative, explained](#) that the social-emotional development component in preschool models is important because it helps children learn to self-regulate behavior and develop meaningful relationships, especially for children with developmental delays.
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South Carolina

- Early childhood education providers in Berkeley County have joined forces with local mental health professionals, doulas, and data experts to form the [Berkeley Early Education and Care Collective](#). With the guidance of the Networks of Opportunity for child Wellbeing (NOW) Learning Community Program and funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this collective will be able to provide holistic care to families across the county.
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Texas

- The Dallas Independent School District is [opening its first stand-alone, full-day pre-k school](#) this school year. The district has seen an overall decline in enrollment and hopes that opening a pre-k school will attract families who would have otherwise

placed their children in private pre-k programs.

Washington

- Washington has [adopted new rules](#) that limit the number of children being suspended or expelled in public schools. The rules was put into effect July 30. During the 2016-2017 school year, 3.5% of the children in public schools were suspended or expelled. Most of these children were receiving special education services, or were African American, or Latinos.

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