

Friends,

Please note that the National Policy Digest will take a brief hiatus for the remainder of 2018. Using your feedback, we will pick back up in 2019 with a newly designed digest. We look forward to revealing the redesign with you in the new year.

Thanks for your continued support,

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National Policy Digest Vol. 7, Issue 13

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Highlights

The Ounce of Prevention Fund outlines the complexity of school finance

The National Association of State Boards (NASBE) just released the September 2018 issue of The State Education Standard, focusing on school finance. Among the expert collection of voices on this topic, the Ounce of Prevention Fund's Margie Judy Reidt-Parker contributed the essay entitled "Layering Funding Wallen and for Quality ECE" which presses state boards to take the lead on removing obstacles to blending the diverse funding streams that feed pre-K programming in their states. The Ounce's experience and recent contribution in The State Education Standard serve as an example of the impact the organization is making in early childhood education,

supporting practitioners, home visitors and advocates in the field. Click [here](#) to read the full September 2018 issue of The State Education Standard.

Americans Pay Almost as Much for Child Care as They Do for Rent

[Time reports](#) that the current average cost of child care is \$1,385 per month, which is only slightly less than the median rent of \$1,500 across the country. While the cost of rent is currently rising at a faster pace than child care, that gap may not persist as economists predict rent stabilizing as child care costs continue to grow. That means that families who rent may soon experience a cost savings in rent, but they will have to apply that savings to rising child care costs.

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Policy Trends and Analysis

Breastfeeding Report Card

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the [Breastfeeding Report Card](#), which provides state-level data to monitor the [Healthy People 2020's objectives](#). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that babies should be breastfed exclusively for at least the first six months of their lives and that breastfeeding should continue at least [until the child turns 1 year old](#). Overall, about a quarter of the children born in the US are being fed breastmilk exclusively until six months. Only 35.9% of babies are being breastfed until 12 months. One of challenges of continuous breastfeeding for the first year could be the transition some mothers faces when returning to work. The data shows that about half of the worksites had a separate/private room designed to be a lactation room.

More than 1000 Rejected Asylum Seekers Could Get a Second Chance If Court Approves

On September 12, legal advocates representing the asylum-seekers who were separated from their children this past spring, [announced that their clients will receive a second chance at asylum](#). The agreement was reached with the US government after a set of lawsuits claimed that some of the asylum seekers in question were rejected by immigration authorities after interviews during which they were said to be “traumatized” by having had their children taken from them. If approved by the courts, these parents will have a second chance to have their asylum request reviewed as well as present new evidence and testimony, though it does not guarantee asylum will be approved.

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Federal Updates

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Released and

Webinar

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the US Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with the Department of Education released their application solicitation in this month. ACF Office of Child and US Department will be hosting a webinar about PDG B-5 on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 from 2–3:30pm ET. [Register here](#). According to the [PDG B-5 solicitation](#), “PDG B-5 is designed to support States in coordinating and aligning early childhood care and education (ECE) programs, resources and services that already exist, improving program quality; facilitating better partnerships between programs and improving the transition from ECE programs into elementary school; increasing program operating and cost efficiencies; expanding parental choices and involvement; and ensuring families are linked to the full range of services they need.”

Almost a Half Million Families with Young Children Could Lose Benefits Under the Farm Bill

[The New York Times reports](#) that 469,000 households with young children are among the 2 million Americans who could lose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits under the House version of the Farm Bill. The bill includes a proposal to reformulate income and expense criteria that could remove about 8% of those currently receiving aid from the rolls. These estimates, calculated by Mathematica, do not account for another proposal to impose strict new work requirements, which could strip an additional 1.2 million people of their benefits. It is clear that this version of the [bill would negatively impact](#) many of the 31% of children, age birth to 4, who currently rely on SNAP.

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New Research

In recognition of the [International Overdose Awareness Day](#), August 31, 2018, the following research stories focus on the potential effects drug exposure could have on the development of fetuses and children.

Rate of Special Education Referrals Higher in Children Born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

Dr. Fill et al. used data from the Tennessee Medicaid, birth certificate data and the Tennessee Department of Education to [analyze the association](#) between Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and special education services. Researchers found that children born with NAS were more likely to be referred for disability evaluations, meet criteria to a disability, and require classroom therapies or services when compared to children who were not born with NAS. [The U.S. News & World Report interviewed](#) Dr. Fill, who stated that this does not mean that all children born with NAS will require special services, rather that “there are great programs and services that exist to help these children and their families. We just have to make sure that they get plugged in.”

Marijuana Consumption

In a new study published in the [Pediatrics journal](#), researchers at University of California San Diego found small amounts of the THC component, psychoactive chemicals in marijuana, in breastmilk samples of mother who use the drug. [The Chicago Tribune reported](#) that the researchers state that “it is reasonable to speculate” that exposing babies to marijuana “could influence normal brain development.” The level of exposure depends not only on the amount of marijuana dosage, but also the timing of when the fetus or infant was exposed to marijuana. Currently, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that women stop using marijuana during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. However, Dr. Seth Ammerman a pediatric professor at Stanford University warns that “in counseling patients about this, it’s important to be nonjudgmental, but to educate patients about the potential risks and benefits.” This nonjudgmental outreach perspective Dr. Ammerman says will help families receive the support and guidance to “a healthy outcome for [mothers] and their baby.”

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Other News, Announcements and Resources

PDG Consultation and Technical Assistance

BUILD Initiatives, the Alliance for Early Success, EducationCounsel, CELO and the Ounce of Prevention Fund are coordinating consultation and technical assistance to state administrators and advocates through a two-day meeting on October 9–10, 2018. State teams should be composed of 2-4 key leaders. The meeting is purposely scheduled mid-way between the time PDG B-5 was released and its due date, in order to allow states to review and begin preparations for proposal writing. BUILD and partners will elevate these preparation efforts and support next steps. The coordinating organizations are requesting feedback on how to best design and organize this meeting. [Please submit only one survey per state.](#)

NCCP Releases Updated Two-Generation State Policy Profiles

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) recently updated its [Early Childhood Two-Generation State Policy Profiles](#) and [Young Child Risk Calculator](#). The EC Profiles provide a two-generation view of current policies affecting children birth to age 8, nationally and state-by-state, in the areas of early care and education, health and parenting/family economic supports. In this update, they added a new policy variable to track whether a state requires child care and preschool teachers to have at least a bachelor’s degree, using data compiled by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

It’s Time for Governors to Think Babies

ZERO TO THREE recently released a new policy brief for advocates in the 36 states with gubernatorial elections this year. The resource makes a case for the importance of high-quality early childhood programs and offers specific policy, budget and

administrative actions governors can make early childhood a priority. [Read the full policy brief.](#)

Research Connections will Begin the Closeout Phase

For almost 15 years, [Research Connections](#) has been an online hub for researchers, policy analysts and practitioners in the early childhood field. Their free library holds more than 33,000 ECE studies and other publications, 339 datasets, meeting notes to federally funded meetings from ECE networks and workgroups, and more than 500 data tools of all 50 states. This month, Research Connections announced that after September 29, 2018 they will begin their six-month closeout phase. There will be no more publications or datasets added to the library, nor newsletters released after this date. In 2004, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) at the US Department of Health and Human Services funded the Research Connection, at the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, in an effort to “promote the production and use of policy-relevant research on child care and early education.”

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News from the States

[CO](#)|[NH](#)|[NY](#)|[OK](#)|[PA](#)|

Colorado

Colorado’s Teach for America (TFA) is [responding to the demand for preschool teachers](#) by launching a two-year pilot program to bring teachers into preschool classrooms. With the help of an \$800,000 grant from Denver-based Gary Community Investments, TFA will send eight early childhood corps members to work at five preschools across the city starting this school year. These teachers will make between \$17-\$18.50/hour. Colorado TFA will also hire a full-time staff member to work on larger early-childhood education issues, such as quality and teacher pay.

New Hampshire

At the end of August, [Spark NH hosted](#) the Gubernatorial Forum on Young Children with the current Republican Governor Chris Sununu, and his two Democratic challengers, Senator Molly Kelly and Mayor Steve Marchand.

New York

In his 2018 State of the State address, [Governor Andrew Cuomo announced](#) \$15 million in funding to expand pre-k programs across the state, with a preference for high-need school districts that do not currently have state-funded pre-k programs.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma was [awarded a \\$200,000 Project HOPE grant](#) to improve early childhood development among vulnerable populations. The grant will support an 18-24 month project to develop solutions around barriers facing families in accessing education and health services for their children.

Pennsylvania

The Philadelphia's Department of Public Health [launched a new campaign](#) that aims to promote breastfeeding, especially in minority communities. Breastfeeding is considered to be a preventive action towards sudden infant death syndrome and child obesity among other benefits. In Philadelphia, African-American infants are dying at a faster rate than Caucasian infants. The city wants to provide positive images of minorities breastfeeding on billboards and other materials. These are being distributed with a slogan that states "Feeding your baby is NORMAL" by [Philly Loves Breastfeeding campaign](#).

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