



2019 STATE POLICY UPDATE REPORT INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

This Report Brought to You by
OUNCE OF PREVENTION FUND NATIONAL POLICY TEAM



INTRODUCTION

The Ounce of Prevention Fund (the Ounce) gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest-quality care and education from birth to age 5. The Ounce envisions a world in which high-quality early learning opportunities beginning at birth are an integral part of our nation's education system.

With commitment to quality as our guiding principle, the Ounce works at the intersection of practice, policy and research and forges public-private partnerships. Over the last 35 years, the Ounce has developed an effective approach to advancing knowledge, testing ideas in real-world settings, advocating for policy change, engaging champions and training practitioners and leaders.

Additionally, the Ounce has a long history of policy and advocacy work that is rooted in our deep experiences in Illinois. Through legislative, administrative and grassroots advocacy, our Illinois Policy Team seeks to shape the foundational elements of the state's early childhood system, including major funding streams, legislation and federal and state initiatives.

Our National Policy Team focuses on the intersection of policy, research and practice, providing consultation, peer learning opportunities and resources on policy content and advocacy to early childhood advocates, Educare Learning Network leaders, and other state and local systems leaders in 21 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.). Policy teams work to improve, implement and expand the policies, investments, programs and services that create high-functioning, high-quality early care and education systems. The Ounce also partners with the First Five Years Fund to increase federal investment in high-quality early childhood education programs and to ensure that the interests of children from birth to age 5 in low-income families are included in policy and funding decisions across the country.

The State Policy Update Report (SPUR) provides a snapshot of early childhood care and education budget and policy changes in states during the 2019 legislative sessions as of August 2019, many of which resulted in greater access to higher quality early learning programs and more-effective early childhood systems. This year, the report has been expanded to include more states than previously profiled. All 50 states and D.C. were invited to complete our 2019 State Policy Update survey. Representatives from a total of 33 states responded.

This year, survey respondents were asked to categorize **legislative, administrative and budgetary changes** that occurred in 2019, and to provide information about their involvement in advancing federal policy, identify elected officials who are noteworthy early childhood champions, and share stories about their accomplishments. As a result, we can offer a more robust report that illuminates trends and connects early childhood policy and funding advances across the country.

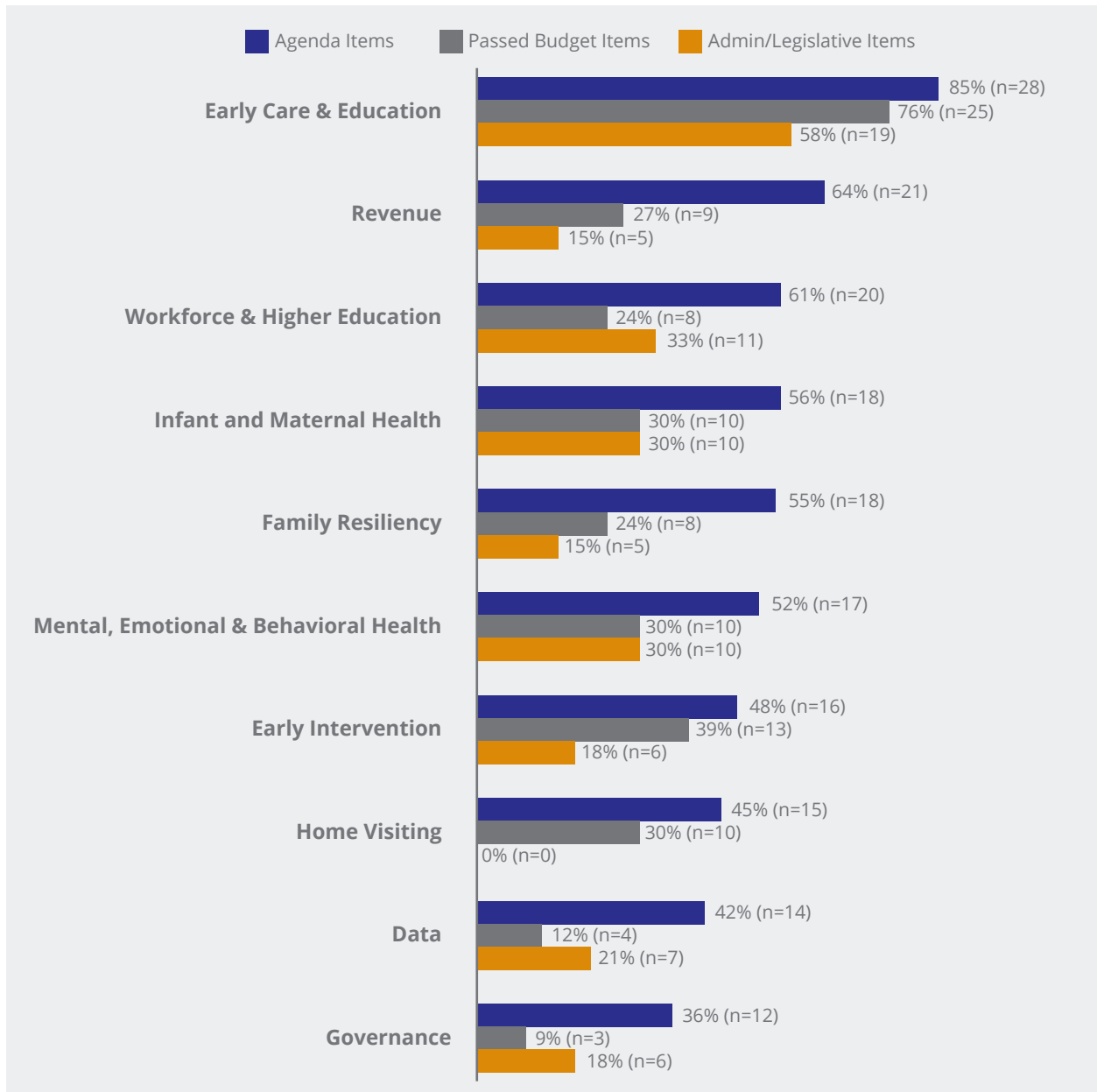
The body of the report is organized based on subject area, but individual state reports can be found in the appendix. Previous editions of the SPUR are available at <https://www.theounce.org/what-we-do/policy-and-advocacy/national-policy/>.

***POLICY WINS:** In 2019, numerous states across the country made **major policy changes and investments** to improve the lives of young children and families.*

- In **California**, policy priorities generated by California's early childhood advocates were ultimately adopted by Governor Gavin Newsome in his fiscal year 2020 budget request to the legislature, resulting in over \$2 billion dedicated to early childhood. This includes the Early Learning and Care Infrastructure Grant program, which received \$142.7 million in one-time General Funds to be expended over five years to expand child care facilities serving families with low incomes.
- As a result of the 2019 legislative session, **Florida's** Office of Early Learning is now required to develop early learning professional development training and course standards to assess school readiness (e.g. child care) for program providers. The Office must also identify both formal and informal early learning career pathways with stackable credentials and certifications, which allow early childhood teachers to access specialized professional development opportunities.
- **Georgia's** new governor, Brian Kemp, fulfilled his campaign promise by approving \$15 million to increase salaries by \$3,000 for eligible pre-K and K-12 teachers in Georgia's classrooms.
- **Hawaii's** Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, will work with the family reunification working group and other community stakeholders to develop a plan to establish visitation centers at all state correctional facilities and jails.
- The **Illinois** budget included \$100 million in facilities funding for school districts and child care centers through the Early Childhood Construction Grant program. With these funds, early learning providers will build new or update existing classrooms for infants, toddlers and preschoolers across the state.
- **Louisiana** received \$4 million in new state funding for the LA 4 Pre-K program to sustain 800 pre-K seats that were previously funded by a federal grant that is ending this year.
- In **Maine**, Governor Janet Mills signed legislation to implement a statewide Early Childhood Consultation program where early childhood mental health professionals work with teachers, providers and parents to promote appropriate social and emotional development and manage challenging behaviors in children to help them be more successful in the classroom.
- **Oregon** launched the universal Family Connects program to provide all new parents in a community with the option of a nurse home visit after the birth of a child.
- As part of a \$6 billion boost to public education, **Texas** approved full-day pre-K funding through a new Early Education Allotment, which will distribute an estimated \$780 million per year for full-day, pre-K or other early reading and mathematics strategies.
- In **Virginia**, more than 1,500 at-risk 4-year-olds will have the opportunity to attend high-quality preschool. The final budget includes \$6.1 million to continue Virginia Preschool Initiative classrooms in 13 communities slated to close due to completion of a federal grant.

OVERVIEW

The chart below shows the categories in which state respondents reported **budget and legislative changes**, as well as **policy agenda items** for the upcoming year. The body of the report offers definitions, examples and more information for each category.



POLICY PRIORITIES: Many state respondents reported a **continued commitment** to expanding state-funded pre-K, expanding access to quality child care, improving instructional supports for early childhood teachers, improving prevention services for families at risk of entering the child welfare system, improving data collection and reporting, and countless other issues impacting children and families.

OVERVIEW

- **Colorado** is working toward expanding access to quality, affordable and available child care through increased funding, tax credit strategies and investigating the feasibility of contracted slots within the state's subsidy program.
- In **Rhode Island**, advocates are developing and implementing compensation strategies to improve qualifications and retention of effective infant/toddler educators, home visitors and Early Intervention providers serving infants and toddlers with development delays or disabilities.
- Advocates in **Kansas** have prioritized strengthening family support programs for working families by modifying eligibility policies for child care assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ensure these programs can reach Kansas children and families in need.
- In **Oklahoma**, advocates are promoting an early childhood integrated data system to capture an unduplicated count of early learning program participation and inform future investments in early childhood.

CATEGORIZED AGENDA ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF STATES (N=33)	STATES THAT REPORTED AGENDA ITEMS
Early Care & Education	85% (n=28)	CA, CO, FL, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MS, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NY, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI
Revenue	64% (n=21)	AR, CO, FL, HI, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MS, NE, NV, NM, NY, OK, OR, SC, SD, TN, WI
Workforce & Higher Education	61% (n=20)	AR, CA, CO, FL, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MA, NE, NV, NY, PA, RI, SC, SD, WA, WI
Infant & Maternal Health	56% (n=18)	FL, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, NV, NY, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, WI
Family Resiliency	55% (n=18)	AR, FL, HI, KS, KY, MD, MA, NE, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, VA, WI
Mental, Emotional & Behavioral Health	52% (n=17)	AR, CO, FL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MA, NV, NJ, NY, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, WI
Early Intervention	48% (n=16)	FL, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, NV, NY, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, WI
Home Visiting	45% (n=15)	FL, IL, KS, ME, NE, NH, NJ, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, VA, WI
Data	42% (n=14)	FL, HI, KS, LA, ME, MA, NE, NV, OK, RI, SC, SD, TN, VA
Governance	36% (n=12)	AR, FL, KS, LA, ME, MA, NV, NM, SC, SD, TN, VA

OVERVIEW

Most of the states in this report are also engaged in advancing federal-level policy. Most state advocates (26 of the 33 states who responded to our survey) are involved in work to enhance the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Many advocates also reported working to ensure children are accurately counted during the 2020 Census, developing plans for the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), and promoting the reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

While these successes are impressive, they only scratch the surface of the accomplishments state advocates and their many partners have achieved over the past year. In addition to administrative rule and legislative changes and budget increases that expand high-quality early learning, states approved policies such as infant and early childhood mental health consultation and paid family leave that support the whole child and family. We are excited to share highlights from each state that illustrate the persistent work of early childhood advocates, program providers, public officials and many other stakeholders who continue to move the field forward in creating environments in which young children and families can thrive.



Ounce of Prevention Fund
312.922.3863 • theOunce.org