



STATE POLICY UPDATE: OCTOBER 2017

THIS REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY

[Ounce of Prevention Fund national policy team](#)

Overview: This update provides a snapshot of early childhood care and education budget and policy changes in states during the 2017 legislative sessions as of September 2017.

You can find previous editions of the State Policy Update at <http://bit.ly/1HuMmKF>.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund 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 five. The Ounce national policy team works to increase the capacity of early childhood advocates, Educare schools and school district leaders (and other state and local leaders) to improve, implement and expand the policies, investments, programs and services that create high-functioning, high-quality, state early care and education systems. The national policy team focuses on the intersection of policy and practice—providing consultation, technical assistance and content expertise to state and local early childhood stakeholders.

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OVERVIEW

In 2017, numerous states across the country made major policy changes and investments that advanced access to high-quality early learning programs.

- **Illinois** passed legislation that limits preventable preschool expulsions and provides protections for children in early learning programs funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and child care programs licensed by the state Department of Children and Family Services. The law also identifies trainings and topics needed to address the problem and asks state agencies to make this information available to programs, and it calls for better tracking of expulsions to expand understanding of how often and where they are occurring.
- Eligibility levels for subsidized child care and preschool in **California** had been frozen at 70% of 2005 state median income (SMI) until this recent state budget included \$25 million to update requirements to 70% of the current SMI in order to account for California's increasing state minimum wage and cost of living. The budget also implements a continuous, 12-month eligibility period for families receiving child care assistance.
- This summer, the **Pennsylvania** Office of Child Development and Early Learning released the revised standards for the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Keystone STARS. Scheduled to take effect in July 2018, the updated standards address staff qualifications and professional development, the early care and education program, partnerships with families and communities, and leadership and management.

Other states faced significant challenges this year, with state advocates battling harmful proposed budget cuts. Funding for early care and education programs in **Louisiana** were subjected to a 2% cut imposed on programs throughout the state budget. **Maine** faced a three-day state government shutdown over budget negotiations. Once again, **Kansas** fought off attempts to abolish the Children's Initiatives Fund and Kansas Endowment for Youth or to sweep funds into the state's general fund. However, on a positive budgetary note, Kansas took a major step forward in repairing the state tax code by closing loopholes and restoring important credits and deductions with the expectation of bringing in an additional \$600 million annually in revenue. Meanwhile, **Illinois** passed its first comprehensive budget since fiscal year 2014, with a permanent revenue increase via the state income tax.

The [*State Policy Update: November 2016*](#) highlighted the common goals and opportunities states identified for 2017, and as this policy update illustrates, many were indeed major issues this year.

- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act State Plan Implementation.** The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state plan deadline necessitated hearings, work groups, administrative rules changes and legislation around almost every facet of child care. Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Wisconsin are among the many states that made changes to comply with the new eligibility requirements.
- **Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health.** The groundswell of support and acknowledgment of the importance of a child's social-emotional development continues. The **Florida** governor's Children and Youth Cabinet 2017–18 priorities include mental health and substance abuse. **Georgia's** budget provides \$2.5 million for mental health services to all children from birth to age five, and the governor's Commission on Children's Mental Health is set to make recommendations this fall that could include funding resources for early childhood mental health consultants, supporting behavioral health intervention services and championing early care and

education (ECE) training on trauma-informed practices. **Maine** passed legislation to start a pilot program for early childhood consultation, although it has not been funded.

- **Strong Leadership and Burgeoning Champions.** While the country continues to react to a new administration on the federal level and what that means for advancing early childhood efforts across the country, it is positive to note that a majority of states identified strong leadership, burgeoning champions and increased interest in supporting high-quality early learning and development. For example, **Colorado** extended the authorization of its Early Childhood Leadership Commission to 2023.

KEY

State Budget Updates

-  Pending or Proposed Increase/Restoration
-  Funds Held Level
-  Pending or Proposed Budget Cut
-  Budget Cut
-  Budget Proposal Did Not Pass

Recent Policy Changes

-  Policy Change
-  Pending Policy Change
-  Policy Change Did Not Pass

Note: *This publication reflects the first year in which only one update was produced. Given the new timing, not all states had finished drafting legislative agendas for 2018 and therefore some might still reflect agendas from 2017.*

ARIZONA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Expand legislative and public knowledge of the importance of the early years and state-funded programs as well as the larger early childhood system that supports these programs.
- Support state agency partners in pursuing funding that supports child welfare and early learning.
- Continue to support the newly founded Arizona Early Childhood Alliance as an umbrella group representing the interests of the early childhood community before policymakers.
- Review Arizona's Quality Improvement and Rating System (Quality First) to align policies and leverage resources across state agency partners and Head Start to bring to scale.
- Strengthen Arizona's comprehensive early intervention system through policy alignment, leveraging resources and addressing barriers and challenges to children not receiving timely and appropriate screening, evaluation, referral and services/treatment.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- The Arizona Early Childhood Alliance is a partnership of 50 public, nonprofit and private organizations statewide dedicated to collaborating on public policy solutions to help young children be prepared for kindergarten and educational success. The organization is a spin-off of Arizona BUILD and has been engaging in advocacy and educational activities at the state and local levels.

State Budget Updates



The general appropriations bill (SB 1522) makes a supplemental appropriation of \$17 million from the general fund in FY2017–18 to the superintendent of public instruction for additional formula costs and a supplemental appropriation of \$12 million from the general fund in FY2018–19 to the superintendent for early literacy.



The K–12 appropriations bill (SB 1530) establishes the Early Literacy Grant Program Fund (which the above revenue would be deposited into) to be administered by the Arizona Department of Education and requires the department to award grants on a three-year cycle to eligible schools to increase the reading proficiency of students in grades K–3 or to provide a full-day kindergarten program that is structured to increase reading proficiency. The money cannot be used for preschool services, only K–3. (In the governor's original proposed budget, these dollars could have been used to fund preschool.)

Recent Policy Changes

- P** **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** HB 2372 extends TANF benefits to 24 months (from 12 months). It includes stipulations that applicants must adhere to, such as work and school requirements.
- P** **Dyslexia:** HB 2202 allows the Arizona Department of Education to develop and maintain a dyslexia handbook that provides guidance for students, parents and teachers.
- P** **Medicaid Federal Match:** The state budget includes provisions stating that if Arizona's federal medical assistance percentage for KidsCare, the state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), is less than 100%, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) Administration (the state Medicaid provider) is required to notify the governor and the Legislature and to stop processing all new applications. The AHCCSS is also no longer required to provide notice to contractors and members that the program will terminate if the US government eliminates federal funding for KidsCare.
- X** **Child Care Tiered Reimbursement:** Language was proposed to create a pilot tiered-reimbursement program based on quality indicators for child care subsidy dollars through the Department of Economic Security that was not included in the final budget.
- X** **Adverse Childhood Experiences:** Legislation was proposed to create a committee on Adverse Childhood Experiences. Creation of the committee did not move forward at this time.

Contact Information

- Benjamin Altener, senior director of government affairs, First Things First, baltener@azftf.gov.

CALIFORNIA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda¹

- Support paid-leave protections that allow employees to bond with a new child within one year of the child's birth, adoption or foster care payment and prohibit an employer from refusing to maintain and pay for health coverage (SB 63–Jackson)
- Establish the Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program to provide funding for implementing or contracting with specified early home visiting programs (AB 992–Arambula)
- Develop and implement a birth-to-entering-1st-grade license option for day care centers (AB 605–Mullin)
- Modernize eligibility for subsidized early learning programs by updating requirements and guaranteeing 12-month assistance (AB 60–Santiago and Gonzalez Fletcher)

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Continue to engage state agencies and policymakers on the new CCDBG Act requirements and the significant implementation challenges many of the provisions present for California.
- Continue to provide recommendations to the State Board of Education that would expand opportunities for ECE to play a more prominent role in the Every Student Succeeds Act state plan.
- Build ECE infrastructure components and systems to support quality. The adoption of ongoing investments in the FY2017–18 budget lay the foundation for next year's policy priorities. These include:
 - The one-time Infant-Toddler Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) grant received ongoing annual funding via California's CCDBG Quality Improvement (QI) funds. County-level consortia will use this funding for professional development, training, technical assistance and other resources to support infant-toddler care providers within local QRIS systems. Additional new funds are still needed.
 - Enhancing the statewide consumer education database and website to include required material, such as additional public information to assist consumers with child care searches and accessing additional public benefits. One-time Budget Act funds for the database were obtained in last year's budget. Ongoing funds are still needed.
 - First 5 California is making a significant one-time investment to support the expanded use of the California Workforce Registry statewide. The

¹ This reflects a compilation of priorities and policy agendas from First 5 California, First 5 Los Angeles, the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and Children Now and may not reflect the positions of any individual organization.

registry is a web-based system to verify, store and track the employment, training and education accomplishments of ECE teachers and providers. With First 5 California's IMPACT funding, the Child Care Alliance will be able to enroll more participants statewide, however, additional funding is needed for full implementation.

- First 5 California and QI funds have been identified to support QRIS regional hubs across the state.
- Explore avenues for addressing unmet child care need, particularly for infants and toddlers, through increased investment in child care programs and other administrative and policy changes to facilitate service expansion.

State Budget Updates



Child Care Eligibility: Eligibility levels for subsidized child care and preschool have been frozen at 70% of 2005 State Median Income (SMI). The Budget Act provides an increase of \$25 million to update income eligibility requirements for subsidized child care and development programs to 70% of the current SMI, to account for California's increasing state minimum wage and cost of living. The budget also implements a continuous, 12-month eligibility period for families, until their income exceeds 85% of SMI, to incentivize continuity of care for low-income children.



Provider Reimbursement Rates: An increase of \$92.7 million boosted the standard reimbursement rate for state preschool and other direct-contracted child care and development providers, beginning July 1, 2017. An increase of \$40.6 million will raise the regional market rate for voucher-based child care providers to the 75th percentile of the 2016 survey beginning Jan. 1, 2018.



Access: An increase of \$7.9 million will provide new access to full-day state preschool for nearly 3,000 low-income children beginning March 1, 2018.



Health Care: The Budget Act increased child access to Medicaid-funded services by raising Medi-Cal and Denti-Cal provider reimbursement rates.



Ratio and Licensing Requirements: The Brown administration proposed two major policies to change ratio and licensing requirements for school-based preschool programs that were ultimately not adopted in the final budget. Instead, a stakeholder process will be convened by the Legislative Analyst Office, no later than October 1, 2017, to encourage broad representation from ECE stakeholders to inform proposed regulatory changes.



New Infant/Toddler and Other Child Care Slots: The Legislative Women's Caucus requested an additional \$500 million for general child care and Alternative Payment Program slots to restore child care funding to 2008 levels, but this proposal was not adopted in the final budget.



Workforce: The PK–14 Proposition 98 funding of \$74.5 billion for 2017–18, meant there was an increase of \$2.6 billion compared to the 2016 Budget Act level for public schools and community colleges.



Foster Children: The 2017–18 Budget Act funded the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children, with \$15 million designated to establish voluntary county programs for emergency vouchers, starting January 1, 2018, and \$31 million to support the program annually thereafter. This funding ensures child care is not a barrier for families interested in fostering children, allows immediate access to child care for foster children and assistance in finding long term child care options, and trains providers on trauma-informed care to support the needs of children in foster care.

Recent Policy Changes



Subsidized Early Learning Eligibility: The final Budget Act of 2017–18 enacted the policy provisions of AB 60 (Santiago and Gonzalez Fletcher), which modernizes eligibility for subsidized early learning programs by updating income eligibility requirements to 70% of the current SMI and guaranteeing 12-month child care assistance by providing a graduated phase-out of families whose income has increased at the time of eligibility re-determination, but still does not exceed 85% of the SMI.



Parental Leave: SB 63 (Jackson) prohibits an employer from refusing to allow an employee with more than 12 months of service and who works at a site in which the firm employs at least 20 people who live within 75 miles to take up to 12 weeks of parental leave to bond with a new child within one year of the child’s birth, adoption or foster care placement. The bill also prohibits an employer from refusing to maintain and pay for coverage under a group health plan for an employee who takes this leave. This bill was signed by the Governor in October 2017.



Home Visiting: AB 992 (Arambula) would establish the Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program, which would require the State Department of Social Services to award funds to counties for the purpose of implementing or contracting with specified home visiting programs to provide voluntary maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting programs approved by the department and would authorize the funds to be used to coordinate home visiting services with, among others, diaper bank services. This is a two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.



Child Care Licensing: AB 605 (Mullin) would require the State Department of Social Services to adopt regulations on or before January 1, 2019, to develop and implement a birth-to-entering-1st-grade license option for day care centers. The bill would require the regulations to include age-appropriate transition times, as specified; that a single, integrated, license option list the age groups of children being served at the center; and that all other licensing regulations that apply to a

center also apply to a birth-to-entering-1st-grade license option. This is a two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.

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Early Childhood Systems: AB 11 (McCarty) would, subject to appropriation, establish a grant program to provide grants to local partnerships, and authorize local entities to establish a systems approach to deliver health, child welfare, early care and education, and social services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable infants and toddlers and their families. The bill would require the partnership to build, expand and test innovative early childhood system approaches to effectively identify and serve children from birth to three who are experiencing adverse childhood experiences and provide them and their families with individualized services and support. This is a two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.

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Child Care Contracts: AB 231 (Chávez) authorizes the superintendent of public instruction to execute local contractual agreements with public or private entities for child care and development services. The bill would limit a family to a total of no more than eight years of state-funded child care and development services per child. This is a two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.

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Child Care Eligibility: AB 273 (Aguiar-Curry) expands eligibility for subsidized child care programs to parents participating in English-as-a-second-language programs. This bill was signed by the Governor in October 2017.

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County Child Care Subsidy Plans: Several bills were signed that authorize counties to develop an individualized county child care subsidy plan to be submitted to local planning councils and the county board of supervisors for approval, as specified. The bills require the State Department of Education to review and approve the plan. The bills were signed by the Governor in October 2017.

- AB 258 (Arambula)—County of Fresno
- AB 300 (Caballero)—Counties of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz
- AB 377 (Frazier)—Counties of San Diego and Solano
- AB 435 (Thurmond)—Counties of Contra Costa, Marin and Sonoma

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Child Care: AB 540 (Mullin) would establish an optional statewide child care and education subsidy policy program to increase and encourage county and regional collaboration among subsidized ECE programs and providers to increase access to subsidized services, promote local flexibility to meet the unique needs of children and families in each county or region and maximize the use of county or regional funding allocations. This is a two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.

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Health and Safety: AB 676 (Limón) would require the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation to establish and maintain an Early Educators' Occupational Safety and Health Training Program relating to occupational health and safety risks specific to early education professionals with

specified components, including a discussion of the risks of chemical and biological hazards, infectious diseases and physical hazards and stress, and how to identify and minimize those risks. The bill would require an early educator to attend that training within six years of it first being offered, or within three months of the person becoming an early educator, whichever occurs later. The bill would also establish the Early Educators' Safety and Health Education Fund, subject to appropriation, which would allow the commission to establish and maintain the training. This bill was held on the Senate Appropriations Suspense File.

Suspension and Expulsion: AB 752 (Rubio) prohibits a contracting agency from expelling or unenrolling a child because of a child's behavior unless the contracting agency has explored and documented all possible steps to maintain the child's safe participation in the program and determines, in consultation with the parents or legal guardians of the child, the child's teacher, and, if applicable, the local agency responsible for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, that the child's continued enrollment would present a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children. This bill was signed by the Governor in October 2017.

Child Care Payment: AB 1106 (Weber) requires the superintendent of public instruction to develop a contracting process that provides alternative payment programs no less than 36 months to expend funds allocated to that program in any fiscal year. This bill was signed by the Governor in October 2017.

CalKIDS Savings Trust Fund: AB 1304 (Melendez) would create the CalKIDS Savings Trust Fund and savings accounts within that fund for each beneficiary for the purpose of encouraging and earmarking savings for the costs of child care, education or other enrichment activities that will prepare the beneficiary for the future or higher education or for the purpose of taking care of elderly dependents. This is a two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.

Child Poverty: AB 1520 (Burke) establishes the Lifting Children and Families Out of Poverty Task Force, consisting of specified stakeholders for the purpose of developing, recommending and annually updating a plan aimed at addressing deep child poverty and providing recommendations on how to reduce child poverty in California. This bill was signed by the Governor in October 2017.

Child Health: The final Budget Act enacted the policy provisions of AB 15 (Maienschein), which increases child access to Medicaid-funded services by increasing the Medi-Cal and Denti-Cal provider reimbursement rates for the 15 most common prevention, treatment and oral-evaluation services based on the average rates per service established in FY2015–16.

Home Visiting: SB 426 (Pan) would require specific criteria for awarding the implementation grants to independently evaluated home visiting program models in accordance with each plan's addressing of those elements. This is a

two-year bill and may be acted on in January 2018.

Contact Information

- Erin Gabel, deputy director, External and Governmental Affairs Division, First 5 California egabel@ccfc.ca.gov.

COLORADO

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Continue work to ensure all children get a healthy start, with a particular focus on mental and behavioral health and discipline policies.
- Advocate for critical early childhood tax credits.
- Build state capacity around pre-k funding through the legislative process and potential ballot measures.
- Support the early childhood workforce by utilizing outcomes from state research studies to advance a policy agenda and assist with implementation of the new state professional development plan.
- Lead a statewide policy agenda development process for the medium- and long-term future of early childhood policies and funding in Colorado.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Increase access to behavioral health supports in primary care settings.
- Improve access to developmental screening and referral systems and early childhood mental health consultation models to support the healthy development of young children.
- Address the utilization and disproportionality of suspensions and expulsions in early learning settings and promote alternative interventions.
- Address Colorado's fiscal and constitutional constraints to increasing access to quality early learning, including child care and preschool.
- Improve the recruitment, retention and compensation of the early childhood workforce, including exploring possible supports such as tax credits.
- Address Colorado's fiscal and constitutional constraints to increasing access to quality early learning, including child care and pre-k.

State Budget Updates

-  An increase of per pupil funding for K-12 students of approximately \$240, including an approximate \$100 increase per child enrolled in the Colorado Preschool Program.
-  An increase of \$1.9 million in federal Child Care Development Funds to mitigate county waitlists in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program.
-  An increase in funding to support an additional 150 behavioral mental health professionals in schools through the School Behavioral Health Professionals and Counselor Corps grant programs.
-  Funding to increase from one to three the number of pregnancy-related depression screenings offered during well-child pediatric visits.
-  An increase in state funding to continue supporting 1,300 families through the Healthy Steps for Young Children home visiting program.

-  A realignment of funding to consolidate programs under the Office of Early Childhood.
-  Request for funding to establish the Two Generations Reaching Opportunity, to help families move out of poverty and support healthy child development by integrating home visiting programs with comprehensive services for adults, did not pass.
-  Request for funding to establish the Mother Baby Unit at the La Vista Correctional Facility for incarcerated mothers to be able to stay with their infants and toddlers for up to 20 months did not pass.
-  Request for state funding increases to finance full-day kindergarten for all Colorado children did not pass.
-  Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program proposed establishing a short-term disability insurance program for the state for family and medical leave, but it did not pass.

Recent Policy Changes

-  **Child Care Tax Credit:** HB17-1002 renews current policy, expiring at the end of the year, allowing families earning less than \$25,000 a year to claim a tax credit for child care expenses. Approximately 33,000 families have benefitted from this credit each of the past several years, and continuing this tax credit helps ensure families have the ability to work and access child care.
-  **Portability of Background Checks:** HB17-1135 creates a new provision that requires only one set of background checks for early childhood educators if they work for multiple sites governed by a single entity. This helps alleviate the administrative burden on educators and providers while maintaining state standards that ensure children’s safety.
-  **Reauthorization of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission:** HB17-1106 extends the repeal date of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission from 2018 to 2023. The commission acts as the state’s adviser on all early childhood issues by providing guidance, leadership and expertise to policymakers, state agencies and advocates on early childhood policy to help ensure that all Colorado children are healthy, valued and thriving.
-  **Early Learning Strategies in Education Accountability:** SB17-103 allows schools to invest in research-based early learning strategies as part of the state’s approach to turning around low-performing elementary schools by supporting young children’s academic achievement through access to high-quality early learning and development.
-  **School Counselors Providing Early Support for Students:** SB17-068 expands eligibility for the School Behavioral Health Professionals and Counselor Corps grant programs to include elementary schools. These professionals help ensure

that children get a healthy and strong start in school by providing critical support and early intervention for students of all ages.

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Alternative Licensing for Community Providers: HB17-1332 lets community-based early childhood educators enroll in alternative educator licensure programs, allowing more flexibility than current requirements, which only authorize alternative licensure programs through public school settings.

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Professional Development for Early Educators for Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion: HB17-1211 establishes a grant program that will allow schools to implement professional development strategies that are culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate to promote alternatives to early childhood suspension and expulsion. Creating this pilot program gives schools the opportunity to invest in preventative strategies that give educators and administrators the tools to address behavioral issues in a culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate way.

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Strategic Plan to Address Teacher Shortages: HB17-1003 requires the creation of a strategic plan to address teacher shortages in Colorado by the Department of Higher Education and Department of Education with early childhood educator involvement.

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Legislative Interim Committee on School Finance: HB17-1340 establishes an interim legislative committee on school finance, which will include examining preschool funding.

Contact Information

- Bill Jaeger, vice president, early childhood initiatives, Colorado Children's Campaign, bill@coloradokids.org.
- Christina Walker, manager, policy and advocacy, Clayton Early Learning, cwalker@claytonearlylearning.org.

FLORIDA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Financial Stability:
 - Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): Funding for tax-preparation assistance to increase the number of tax returns filed by, and EITC refunds, child tax and other credits claimed by, low- and moderate-income Florida families.
 - Affordable Housing: Support Florida's low-income families by ensuring that state and local housing trust fund monies remain in Florida's housing programs and are not used for other purposes.
- Health: KidCare (the state Children's Health Insurance Program) outreach and enrollment; training for mental health counselors on early childhood mental health issues; expanded access to dental care for children; mental health bill to include parental and caregiver anxiety and depression, pregnancy-related mental-health issues and early childhood mental health; coverage for perinatal depression screening and treatment as part of children's Medicaid benefits; expanded prenatal Medicaid eligibility (currently at 185% of federal poverty level).
- Safety: Expanded access to trauma-informed care and courts; trauma-informed competency for those who deal with children and their families.
- Early Learning:
 - School Readiness: Raise the quality of subsidized child care (school readiness, or SR) programs in Florida by working to expand and bring to scale the School Readiness Program, an incentive-based reimbursement model linked to quality measures, including professional development, Classroom Assessment Scoring System and curriculum-based assessments. Increase SR funding by \$85 million, the cost of implementing a quality improvement plan, including performance-based reimbursements.
 - Early learning assessments: Support the Early Learning Assessments Workgroup (authorized in 2017 by the Florida Legislature) in developing recommendations for a comprehensive system of accountability birth through kindergarten that includes school-readiness, Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) and kindergarten-assessment policies and protocols.
 - Other: Expanded parental support through Help Me Grow; collection of relevant data to measure child/family well-being.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- **First 1,000 Days:** Continue to strengthen the First 1,000 Days Florida Coalition to raise public and policymakers' awareness of early childhood development and build legislative support for policy and funding priorities.

- **Home Visiting:** Raise awareness of and increase state support for home visiting as an effective service-delivery strategy for providing education and support to vulnerable families and their young children.
- **Governor's Children and Youth Cabinet:** Work with the Governor's Children and Youth Cabinet to advance its 2017–18 priorities:
 - **Mental Health and Substance Abuse** (safety and health): Includes children and teens with significant behavioral/mental-health issues.
 - **Children Living in High-Poverty Areas** (safety, health and education): Address children in poverty, and safe and affordable housing (and neighborhoods).
 - **Infants and Toddlers:** Continued focus on children birth to three, and on school readiness.

State Budget Updates

-  SR funding to improve access (reduce wait lists) increased \$25 million; SR Performance Funding Program remained at \$15.5 million.
-  T.E.A.C.H. decreased \$7 million (actual decrease: \$4.5 million, including carryover funds).
-  Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters decreased \$2.5 million.
-  Help Me Grow decreased \$600,000.
-  VPK per-student allocation remained flat at \$2,437 per child (for a 3 hour/day program).
-  Early Steps (Part C) increased \$5 million.
-  Healthy Start (prenatal support) and Nurse-Family Partnership (home visiting) decreased a total of \$1.4 million.
-  \$85 million school readiness increase for performance funding failed.
-  \$2 million Help Me Grow increase (to expand statewide) failed.
-  \$1.2 million to expand free tax assistance for families to claim EITC refunds failed.

Recent Policy Changes



Assessments Coordination: Early Learning Assessments Workgroup was authorized by the 2017 Legislature to develop recommendations for coordinated school-readiness, VPK- and kindergarten-readiness assessments, with the goal of increasing accountability.

Contact Information

- Jess Scher, senior director, public policy, United Way of Miami-Dade, scherj@unitedwaymiami.org.

GEORGIA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Increase reimbursement rates for state and federal funding for child care subsidies, including expanded eligibility, and tiered reimbursement for Quality Rated providers.
- Continue to lead the partnership with the Harvard Center on the Developing Child and the state of Georgia on innovative policy and programs to impact social-emotional learning.
- Continue to manage implementation of the public awareness campaign for Quality Rated that launched in spring 2016.
- Support the state's two-generation efforts.
- Continue to work for the inclusion of early education in the state's Every Student Succeeds Act plan.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Governor's Children's Mental Health Commission, a state early childhood mental-health initiative, will make recommendations by September 2017.
- Explore policy opportunities to promote lead screening in environments in which children live.

State Budget Updates

-  \$5.5 million increase for the state's child care subsidy program, the first new state money for child care assistance in at least 10 years.
-  \$20 million to keep pace with growth in foster care and meet needs of children.
-  \$26 million to boost salaries for child welfare case managers and their supervisors by 19% on average in an effort to slow staff turnover.
-  \$2.5 million to provide mental-health services to the full population of children birth to age five.

Recent Policy Changes

Changes in the state's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) subsidy program were announced in June 2017:

For Current CAPS Families:

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 - Families currently in the CAPS program will remain there as long as they meet the eligibility requirements at time of redetermination.
 - Current CAPS recipients will not have to be a member of a priority group to be eligible to receive CAPS funding as long as the family meets the other eligibility requirements.
 - The family fee calculation will be simplified.

- A family will receive a 15% discount off family fees if it chooses a Quality Rated child care program.

For New Families Applying for CAPS:

- The funding restrictions instituted on August 1, 2016, remain in effect.
- New families applying for CAPS must meet the CAPS eligibility requirements and be a member of a prescribed priority group. To see a list of priority groups, visit www.caps.decal.ga.gov.

For Providers:

- Tiered bonus amounts of 5, 10 and 25% for one-, two- and three-star Quality Rated programs that became effective October 1, 2016, remain in effect.

Contact Information

- Mindy Binderman, executive director, GEEARS: The Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, mbinderman@gears.org.

ILLINOIS

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2017 Agenda

- Advocate for a \$50 million increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) in FY2018 to continue to expand the reach and quality of early learning programs and to meet the obligations of Illinois' federal Preschool Expansion Grant. Advocate for an increase of \$13 million to restore services for bilingual students, which includes children in early childhood programs.
- Acquire new revenue to restore cuts to vital state-funded programs, including early childhood programs.
- Find a resolution of the stopgap, partial FY2017 budget for human services programs, including \$16.9 million for home visiting programs, as well as adequate funding for child care—particularly to fund key new investments outlined in CCDBG reauthorization—and Early Intervention. Further, ensure the stability of these programs by enacting a full-year, FY2018 budget that includes sufficient funding for each of these important programs.
- Support legislation to significantly reduce expulsion in early care and education settings and to improve the use of best practices in transitioning children to new settings when needed, increased professional development supports for early care and education professionals (including program leaders and teachers) and improved data collection on expulsion from early care and education settings.
- Influence/monitor the full recompetition of ECBG for FY2018 grants to ensure that serving the most at-risk children in high-quality settings is prioritized.

State Budget Updates

Illinois enacted its first full-year, fully funded budget since FY2014. With a permanent revenue increase via the state income tax, the FY2018 budget includes:

-  \$50 million boost to the ECBG for expansion of preschool and birth-to-three services (at least 25% of this increase must be spent on birth-to-three services because of legislation passed last year).
-  \$77 million increase to child care spending.
-  \$4 million increase to Early Intervention funding.
-  Restoration of the Department of Human Services-funded home visiting to FY2014 levels and funding for FY2017 home visiting services not previously funded by the stopgap budget.
-  Significant increase to bilingual funding, as well as putting the base bilingual funding into the reworked school-funding formula.



Allowance for the restoration of regular child care eligibility rules.



Significant expansion of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit.

Recent Policy Changes



Suspension and Expulsion: HB 2663 limits preventable preschool expulsions and provides protections for children in early learning programs funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and child care programs licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services. It also ensures children remain in the most beneficial early care and education setting. This bill also identifies trainings and topics needed to address the problem, asks state agencies to make this information available to programs and calls for better tracking of expulsions to expand understanding of how often and where they are occurring.



Child Care Eligibility: HB 3213 makes families engaged in non-Temporary Assistance for Needy Families education and training one of the priority populations that will continue to be served even during a time of restricted eligibility. These families had lost their eligibility with the administration's emergency rules in 2015.



ECBG: HB 2426 cleans up statutory differences between the early childhood statutes and Chicago block grant statutes and ensures that the city of Chicago is committing increasing funds to birth-to-three services as well as preschool.



Kindergarten Transitions: HJ R24 creates a kindergarten transition advisory committee.



School Funding Formula: For the first time in decades, Illinois has revamped its school funding formula. Illinois will now use an evidence-based funding model for any increase in K-12 funding and has incorporated some previously nonformula programs into the formula, such as bilingual education and special education funds. The final, bipartisan bill that emerged a few weeks after initial general state-aid payments to school districts were missed reflects early childhood advocates' wishes that early childhood funding be left out of the formula, because of the targeting and complexity of the existing early childhood funding stream. It also maintains the current structure of Chicago's early childhood funding despite significant changes to the rest of Chicago's K-12 funding. Early childhood funding will also be part of a larger education-funding-adequacy study.



ECBG: Because the budget impasse was not resolved until the end of June, the ISBE announced that it would not hold a full recompetition for the 2017-2018 school year. Instead, it offered the stability of continuing grants to current providers and announced there would be an open competition for any funding received above the FY2017 level. It intends to move forward with the full

recompetition for the 2018–2019 school with the improvements to the Request For Proposal as suggested by early learning stakeholders.

Contact Information

- Ireta Gasner, assistant director, Illinois policy, Ounce of Prevention Fund, IGasner@theounceofprevention.org.

INDIANA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Support a public-private implementation of recent pre-k expansion legislation, including scholarships and capacity-building funding.
- Monitor implementation of pre-k expansion and advocate for any legislative fixes if need arises.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Continue to build a strong and diverse statewide coalition.
- Expand investments in teacher quality.
- Explore use of early childhood tax credits like those in Louisiana and Nebraska.
- Encourage regional ECE/pre-k collaboration.
- Revise Indiana's QRIS—Paths to QUALITY™.
- Explore federal funding partnerships and potential funding-streams-innovation efforts.
- Implement privately funded Kindergarten Readiness Assessment pilots.
- Monitor Every Student Succeeds Act follow-up and implementation.
- Support local, mayoral initiatives.
- Address child care deserts.

State Budget Updates



Funding for state-funded pre-k (On My Way Pre-K) was doubled to \$22 million of which \$1 million was reserved for an online pre-k program that may be approved by the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. Advocates were seeking \$50 million for the expansion.

Recent Policy Changes



Preschool Expansion: The General Assembly doubled its investment in state-funded pre-k in order to expand the program from 5 counties to 20. In doing so, a separate existing pre-k program (Early Education Matching Grants) was consolidated into the county-level pre-k grant program (On My Way Pre-K). The legislation also expanded eligibility in the original five pilot counties to 185% of the federal poverty level from 127%. Other changes from the legislation include strengthened family-engagement provisions, focus on a child's social-emotional and behavioral health to avoid expulsion, reduction in the county-level match from 10% to 5%, and allowance of 20% of funding to expand high-quality pre-k seats anywhere in the state. The program funding is intended to be blended with CCDF resources to allow for a higher per-child allocation than would be possible with state pre-k funds alone, but the blending means families must meet income thresholds and service-need requirements.

Contact Information

- Christina Hage, public policy vice president, United Way of Central Indiana, Christina.hage@uwci.org.
- Kent Mitchell, vice president of outreach and partnerships, Early Learning Indiana, kentm@earlylearningindiana.org.
- Jeff Harris, director of public affairs, Early Learning Indiana, jeffh@earlylearningindiana.org.

IOWA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2017 Agenda

- Support a comprehensive and integrated early care, health and education system by restoring funding to Early Childhood Iowa.
- Expand Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program to additional low-income children.
- Strengthen the child care subsidy by increasing eligibility to at least 160% of the federal poverty level and raising reimbursement rates.
- Incorporate additional provisions within managed- and accountable-care activities under Medicaid to promote comprehensive, preventive services that respond to social as well as biomedical determinants of health.
- Promote achieving school readiness for all children and closing disparities and inequities as a priority for the Iowa General Assembly.

State Budget Updates



\$7 million dollar increase for child care assistance to address the cliff effect.

Recent Policy Changes



Refundable Tax Credits: HSB 187 would have removed the refundability on all state tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.



Preschool Funding: HF 25 would add an additional supplement to state preschool funding based on the level of enrollment for students whose family is at 200% or less of the federal poverty level. Includes a reduction in funding for preschools based on the amount of preschool funding in previous years that is not used. Did not pass out of committee.



School District Flexibility Fund: HF 565 allowed for the creation of a Flexibility Fund in each district (including preschool) to collect unexpended and unobligated funds from a few different sources of categorical funding and allow the district to use those funds for purposes of the original source or other general fund purposes. HF 564 provided for new allowable uses for specific funding received by school districts, including professional development, at-risk / dropout prevention, preschool, Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) and student activities. Flexibility now includes:

- Transportation
- Items such as paper towels, snacks and crayons
- Translation services

The governor signed both bills.



Licensing: HF 534 would exempt from the licensing requirements for child care facilities preschool programs for 3-year-olds who require special education. It was signed by the governor.

Contact Information

- Sheila Hansen, director, Every Child Counts advocacy initiative of the Child and Family Policy Center, shansen@cfpciowa.org.

KANSAS

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Maximize early childhood investments by dedicating the full amount of tobacco-settlement dollars to the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Fund and the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF). The current budget allocates \$41.8 million in tobacco-settlement revenue to the CIF for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. The Kansas Legislature will reject proposals to securitize, or sell off, tobacco-settlement funds.
- Preserve the Kansas Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). More than 270,000 Kansas children live in families who stand to benefit from the credit.
- Establish dental therapists so that more Kansas children get the oral health care they need. Dental decay makes it difficult for children to learn and grow up healthy, and a dental workforce shortage means dental care is inaccessible for too many Kansans. Allowing dentists and safety-net clinics to hire dental therapists will mean more Kansas children will get the oral health care they need.
- Strengthen the safety net by modifying eligibility policies for child care assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to ensure these programs can reach Kansas children and families in need.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Explore comprehensive public-private partnerships, like initiatives in Nebraska and Oklahoma, which could be replicated in Kansas to expand the scope of early childhood services.
- Explore opportunities to lower the state food sales tax in a revenue-neutral way to make healthy, nutritious food more affordable for Kansas families. Also exploring other opportunities to improve the state tax code to benefit low- and moderate-income Kansans.

State Budget Updates



Comprehensive Tax Reform: The 2017 Kansas Legislature took a major step forward in repairing the state tax code. Both chambers of the Legislature overrode the governor’s veto of Senate Bill 30, a comprehensive tax-reform package that ended the “March to Zero” income tax, closed the “LLC Loophole” and rebalanced individual income tax rates. It also restored important credits and deductions that help Kansas families, including the state Child and Dependent Care Credit that ensures more families can afford child care. This legislation is anticipated to bring in approximately \$600 million of additional revenue annually.

Protecting and Funding Early Childhood Programs: The state's budget for the next two years (House Substitute for Senate Bill 109) does not securitize tobacco-settlement dollars. The CIF will fund early childhood programs at the same level as the 2017 budget year. Moving forward, Parents as Teachers will be funded using CIF resources rather than TANF funding. Additionally, the Healthy Families home visiting program (offered by the Kansas Children's Service League and partially supported by the CIF) will receive an additional \$3 million in TANF funding annually.



Preserving Future Funds for Early Childhood: After Kansas received \$4 million more than expected in tobacco-settlement revenue in April 2017, lawmakers rejected the governor's budget-adjustment proposal to sweep those funds and instead kept them in the KEY Fund, where they can be used for future investments in Kansas children.



Recognizing the Importance of Early Education in School Finance: This year, Kansas lawmakers faced the task of crafting a new school-finance formula in response to a Kansas Supreme Court order. Senate Bill 19 fully funds all-day kindergarten and increases preschool funding for at-risk children so that Kansas students can build the foundation they need to succeed in school. The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the next phase of school-finance litigation in July and will rule on whether the newly passed school-finance formula meets constitutional muster.



Securitization of Kansas Tobacco-Settlement Revenue: The governor's proposed budget for fiscal years 2018–2019 proposed securitizing, or selling off, the tobacco-settlement revenue that funds Kansas' early childhood programs. Securitization would risk Kansas' prized early learning infrastructure. Kansas legislators' rejection of the governor's proposal represents a tremendous victory for Kansas children. It did not pass.



Weakening the Kansas EITC: The chair of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee supported legislation that would make the state EITC nonrefundable, which would have significantly reduced its benefit for low-income Kansas families. After members of the Senate voiced their opposition, the proposal did not advance.



Recent Policy Changes

Improving Kansas Child Care: House Bill 2304 builds on the state's child care licensing laws to expand background checks for child care providers, bringing the state into compliance with the federal CCDBG. This legislation will also place the state's safe-sleep regulations into statute. Regulatory changes finalized in 2017 increase the number of continuing education clock hours required for Kansas child care providers and bring training requirements into compliance with CCDBG.



- P** **Strengthening the Kansas Safety Net:** Senate Bill 95 allows Kansans to certify applications for public assistance via telephone. This will streamline the process that nonprofits and food banks use to help Kansans apply for cash assistance, food assistance and child care assistance, increasing those programs' ability to reach Kansans in need.
- P** **Improving Medicaid Oversight:** House Bill 2047 moves the KanCare Medicaid for Kansas Office of the Inspector General to the Attorney General's office to provide it increased independence and authority to oversee the Medicaid program.
- P** **Establishing a Child Welfare Task Force:** Senate Bill 126 will establish a child welfare system task force to study the Kansas child welfare system and to recommend improvements to the Legislature by January 2019.

Contact Information

- Amanda Gress, director of government relations, Kansas Action for Children, amanda@kac.org.

LOUISIANA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Monitor the implementation of the new Louisiana School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) package that more effectively incentivizes, supports and enhances quality care for children birth through age four and is based on the new early learning system being implemented under Act 3, the Early Childhood Education Act, passed in 2012.
- Increase funding for early care and education through the SRTC; the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP); LA-4, Louisiana's largest public preschool program; the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program; the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund (also known as 8g); or other sources.
- Continue to monitor the new early care and education rating system, new coordinated funding system and new coordinated enrollment system, examine their effectiveness and make recommendations for improvement.
- Improve the availability of supports for child care centers statewide by researching and developing a report focusing on strategies to improve scores on the CLASS assessment, the rating tool on which the state's accountability system is based.
- Engage the business community across Louisiana in advocacy for increased investment in early care and education in the state, including promoting the study on worker productivity when access to stable child care is lacking.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Develop Early Education Week in 2018, inspired and modeled after Georgia's successful annual pre-k week to engage members of the Legislature, chambers of commerce and the business community to participate in coordinated site visits at high-quality early learning centers in key locales throughout the state.
- Improve educational pathways in higher education for early childhood teachers through partnerships with the Louisiana Board of Regents and colleges and universities focused on developing certificate- and degree-granting educational pathways, from a child development associate's certificate through a master's degree in early education.

State Budget Updates



An additional \$5 million was allocated to the SRTC through the repeal of another underutilized education credit, resulting in a 30% increase in SRTC funding for 2018.



Funding for early care and education was subjected to the 2% cut imposed on programs throughout the state budget. This resulted in decreased funding:

- In LA 4, Louisiana's largest pre-k program, currently serving 16,283 4-year-olds, from \$75.5 million to \$74 million.

- In the nonpublic school pre-k program, which currently serves 1,568 4-year-olds, from \$6.6 million to \$6.4 million.

It is hoped that these reductions will be made up by the expansion next year of the federally funded Pre-K Expansion Grant, which will increase from 1,000 slots for 4-year-olds to 1,440 slots. It should be noted, however, that this federal grant will end after the 2018–19 school year.



There was no restoration of funding for CCAP, which has been cut by over \$65 million in the last eight years.



Five bills that were introduced that threatened the successful SRTC program and its funding were stopped or amended to exclude these credits.

Recent Policy Changes



Child Care Background Checks: HB 486 (Johnson): This bill establishes an administrative process for the appeal of a justified determination of child abuse or neglect for an individual whose name is placed on the state central registry for child abuse or neglect. Given that federal law requires that by fall 2018 owners, employees in child care centers, registered family child care providers and in-home providers must pass a state central registry background check. This legislation provides a mechanism for the approximately 200,000 people currently on the registry, and those going forward, to have a more-efficient means of due process to contest their placement on the registry. The bill also provides that the Department of Children and Family Services can charge a fee up to \$25 for state central registry checks.



Child Care Background Checks: HB 557 (Seabaugh): Given that federal law requires that by fall 2018 owners, employees in child care centers, registered family child care providers and in-home providers must pass more in-depth and extensive background checks, this bill sets up the state infrastructure and requirements for Louisiana to comply with federal law. It also provides for the Department of Education to be able to charge a fee of up to \$15 to process these background checks.



State Early Childhood Fund: HB 584 (Leger): This bill creates the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund and provides for a 1:2 state match for funding by local entities for certain childhood education programs. Although no money was appropriated for this new fund, the bill does provide a structure that hopefully will be funded in future years.



Child Care Waitlist: The Louisiana Department of Education established a CCAP waiting list for eligible working families who apply to the program on or after July 1, 2017. In prior years, as the budget for CCAP was substantially cut, instead of instituting a waiting list to address demand, the state chose to (1) reduce the funding per child to the point that the subsidy was paying less than one-third of

the average cost of tuition, forcing low-income parents to make up the difference, and (2) make eligibility requirements so stringent that few working parents could qualify. When the Department of Education took over CCAP as part of the Act 3 reforms, it increased the amount paid per child to better approximate the cost of care and lowered the eligibility requirements to be more aligned with other states. The new waiting list will provide a more realistic picture for Louisiana policymakers of the need for CCAP by working parents.

Contact Information

- Melanie Bronfin, executive director, Policy Institute for Children, mmbronfin@policyinstitutela.org.

MAINE

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2017 Agenda

- Continue to advance key recommendations resulting from the social-emotional learning and development project, including designing and piloting a statewide early childhood consultation program. In early 2017, a final report that included data and recommendations for evidence-based policies that promote the social-emotional development of young children from birth through age eight was submitted to the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.
- Monitor and review proposed child care subsidy and licensing regulations as a result of the CCDBG and state child care plan and provide testimony and comments.
- Monitor and provide testimony regarding the submission of major substantive rules relating to background checks for child care staff during the 128th legislative session. Review report of legislative working group on the implementation of background checks of child care providers.
- Continue efforts to support and promote state-funded Head Start, Maine Families home visiting, child care and public preschool as critical elements in Maine's early childhood system.

State Budget Updates

This year gridlock over budget negotiations between the governor and the Legislature led to a three-day state government shutdown. As a result, there were limited opportunities to advance early childhood in the state budget, and much of the focus was on preserving level funding for critical programs, like state-funded Head Start.



Prior to this year's budget negotiations, additional new state funding for Maine's public preschool programs through the school funding formula was delayed a year. The delay meant that districts had to fund the creation of new preschool classrooms from local dollars, which deterred many districts from offering public preschool. Two changes made in the state's FY2018 budget will result in a substantial increase in funding for Maine's public preschool programs. First, new language was included in the school funding formula that changes the way school districts receive preschool funding, which eliminates the delay that school districts had experienced in securing funding for new publicly funded preschool classrooms. The enacted policy reform will incentivize more school districts to offer public preschool programs. The second major change relates to the definition of "kindergarten" to include programs for 4-year-olds, which will allow districts serving 4-year-olds to access \$162 million in new K-12 education funding in FY2018.



In his original budget, the governor proposed cutting \$1.2 million in state Head Start funding, which, combined with the loss of \$575,000 in a one-time expenditure, would have resulted in a loss of \$1.8 million. Fortunately, the \$1.2 million was reinstated during deliberations by the legislative Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and the \$575,000 was restored in last minute negotiations between the House speaker and the governor. These actions resulted in the ability to maintain state-funded Head Start services at current levels in FY2018.



The House and Senate passed a bill to provide \$25,000 annually to the Maine Children’s Growth Council to support its work.



The administration cut \$10 million from important public health programs, supported by the Fund for Health Maine. This cut includes the elimination of contracts that had just been implemented on tobacco cessation, obesity prevention and other public health initiatives for children.



The budget included sizable portions of a comprehensive bill to alleviate deep child poverty and create opportunity for Maine families. Specific provisions include the first increase to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families in 16 years, with a 20% increase to families beginning October 1, 2017, and annual cost-of-living increases.



A moratorium on rule making relating to a number of MaineCare rates and reimbursements was a last-minute negotiation. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) may not begin any rule-making procedure connected with rate reductions for reimbursement levels under Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Sections 13 (Targeted Case Management Services), 17 (Community Support Services), 28 (Rehabilitative and Community Support Services for Children with Cognitive Impairments and Functional Limitations), and 65 (Behavioral Health Services) through June 30, 2019, without legislative approval.

Recent Policy Changes

Due to the large number of early childhood bills introduced this session, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services decided to carry over these bills to the next legislative session. The committee will take up these bills when lawmakers return in January 2018.



Early Childhood Consultation: The Legislature passed a bill that would establish a voluntary, early childhood consultation pilot program in response to recommendations from the Maine Social Emotional Learning and Development project, but no funding was allocated for the pilot.



Child Care Health and Safety: DHHS has proposed significant changes to Maine’s Family Child Care Rules, which would weaken the health and safety protections of children in licensed family child care homes. Substantive changes

to the existing rules typically require legislative review prior to implementation, but the department announced its intention to seek emergency implementation, which would bypass legislative oversight. Major concerns regarding the proposed emergency rules include reduction of parental rights, changes to staff-child ratios, relaxing emergency preparedness requirements and failure to meet the federal CCDBG requirements.



Child Care Reimbursement Rates: DHHS has decided to increase the reimbursement rate to the 75th percentile for Maine family child care providers serving children through subsidy programs.

Contact Information

- Rita Furlow, senior policy analyst, Maine Children’s Alliance, rfurlow@mekids.org.

MASSACHUSETTS

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Preschool expansion: supporting local planning, system building and advocacy while communicating progress and lessons learned to state policymakers. Advocating for continued state investment through the state budget and pending legislation, An Act Ensuring High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education ([S.240/H.2874](#)).
- Workforce supports: information sharing and advocacy for increased investments in workforce quality, credentials and compensation. Building on FY2017 and FY2018 state investments in early education and care rate increases.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Boston Pre-K Legislation: Boston Mayor Marty Walsh has worked with the Legislature to file an act relative to expanding access to high-quality early education in Boston (H. 3759). This bill would redirect surplus tourism fees from the city’s convention center to a new city Early Education Fund.
- ECE Workforce Study: The University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy plans to conduct a comprehensive study of the early education and care workforce. During FY2018 budget negotiations, the Senate and Conference Committee budgets earmarked \$100,000 for the study, which the governor vetoed.

State Budget Updates

-  FY2017: In December 2016, Governor Charlie Baker made \$98 million in midyear budget cuts, including \$1.13 million to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The cut eliminated the \$1 million of state funding for Reach Out and Read.
-  FY2018: EEC’s budget increases slightly in FY2018, to \$558.87 million, continuing a five-year trend of increases but still falling short of pre-recession FY2009 allocation of \$570.58 million.
-  The FY18 budget includes a \$15 million rate reserve for early educator salaries, the largest rate increase in recent history. The governor, House and Senate all supported the rate reserve this year, a reflection of the increased advocacy and awareness of the ongoing workforce crisis in early education and care.
-  The Baker administration estimates a total \$38.5 million investment in early education rate increases this year. This includes the \$15 million rate reserve for early educator salaries mentioned above plus a reversion of unspent funds from the state’s Income Eligible Child Care account and efficiencies from implementing a new financial management system for subsidies. Legislative

language passed in the FY2018 state budget authorizes surplus Income Eligible funding to revert back to EEC instead of the state's general fund, and be dedicated to rate increases.

✕ The Senate included \$15.1 million for preschool expansion funding, which was not included in the Conference Committee budget. This funding would have provided 5 to 10 communities with implementation funding. In FY2016, the state budget included \$500,000 for preschool planning grants, which helped 13 local communities create strategic plans for preschool expansion in the mixed-provider model, aligned with Preschool Development Grant quality standards. These communities are ready and awaiting implementation funding. Five communities are implementing Preschool Development Grants using federal funds, \$15 million annually over four years.

✕ Governor Baker made \$320 million in vetoes to the final FY2018 state budget. He reduced funding for early education and care by \$2.68 million, including \$1 million for Reach Out and Read, \$1.25 million for early childhood mental health, \$200,000 for preschool planning grants, \$100,000 for the Parent-Child Home Program, and \$100,000 for an early education workforce study to be conducted by UMass Boston. State House News Service reported that the Legislature wanted to see revenue collections from July and August before making any veto overrides in September. On September 13, the House voted to override three of the above vetoes, Reach out and Read, mental health, and preschool planning grants. The Senate did the same on September 28.

Recent Policy Changes

P **Workforce:** The Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program regulations were updated to increase degree completion, academic advising and focused eligibility on early childhood education and closely related fields of study. Since its creation in FY2006, the scholarship has received annual state appropriations of roughly \$3 million that have funded scholarships for thousands of early educators.

P **Business Support:** In February 2017, House Speaker Robert DeLeo, other legislators and business leaders released the report "[The Business Imperative for Early Education](#)." The speaker's ongoing attention to the early education workforce has helped ensure continued state budget investments in this critical area.

P **Birth to Eight:** In May 2017, the Senate released "[Kids First: A Blueprint for Investing in Our Future](#)," a comprehensive, whole-child, birth-to-eight plan, with 3rd-grade reading proficiency as a goal.

P **CCDBG Reauthorization:** The EEC has a plan in place for implementing new CCDBG regulations.



Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): The EEC is in the process of updating the state QRIS, informed by the results of a QRIS-validation study and with an eye toward workforce competencies.



Preschool: Abt Associates is conducting a multiyear evaluation of the Massachusetts Preschool Development Grant. First-round results released in February 2017 were promising and showed high levels of program quality, age-appropriate skills in participating children and strong parent engagement.



Every Student Succeeds Act: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has submitted its state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Early literacy, preschool and birth-through-grade-3 alignment are woven through sections of the plan.



Full-Day Kindergarten: In FY2017, the state budget eliminated funding for full-day kindergarten grants, a quality and transition grant that helped local school districts increase children's enrollment in full-day kindergarten from 29% in 2000 to 95% in 2016.

Contact Information

- Amy O'Leary, campaign director, Strategies for Children Inc., aoleary@strategiesforchildren.org.

MICHIGAN

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Improve the Child Development and Care Program—the state’s child care subsidy system—by focusing on increasing provider rates, increasing eligibility and moving away from an hourly reimbursement structure. In addition, work to improve the application approval process and ensure that license-exempt providers are continuously and appropriately supported throughout the process.
- Advocate for state funding for Early On, Michigan’s Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Part C program.
- Maintain the state’s investment in Flint for early childhood programming, including Early On, home visiting, child care and preschool.

State Budget Updates

- ⊕ \$24.3 million (\$8.4 million general fund) increase to the Child Development and Care program, which provides reimbursement subsidies for child care providers.
- ⊕ \$5.5 million to support expansion of income eligibility threshold from 125% of the federal poverty level to 130%.
- ⊕ \$7.1 million for background checks, including FBI fingerprinting of child care providers, that’s required under new federal law.
- ⊕ \$1.5 million in grants for improvements to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services technology.
- ⊕ \$1 million for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to increase credit-based educational opportunities for child care providers that are trying to increase their star rating in Great Start to Quality, Michigan’s Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Contact Information

- Robert Dorigo Jones, policy and outreach associate, Michigan’s Children, robert@michiganschildren.org.

NEBRASKA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Introduce legislation in 2018 that would allow child care subsidy reimbursement rates to be based on a child care provider quality cost model.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Contract with APA Consulting in Denver to develop a cost model of Nebraska's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Step Up to Quality, with the eventual purpose of tying reimbursement levels for each step in the system to the cost of providing quality.
- Continue to fund the evaluation of Step Up to Quality and use the results to improve the system and set rates that pay for the cost of quality.
- Work with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and Joan Lombardi on developing a community-based strategy for expanding early childhood across the state. This planning effort will begin with 10 communities in late 2017 to provide necessary resources to build their capacity.
- Work with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute on its multiyear Theory of Change to transform Nebraska's early childhood workforce. This includes a shared state vision and common language, plans for alignment and integration, sustaining a professional environment and plans for developing workforce professionals.

State Budget Updates



In creating the 2017–2019 biennial budget, revenue forecasts projected a \$1.2 billion shortfall, which had to be addressed. There was approximately a \$200,000 cut in the state's preschool grants, but other early childhood funding was protected. There was a slight increase that went for coaching under Nebraska's Step Up to Quality system.



During the 2017 legislative session, state revenue came in \$276 million lower than earlier projections, which caused a gap in the 2016–2017 budget. The Legislature cut services to reconcile the existing year's budget, but early childhood was spared from those cuts.

Recent Policy Changes



School Readiness Tax Credits: In pursuit of cost savings to close the state's \$1.2 billion shortfall, state senators considered legislation (LB233/AM707) that would have delayed implementation of the School Readiness Tax Credit Act for two years. The Revenue Committee decided against moving forward with LB233 and AM707 after hearing compelling testimony from advocates and service providers who would have been directly affected by a delay in implementing the act. Implementation remains on schedule, but some technical adjustments remain.

- Child Care Subsidy Provider Rates:** LB335, as introduced, was intended to capture cost savings by freezing the biennial adjustment in reimbursement rates for providers serving children through the child care subsidy. However, state Senators Bob Krist and Sara Howard amended the bill to establish floors on the reimbursement rates over the biennium. Their amendments ensure reimbursements may not fall below the 50th percentile of the Market Rate Survey for FY2017–18, or below the 60th percentile for FY2018–19. The legislature passed the bill on final reading, and the governor signed it.
- Pregnant and Parenting Students:** LB427 allows for accommodations to enable pregnant and parenting students to complete their high school education and encourage schools to recommend child care providers at Step 3 or higher in the state’s Step Up to Quality system. The governor signed it into law.

Contact Information

- Becky Veak, director, First Five Nebraska, bveak@firstfivenebraska.org.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- **Healthy Children and Families:** Children and families in New Hampshire have the best opportunities for early and lifelong health.
 - Ensure access to affordable health care for families.
 - Strengthen New Hampshire's capacity to promote healthy social-emotional development of infants, toddlers, other young children and their families and to provide mental-health services and supports.
 - Develop/expand community-based programs targeting sources of toxic stress, such as violence, crime, abuse, neglect, extreme poverty, substance abuse and severe caregiver mental illness, and ensure effective treatment for those who need it.
- **Positive Early Learning Experiences:** Effective learning opportunities are provided in all settings, including the home, child care and afterschool programs, preschools and elementary schools from birth through the primary grades.
 - Expand access to proven and effective early childhood education for all infants, toddlers and other young children through grade 3.
 - Increase opportunities for learning outside of the school day, including during summer.
 - Ensure all children are screened for developmental concerns and receive the services needed to promote their optimal development.
- **Strong Families:** Families have the skills, basic resources and supports to promote their children's development and learning, starting before birth and continuing through the primary grades.
 - Ensure housing and energy assistance to low-income families.
 - Expand access to proven and effective home visiting and family-support programs.
 - Ensure hard work pays by raising the minimum wage, supporting parents' job readiness and expanding access to higher education.
- **A Coordinated Early Childhood System:** New Hampshire's young children and their families have the benefit of well-coordinated early childhood programs and services that work effectively together on their behalf.
 - Establish an integrated, cross-agency, statewide early childhood data system to improve program effectiveness and child and family outcomes.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Develop a network of Family Resource Centers of quality throughout the state.
- Explore strategies to expand access to home visiting.
- Explore strategies to expand access to and quality of child care.

State Budget Updates

- +** **Child Care Scholarship Program:** An additional \$15 million over the next two years to meet new federal CCDBG regulations.
- +** **Full-Day Kindergarten:** SB 191 provides an additional \$1,100 per child enrolled in full-day kindergarten programs in school districts that have adopted a full-day program.
- +** **Children's Mental Health:** Increased funding for children's wraparound health services, access to mobile crisis centers for children and other necessary paths to ensure children's access to mental-health supports.

Recent Policy Changes

- P** **Family Resource Centers:** HB 536 directs the Wellness Primary Prevention Council to look into and report on a facilitating organization structure for a system of family resource centers.
- P** **Study Commission for Grandfamilies:** Due to the state's opioid epidemic, the numbers of grandparents raising grandchildren is dramatically increasing, resulting in grandparents not always being able to access services due to their nonparental relationship with the child. SB 148 creates a study commission for grandfamilies that will bring together stakeholders and legislators to look at the issue in detail.
- P** **Grandparents as Guardians:** HB 629 changes law to allow grandparents to more easily seek guardianship of grandchildren in situations where a parent cannot take care of a child because of substance misuse.
- P** **Office of Child Advocate:** Creates an Office of Child Advocate and sets up a commission to overlook issues related to child protection in the state.
- P** **Childhood Lead Poisoning:** SB 247 would protect children against preventable lead poisoning. The bill includes a public fund to help costs of remediation of lead. It was retained in committee.
- P** **Early Supports Investments:** SB 153 proposed increases in funding for early support and services. Due to the opioid epidemic, there has been an increased demand for early supports and services, which are vital in improving health and wellness outcomes for children. It was retained in committee.

Contact Information

- Rebecca Woitkowski, Esq., early childhood policy coordinator, New Futures—Kids Count, rwoitkowski@new-futures.org.

NEW JERSEY

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Expand access to quality child care for infants and toddlers.
- Expand access to high-quality preschool.
- Expand affordable child care for families.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Increase the child care reimbursement rate for infants, up to age 18 months.
- Develop a road map for preschool expansion implementation for the new governor and legislature.
- Continue work with preschool and kindergarten administrators to reduce chronic absenteeism.

State Budget Updates



An additional \$25 million for FY2018 to expand preschool.

Recent Policy Changes



Background Checks: A new law requires family day care providers and certain household members to undergo criminal-history-record background checks.

Contact Information

- Cynthia Rice, senior policy analyst, Advocates for Children of New Jersey, crice@acnj.org.

NEW MEXICO

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Expansion of full-day New Mexico PreK to additional 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Increased access to home visiting services.
- Increased access to T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarships and INCENTIVE\$ wage supplements to advance professional development and wage supplements to early learning professionals.
- Increased funding for high-quality child care to meet new federal regulations without reducing quality or eligibility.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Work to ensure communication and coordination between state agencies (Public Education Department and Children, Youth and Families Department) and at the state and local levels to support the expansion of New Mexico PreK and child care quality initiatives.
- Continue analysis of early learning revenue options with a variety of stakeholders, including business leaders, and the development of policy recommendations.

State Budget Updates

Like other states, New Mexico faces severe economic challenges. FY2016 ended with the state in a budget deficit. In addition to the regularly scheduled 60-day legislative session, two special sessions were held to address this crisis. State departments were required to impose across-the-board cuts.



During the 2016 special legislative session, when most agencies received general fund reductions, the Early Childhood Services program was appropriated an additional \$1.5 million for paraprofessional home visits for families with newborns and child care assistance services, which was continued in the FY2018 appropriation.



During the regular session, early learning was protected. There were no cuts to home visiting, child care assistance, New Mexico PreK, workforce supports (T.E.A.C.H. and INCENTIVE\$), K3 Plus (extended-year enhancements) and Reads to Lead.



The budget included language to allow New Mexico's Human Services Department and Children, Youth and Families Department to establish a Medicaid-funded home visiting pilot program. This will allow the state to utilize federal Medicaid funds to establish a home visiting pilot program.



Proposals to amend the New Mexico Constitution to allow Land Grant Permanent Funds to support early learning were introduced but failed to pass the Legislature.

- ✘ Several bills sought to fund early childhood education in innovative ways. None of these measures passed the Legislature.
- ✘ Three bills were introduced that recommended a new early childhood education governance structure. None of these bills made much progress.

Recent Policy Changes

Early Learning Advisory Council: The future of the council is uncertain. Legislation was passed to extend the sunset date of the council and slightly amend the council's composition, require term limits and expand requirements for recommendation by the council to the Children, Youth and Families Department, but the governor vetoed the bill, which means the law authorizing the council will expire. The veto message stated the executive will continue the council under executive authority. It is unclear, however, if the council will continue to operate as a public forum with a similar council membership as previously required by statute.

Agency Collaboration: A Senate memorial passed that directed the New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council to establish a new task force to study methods to increase communication and collaboration among a number of agencies involved in early childhood education. State agencies mentioned in the memorial as participating include the Children, Youth and Families Department, the Indian Affairs Department and the Public Education Department. Additional agencies include New Mexico and tribal Head Start, the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children, and family child care homes.

Contact Information

- Claire Dudley Chavez, executive vice president for policy and stakeholder engagement, United Way of Santa Fe County/New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership, claireD@uwsfc.org.

NEW YORK

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

New York State is in the process of formulating its Executive Agenda for FY2018–19. However, the broad strokes are clear:

- **Child Care:** Winning Beginning NY, Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College Campaign, The Network for Youth Success (afterschool and summer learning) and the state’s new Child Care Crisis Campaign will work together on budget and policy proposals to improve access to quality, affordable child care. This will include efforts at the state and federal levels to increase investment and improve quality and identify and develop alternative funding streams, including from economic development funds.
- **Pre-K:** Seeking to add \$150 million in 2018 to expand access to quality pre-k outside of New York City, which includes investment in pre-k services (\$125 million) and supplemental funding (\$25 million) for quality improvement strategies and infrastructure, with priority on improving compensation and support for teachers. There is significant opportunity to promote recommendations through a new blue-ribbon committee on early learning convened by the state Board of Regents. In addition, New York City’s new 3K for All initiative offers new opportunities to advance pre-k as an educational service and as a component of a prenatal-to-3rd-grade system.
- **Home Visiting:** In addition to a budget request, advocates and programs expect to advance one or two policy proposals that will strengthen the home visiting workforce and the families it serves.
- **Early Intervention:** Expect to request a restoration of reimbursement rates by increasing the current rates by at least 5% (same as last year’s request).
- **Expanded Learning:** Work to sustain increased funding from last year; work to maintain funding for 21st century programs at the federal level (currently facing elimination).
- **Quality Rating and Improvement System:** Increase funding to expand the program.
- **Workforce:** Continue to prioritize the need for additional investment in and support for the early childhood workforce, with significant emphasis on improving compensation, through work on child care and pre-k.

State Budget Updates

-  \$7 million cut in child care subsidies, which means over 900 families will still lose subsidies this year.
-  \$75,000 cut to home visiting.
-  \$35 million increase in afterschool programming.



Consolidated the state's seven pre-k program funding streams and pledged to move toward a single pre-k program by 2021. Added \$5 million for expansion and pledged to use state funds to continue services now supported by the \$25 million federal Preschool Development Grant when it expires in 2018. This represents significant progress in a year when education funding was under significant challenge.

Policy Opportunities

- The state's Medicaid director in July kicked off New York's First 1000 Days on Medicaid initiative, which aims to have New York's health care, education and child care systems work together to maximize outcomes for children. The work group, which includes many early childhood advocates and experts, will develop a 10-point plan that will focus on improving outcomes and access to services for children in the critical first 1,000 days of life.
- The Legislature passed a bill to create a Child Care Availability Task Force. The bill awaits action from the governor.
- The state Board of Regents created and will convene a blue-ribbon committee on early learning, with more than 60 state and national experts, to make recommendations on budget and policy.
- The governor's office recently created the New York State Council on Women and Girls. Child care was identified as one of the areas of impact for the council to focus on.

Policy Challenges

- New York (and all states) could face significant budget challenges should the federal government impose the significant health and human services cuts that have been proposed, including devastating cuts to Medicaid. The 2017 New York state budget contains language that allows the governor to reopen the state budget midyear should federal cuts to the state exceed \$800 million. In addition, the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Act is up for reauthorization in September. Advocates and program representatives have undertaken a congressional outreach campaign to ensure passage and to revise certain pieces of the act, and they will work together to respond to federal cuts that directly affect early childhood and/or that lead to the reopening of the state budget and in that way put state programs at risk.
- The Network for Youth Success (afterschool and summer learning) had a big win last year regarding state funding but finds its programs on the chopping block at the federal level; advocates are actively carrying their ask.
- Implementation of the new CCDBG regulations continues to pose financial and implementation challenges in New York, where the costs are estimated to range from \$200 million to \$500 million when that implementation is complete.
- Appropriate investment in the early childhood workforce and early care and learning services as the minimum wage continues to rise.

Contact Information

- Dede Hill, director of policy, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, dhill@scaany.org.
- Betty Holcomb, director of policy, Center for Children’s Initiatives, bholcomb@ccinyc.org.
- Kristen Kerr, director, New York State Association for the Education of Young Children, kkerr@nysaeyc.org.
- Jessica Klos Shapiro, director of policy and community education, Early Care & Learning Council, jklos@earlycareandlearning.org.
- Jenn O’Connor, director of policy and advocacy, Prevent Child Abuse New York, joconnor@preventchildabuseny.org.

OKLAHOMA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Pilot a comprehensive observational kindergarten assessment in fall 2017, to be called an Early Learning Inventory.
- Continue to inform the development of an early childhood integrated data system to capture an unduplicated count of early care and education program participation and inform future investments in early childhood.
- Maintain the infrastructure for early childhood care and education programs and services by supporting the restoration of public investments.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Develop a cross-sector, aligned program standard framework to improve quality, improve parent's ability to seek quality programs and increase policymakers' support for investments in programs that result in improved outcomes.

State Budget Updates

The Legislature addressed a decline in state revenue during the previous fiscal year by generating an additional \$821 million for the FY2018 budget. Most agencies received a 4.9% reduction from FY2017, 10 agencies were held to close-to-level funding and 17 received an increase compared to FY2017. This has been the third consecutive year of a significant decline in state revenues, and the cumulative effect has been detrimental to many early childhood programs. Some of the revenue-generating measures are being reviewed by the Supreme Court for legality. If not upheld, this could result in a special session or additional reductions this fiscal year.



Funding decreased by 45.4% for the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness/Smart Start Oklahoma, resulting in a loss of funding for the Smart Start Oklahoma community partnership grants.



Decrease to the Child Care Subsidy program of \$4 million and a child care subsidy freeze beginning October 1, 2017.



\$4.2 million (5%) reduction to foster care and adoption rates beginning August 1, 2017.



Increase of \$2.5 million directed to the Early Childhood Initiative, restoring funding to the FY2015 level as the State Department of Education prioritized early learning, struggling readers and new educators.



The state Department of Health has not released its budget. Small percentage reductions made for funding home-based family support programs.



No budget changes to early childhood were legislatively proposed; state agency directors determine funding after receiving their FY2018 state appropriation unless otherwise directed by the Legislature.

Recent Policy Changes

- P** **Camp Licensing:** HB1491 lowers the age of children in summer youth camp exempt from licensing from 5 to 4 and increases the number of hours for “exempt from licensing” from 15 to 21 hours a week if caring for school-aged children and located in a city having less than 100,000 population.
- P** **Child Care Ratings:** HB1968 allows a buyer of a child care facility to operate at the previous owner’s star rating level if employing the same staff.
- P** **School Readiness:** HB1996 reauthorizes the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board until 2021.
- P** **Child Care:** SB717 broadens the scope of the Child Care Restricted Registry.
- P** **Child Care Licensing:** SB723 adds requirements to the Oklahoma Child Care Facilities Licensing Act as mandated by the Child Care Development Fund.

Contact Information

- Debra Andersen, executive director, Smart Start Oklahoma, debra.andersen@smartstartok.org.

OREGON

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Increase the state investment in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education to serve the growing number of eligible children identified by expanded developmental screenings and increase the number of children receiving the recommended level of service.
- Serve more eligible families with an increased state investment in voluntary home visiting programs that is flexible to respond to community need and incentivizes collaboration, coordination and responsiveness to diverse communities and rural areas and strengthen coordination between home visiting programs.
- Serve more eligible children in high-quality, state-funded preschool programs: Preschool Promise and Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten.
- Increase salaries for Oregon Head Start pre-kindergarten teachers to ensure salary parity across all state-funded pre-kindergarten programs and with local kindergarten teacher salaries.
- Strengthen coordination and collaboration between Oregon Head Start and the state's new preschool program, Preschool Promise.
- Support policies and increased investments to expand professional development opportunities across the entire early learning workforce.
- Maintain Oregon's investment in the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund that supports building bridges between early learning and the early elementary school grades.
- Continue local birth-to-eight policy work through two local demonstration sites with an emphasis on birth-to-eight system building and strategic planning.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Invest in culturally specific early learning services.
- Incentivize the health system to define and strengthen its role in supporting kindergarten readiness.

State Budget Updates

-  \$6 million increase in funding for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education.
-  \$2 million (11%) decrease in funding for Early Learning Hubs.
-  \$400,000 (4%) decrease in funding for the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Fund.



\$20 million decrease in funding for child care subsidy. The program was underenrolled, so no families will be removed from the program, but this limits future growth.



Home visiting, preschool and the early learning workforce did not receive requested increases.

Recent Policy Changes



Preschool: Legislation to modify the lead teacher requirement in Preschool Promise ([HB 2013](#)) became law on June 22 (Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 280).



Preschool: Legislation requiring hubs to convene annually representatives of preschool programs for the purpose of coordinating enrollment of eligible children ([HB 3106](#)) became law on June 21 and takes effect January 1, 2018 (Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 140).



Early Childhood Workforce: Legislation to support the early childhood workforce by establishing an Educator Advancement Council ([SB 182](#)) was signed by the governor and takes effect on August 2, 2017 (Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 639). Unfortunately, the \$7.5 million requested was not allocated, so there is no state funding to implement the law.

Contact Information

- Swati Adarkar, president and CEO, Children's Institute, swati@childinst.org.
- Dana Hepper, director of program and policy, Children's Institute, dana@childinst.org.
- Marina Merrill, senior policy and research adviser, Children's Institute marina@childinst.org.

PENNSYLVANIA

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Improve child care reimbursement rates in order to move toward subsidizing the cost of high-quality care.
- Grow investments in the newly created home visiting state line item that was established in the final FY2017–18 budget as a grant program open to all evidence-based home visiting models operating in the commonwealth.
- Work to gain increased investments in high-quality pre-k programs in state FY2018–19 budget.
- Work to increase state investments in basic and special education funding and protect the basic education funding formula.
- Assure that children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are appropriately screened and provided with all opportunities for their healthy development.
- Improve health-coverage outreach, enrollment and renewal practices, including gaining approval to implement continuous eligibility for children in Medicaid.
- Work at the federal level to protect against negative changes to Medicaid, CHIP and/or the Affordable Care Act and increase appropriations for the CCDBG and Head Start.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Promote comprehensive pre-k-to-kindergarten transition policies that emphasize school readiness and foster relationships between families, teachers and community partners.
- Take steps to ensure that children enrolled in the child care subsidy program can attend high-quality programs regardless of where they live in the commonwealth.
- Develop a reliable set of data points to detail potential eligible populations and unmet needs in Pennsylvania’s home visiting service network.

State Budget Updates

Pennsylvania once again started its fiscal year, on July 1, 2017, without an enacted state budget. While the Republican-led legislature sent a \$31.99 billion general appropriations bill to the governor on June 30, an agreement on an accompanying revenue package needed to balance the budget has not been reached to date. Despite this, the governor allowed the general appropriations act to become law without his signature on his July 10 deadline. The general appropriations bill (HB 218) provides for the following:



\$30 million increase for Pre-K Counts and Head Start programs.

- ⊕ \$4.8 million increase for a new appropriation for evidence-based home visiting programs.
- ⊕ \$100 million increase in basic education funding.
- ⊕ \$25 million increase for special education funding.
- ⊕ \$20 million net state/federal increase for the commonwealth's child care subsidy program. Restores the 2016–17 \$20 million state cut and will remove 1,800 children from the current waiting list
- ⊕ The governor's administration has also indicated that while not required in legislation (or specifically in any budget-related bills), it will begin to implement continuous eligibility for children in Medicaid ages birth to three in the 2017–18 fiscal year.

In his February 2017 budget proposal, the governor included the following state funding increases, which did not pass.

- ⊗ \$75-million increase for Pre-K Counts and Head Start programs, so the enacted general appropriations bill is \$45 million less than his proposal.
- ⊗ \$9-million increase for evidence-based home visiting programs, so roughly half of the proposed funding increase was not realized in the enacted appropriations bill.
- ⊗ \$35-million increase for the commonwealth's child care subsidy program, so the full amount was not realized in the enacted appropriations bill.
- ⊗ Also, the House Republican Caucus passed a Human Services Code (component of the state budget) vehicle in July that would require the Department of Human Services to request a waiver from the federal government to charge premiums in Medicaid to families with disabled children whose income is above 1,000% of the federal poverty income limit. The premium payment would be assessed on a sliding scale in a way similar to the premium scale used in CHIP. This proposal was removed by the Senate in late July, but a final bill has yet to reach the governor's desk.

Looking forward to the next budget, advocates are in the process of beginning Program Revision Requests for FY2018–19, which will be used to present to administration officials ahead of the governor's budget address in early 2018. These requests will contain priority budget requests for the coming fiscal year on pre-k, home visiting, child care and basic/special education funding. Pennsylvania will hold a gubernatorial election in 2018, and Democratic Governor Tom Wolf is expected to face a tough race from one of the many Republican contenders who have begun jockeying for sound bites critical of the governor's handling of the state budgets during his tenure. Advocates anticipate a challenging and politically charged budget process in 2018.

Recent Policy Changes

Keystone STARS Revisioning: Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Keystone STARS, is one of the most mature systems in the country. For more than a year, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has worked with stakeholders to revise the Keystone STARS system to support quality improvement in early care and education programs while reducing the administrative burden on providers. In June 2017, the new STARS performance standards were released, and they will take effect July 1, 2018. The updated standards address staff qualifications and professional development, the early care and education program, partnerships with families and communities, and leadership and management. The STARS system was created as a block system, with providers needing to meet all the associated performance standards in the blocks; however, the updated structure reflects a hybrid system that provides greater flexibility to providers and fewer performance standards.

CHIP Reauthorization (State): In addition to federal reauthorization needed by the end of September, Pennsylvania's CHIP program also needs state statutory reauthorization in 2017. The state program is to sunset by the end of the calendar year. Legislation introduced to extend the program has passed the House unanimously and awaits action in the Senate. The legislature likely intends to wait on federal action this fall before finalizing the state reauthorization.

CCDBG Regulations: It is anticipated that OCDEL will publish regulations later in 2017 that would bring the state into compliance with CCDBG requirements contained in the latest reauthorization. To date, these regulations have not yet been made available for public review and comment.

Contact Information

- Joan Benso, president and CEO, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, jbenso@papartnerships.org.

RHODE ISLAND

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Increase and adopt tiered reimbursement rates for the Rhode Island Child Care Assistance Program by paying higher rates for programs that achieve higher ratings in the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System. Pay high-quality programs at or above the 75th percentile of the 2015 Market Rate Survey.
- Expand access to Rhode Island State Pre-K and Head Start.
- Preserve and expand paid family leave policies.
- Develop state plan to implement kindergarten entry assessment as part of a high-quality kindergarten transition process, connecting schools to families and early learning programs.
- Promote routine, universal developmental screening from birth through kindergarten entry with follow-up, referral and enrollment in Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, Section 619, and Part C. Address disparities in access to IDEA services.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Explore wage-enhancement strategies to attract and retain qualified and effective staff in underfinanced early learning programs serving low-income children.
- Continue to strengthen connections and supports for young children in the child-welfare system, including developmental screening and follow-up, eligibility determination for early intervention, high-quality child care, home visiting, access to Head Start and the Rhode Island State Pre-K Program.

State Budget Updates



The FY2018 budget includes a \$1.1 million increase for the Rhode Island State Pre-K program, bringing total state funding to \$6.2 million. Combined with \$6 million in federal funds, the state pre-k program will provide high-quality early education to 1,080 4-year-olds in 2017–2018.



The FY2018 budget includes a \$390,000 increase to support Head Start, bringing total state funding to \$1.2 million to provide high-quality early education to 130 low-income 3-and-4-year-olds in addition to the 2,000 who are served through federal funding.



\$1 million proposed in Governor Gina Raimondo's budget to create enhanced reimbursement rates for child care.



Funding to support implementation of a kindergarten entry profile was not included in the final FY2018 budget.

Recent Policy Changes

- P** **Child Care Cliff Effect:** The Child Care Transition Program (the state’s graduated phaseout policy) was made permanent. Established as a pilot program in 2013, this policy allows low-income families receiving a child care subsidy to retain eligibility as family income grows above 180% of the federal poverty level (\$36,756) to 225% (\$45,945). Family copayments for child care increase as income increases.
- P** **Home Visiting:** The Rhode Island Family Home Visiting Act was amended to require the state Department of Health to produce an annual estimate of the number of children born to Rhode Island families who face significant risk factors known to impair child development, as well as a funding plan to gradually expand evidence-based home visiting programs to serve all vulnerable families.
- X** **Tiered Child Care Quality Rates:** Although the governor had included \$1 million in her proposed FY2018 budget to create enhanced reimbursement rates that promote and incentivize quality improvement for child care programs serving infants and toddlers, funding was not included in the final budget. Legislation that would have expanded on the governor’s proposal by establishing tiered quality rates for all age groups in the Child Care Assistance Program also did not pass.

Contact Information

- Leanne Barrett, senior policy analyst, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, lbarrett@rikidscount.org.
- Elizabeth Burke Bryant, executive director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, ebb@rikidscount.org.

WASHINGTON

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2017 Agenda

Washington state advocates are in the process of identifying which priorities will take precedence in the coming year to expand access to high-quality pre-kindergarten and high-quality child care. Priorities under consideration for 2018 are:

- Support successful implementation of the Early Start Act through administrative advocacy. This includes ensuring that changes to Early Achievers, Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), are driving improved child outcomes; data collection and analysis is sufficient to evaluate impact; the cost of quality is funded; child care subsidy is accessible; and new aligned standards for licensed child care, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Early Achievers support increased access to high-quality, culturally responsive early learning.
- Expand Washington's state pre-k, ECEAP, to make progress toward a statutory commitment to full entitlement for eligible children by 2020. Expansion priorities include additional slots, a slot-rate increase and an investment in facilities and support for a mixed-delivery system that includes child care centers and family child care homes.
- Commit the Legislature and the state Department of Early Learning (DEL) to a process for developing consensus on compensation in the early childhood educator professional workforce through a legislatively mandated stakeholder work group tasked with developing recommendations.
- Fund the cost of quality in child care centers and family child care homes by increasing rates paid to child care providers and fully funding the caseload for child care subsidy.
- Sustain and expand access to evidence-based home visiting programs.
- Enact paid family leave.
- Support new revenue to fund a continuum of early learning from birth to five.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Restore cuts made in the 2017 legislative session to the Early Achievers QRIS.
- Increase the number of children from low-income families who experience the benefits of high-quality pre-k by adding slots, with primary emphasis on full day.
- Increase the state agency administrative rate for state pre-k to allow for increased staff resources to implement expansion and quality improvements for the program.
- Take interim steps to prepare for a campaign to improve compensation for early learning professionals in 2019.
- Improve child care subsidy rates to meet increased costs associated with the minimum wage and higher quality standards.
- Ensure adequate resources and protect focus through administrative agency transitions, including movement of state DEL to a newly created Department of

Children, Youth, and Families, and a unification of child care subsidy administration from two agencies to one.

- Explore eligibility expansions for state pre-k and child care subsidy.
- Secure resources to support early learning facilities renovation and development.
- Administrative advocacy to support the successful expansion of ECEAP in communities across the state while continuing to grow the quality of the program.

State Budget Updates

-  **Expanded Access to High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten (ECEAP):** \$37.8 million. Access to the program will grow with 1,800 new slots (800 first year; 1,000 second year; mix of mostly full-, some part- and a few extended-day slots). A 6% increase to per-child rate will support successful expansion.
-  **Increased Reimbursement Rates for Center-Based Child Care Providers:** \$21 million. Washington passed a 6% base-rate increase for child care centers beginning September 1, 2017.
-  **Passed a Collective Bargaining Agreement for Family Child Care Providers:** \$15.1 million. The agreement includes a 2% base-rate increase for family child care providers, a more significant increase for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers, improved health benefits, needs-based grants and career development funds
-  **Established Stakeholder Work Group to Develop Recommendations to Legislature for Addressing Insufficient Early Learning Educator Compensation With the Intent of Growing and Retaining Highly Competent Early Learning Professional Workforce:** \$5,000. The Legislature provided funds and instructions for the state agency to convene a technical Child Care Workforce Work Group to develop recommendations to support the early learning workforce and issue a report by December 1, 2018. This is timed to immediately precede the start of the next biennial legislative session.
-  **Sustained Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs:** \$1.4 million. The state provided sufficient investment to allow continuation of current services despite the conclusion of federal competitive grant funds and reductions in private investments.
-  **Passed and Provided Start-Up Resources for Paid Family and Medical Leave:** \$82 million. Benefits will begin on January 1, 2020. Washington's policy is one of the most progressive in the nation.
-  **Reduction of Resources for Early Achievers:** \$12 million. The Early Start Act was a careful balance of new requirements and resources to meet them. This reduction undermines that balance of resources. The reduction is directed at

the professional development components of Early Achievers and represent a reduction of approximately 25% to those components.



Investments in early learning facilities were included in final drafts of the state capital budget, but negotiations for the capital budget were held up because of other issues, and a final capital budget for new projects was not passed during the 2017 legislative sessions.



Legislation was proposed during the 2017 session that would have weakened the state's 12-month authorization policy as an attempted cost-saving measure.

Recent Policy Changes

Early Start Act Implementation: The Early Start Act, passed July 6, 2015, [enacted unprecedented policies and resources](#) to expand access to high-quality, culturally competent early learning opportunities, prioritizing children furthest from opportunity. Advocates have worked with partners to ensure that the Early Start Act is implemented in a way that it fulfills its promise. Washington is in year two of the act's Early Achievers five-year implementation plan. Progress includes:



- **Early Achievers participation:** Advocacy has been focused on ensuring that resources and supports are adequate and effective in reaching providers serving children furthest from opportunity, including non-English-speaking providers and providers of color. This year's focus has been on the requirement that providers serving children receiving child care subsidies attain a level 2 rating in Early Achievers by August 1, 2017. This deadline has passed with minimal disruption to services for families and with providers serving the highest numbers of subsidy children and those whose first language is not English meeting the requirement at high rates.
- **Standards alignment:** The Early Start Act directed DEL to develop a single set of standards for child care licensing and ECEAP, Washington's state pre-k program. The new standards must provide minimum health and safety standards, rely on Early Achievers standards to address quality, take into account the separate needs of family child care providers and child care centers, and promote the continued safety of child care settings. The state is undertaking a collaborative negotiated rule-making process to develop broad consensus on new standards, which will proceed to final rule making this fall.



Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program Eligibility: The legislature previously passed a statutory requirement to provide access to all ECEAP eligible families who want to participate in the program by 2020. The 2017 Legislature delayed the timeline to 2022.



Eligibility Verification Process: DEL must develop rules for parents to provide the name of the noncustodial parent during the eligibility verification process for

child care subsidy unless they have good cause not to. This requirement is intended to reduce costs associated with subsidy utilization by reducing user fraud. Advocates are concerned about the potential negative impact for children and families of this new policy.

Contact Information

- Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer, early learning policy director, Children's Alliance, jennifer@childrensalliance.org.

WISCONSIN

Birth-to-Five Policy Priorities

2018 Agenda

- Expand access to high-quality early learning programs, particularly for vulnerable children with fewer opportunities.
- Promote a well-prepared, sustainable child care workforce.
- Promote smart early childhood investments recommend by the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC).
- Improve the health of young children and families, focusing on prevention.

Ideas or Topics in Development

- Equity: Increase the access of disadvantaged children to high-quality childhood services, with a particular emphasis on racial equity.
- Strengthen the workforce: Build an action plan to improve child care teacher compensation.
- ECAC Recommendations: Work with the ECAC to develop effective recommendations for the Governor.
- Expand Champions: Build a stronger group of champions for early learning and development, including business and law-enforcement leaders, the Legislative Children's Caucus and coalitions.
- Policy Change: Promote policy changes to support and sustain high-quality child care.
- Health and Development: Expand the anti-obesity Farm to Early Care and Education project, evidence-based home visiting and early childhood mental health.

State Budget Updates



A positive reverse in policy to main tiered reimbursement payments to high quality child care programs (4- and 5-Star rated in our QRIS program, YoungStar) in January 2017. A policy to reduce payments was reversed by the Legislature and the governor after extensive advocacy by the child care community.



The biennial budget added \$7.8 million over two years for home visiting, a 37% increase in investment, largely due to the ECAC recommendation and extensive advocacy.



\$34 million over two years was added to the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, mostly to fund the change to 12-month eligibility and to fund other new requirements of the federal CCDBG reauthorization, and to cover costs to implement a new Electronic Benefit Transfer system.



\$4 million in year two of the budget is to expand the Wisconsin Shares income threshold over 200% of the federal poverty level to help working families with rising incomes facing a cliff effect.



The Legislative Finance Committee rejected a proposal to increase child care payment rates by \$48 million per year. The Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition advocated for a \$20-million-per-year increase.



The Legislative Finance Committee rejected a \$10 million motion to expand T.E.A.C.H and REWARD programs to increase scholarships and stipends to child care workers. The Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition, and particularly Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, advocated strongly for an increase, with more than one option.



The ECAC recommendation of \$10-million-per-year grants to support 4-Star and 5-Star high-quality child care programs was rejected (aka it did not come up for a vote). The Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition advocated for the ECAC recommendation.

Recent Policy Changes



CCDBG Reauthorization: The main policy changes had to do with changes in state law and administrative rules to come into compliance with the CCDBG authorization regulations.

Contact Information

- Dave Edie, early education policy analyst, Kids Forward (formerly Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, dedie@kidsforward.net,