Early Care and Education E-Update – Winter 2015

In This Issue:
- Early Care and Education 2014 Legislative Action Report
- Legislative Database Highlight
- NCSL Offers Technical Assistance
- The State of Child Care
- NCSL’s Early Learning Fellows Program Continues in 2015
- Federal Updates: Summit on Early Learning & CCDBG Reauthorization 2014
- Resources of Interest
  - The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The 2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book
  - University of Virginia, Experimental Evidence on Early Intervention: The Impact of Full-day Kindergarten
  - Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), First Steps for Early Success: State Strategies to Support Developmental Screening in Early Childhood Settings
  - The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Creating Opportunities for Families: A Two-Generation Approach
  - Child Trends, Connecting the Dots: Raising A Reader Builds Evidence Base for its Parent Engagement and Early Literacy Program
  - ZERO TO THREE, The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: Smart Investments Build Strong Systems for Young Children
  - Child Trends, State of Young Hispanic Children
  - THINK/KERA, Learning While They’re Little
  - The New York Times, Social Programs That Work
  - Education Week, Quality Counts Introduces New State Report Card

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION 2014 LEGISLATIVE ACTION REPORT

In review of the 2014 legislative session, state lawmakers addressed an array of policy issues relating to young children through the introduction of more than 900 bills in 49 states.

Of those, 111 have been enacted or adopted into law in 35 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico. Enacted legislation addressed the quality of child care, including basic health and safety standards, expanded and improved prekindergarten programs, boosted early literacy development in young children and promoted school
readiness, addressed early childhood governance issues and data collection. There also were comprehensive bills that addressed multiple aspects of state early care and education policy.

The Early Care and Education 2014 Legislation Action report is an annually produced report prepared using StateNet, a legislative tracking database, to perform bill searches and analysis. This report is intended to provide an overview of significant enacted legislation in each state and does not represent a comprehensive list of enacted bills with technical changes, state budget appropriations bills and Executive Orders. Bills relating to states’ implementation of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also are excluded from the report.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE DATABASE HIGHLIGHT

The Early Care and Education database tracks and updates early care and education legislation from the 2008-2015 legislative sessions for 50 states and the territories. Issues include child care and child care financing, early childhood services, prekindergarten, professional development, home visiting, infants and toddlers, and financing early education. Legislation can be searched by state, topic, status, primary sponsor, bill number or keyword. This database, which is updated biweekly, is made possible by the generous support of the Alliance for Early Success. View the full 2015 legislative calendar for all states and the territories, including states that have year-round sessions and states in special sessions.

Selected Bills of Note in 2015 (as introduced):

- **Connecticut SB 782 (Sen. Holder-Winfield):** Concerns the retention of early childhood educators and the staff qualifications requirement, develops a plan that addresses the issue of the retention of early childhood educators in school readiness programs who obtain a bachelor's degree.
- **DC B 1 (Councilmember Grosso):** Prohibits the suspension or expulsion of a student of pre-kindergarten age from any publicly funded pre-kindergarten program. Establishes annual reporting requirements for each local education agency on suspensions and expulsions data.
- **Indiana SB 129 (Sen. Broden):** Provides that a child who is otherwise eligible for participation in the federal Child Care and Development Fund voucher program is eligible to participate in the program if the child's family income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal income poverty level; may continue to participate unless the child's family income exceeds 250 percent of the federal income poverty level; makes an appropriation.
- **Minnesota HB 46 & S 6 (Rep. Murphy, E. & Sen. Hoffman):** Provides funding for universal all-day preschool for four-year-old students.
- **Mississippi HB 361 (Rep. Scott, O.):** Requires the State Department of Education to establish A Better Chance or the ABC Program for the purpose of providing prekindergarten instruction throughout the state via the internet, requires the program to include certain components, including the daily delivery of real-time instruction by a licensed prekindergarten teacher.
- **Mississippi SB 2145 (Sen. Wiggins):** Authorizes an income tax credit for taxpayers in an amount equal to child care expenses paid by taxpayers for child care for their children to prekindergarten providers who participate in the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013; authorizes a tax credit for prekindergarten providers who participate in the early learning collaborative act.
- **Nebraska L 81 (Sen. Cook):** At redetermination of eligibility, if a family's income exceeds 140 percent of the federal poverty level, requires that the family continue to receive transitional child care assistance for up to 24 consecutive months or until the family income exceeds 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Requires the amount of such child care assistance be based on a cost-
shared plan between the recipient family and the state and shall be based on a sliding-scale methodology.

- **New York A 1715 (Asm. Magnarelli):** Creates the child care professionals loan forgiveness incentive program for applicants who agree to engage in employment in the child care field.

- **Oklahoma HB 1281 (Rep. Cockroft):** Establishes a scholarship for Child Development Associate to be administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Allows recipient to choose a Professional Development Specialist, establishes scholarship for Child Care Professional, and details criteria for scholarship candidates.

- **Oregon HB 2781 (Rep. Parrish):** Prohibits Office of Child Care from certifying, registering, recording or providing state funds to child care facility when persons with a regular presence at facility possesses a medical marijuana card, prohibits child care facility from hiring, employing or otherwise engaging services of person who possesses medical marijuana card as person with regular presence at facility, directs Office of Child Care to create system whereby owners and operators of child care facilities may apply to receive information.

- **Texas HB 617 (Rep. Deshotel):** Establishes the Office of Early Learning within the State Education Agency.

- **Washington HB 1491 (Rep. Kagi):** Companion WA SB 5452 Improves quality in the early care and education system.
  - Authorizes the Dept. of Early Learning (DEL) to require all licensed or certified child care facilities and early learning programs serving non-school age children and receiving state funds to participate in the Early Achievers program (QRIS).
  - Expects participants to actively engage in the program and continually advance from level 1, the basic licensing requirement, to level 5.
  - Requires DEL to focus the early care and education system on supporting school readiness for young learners and improving educational outcomes.
  - Creates an Early Achievers Review Subcommittee to provide feedback and guidance on strategies to improve the quality of instruction and environment for early learning and provide input and recommendations and the implementation and refinement of the Early Achievers program.
  - Implements a single set of licensing standards for child care programs and the child care subsidy program.
  - Requires DEL to create a professional development pathway for the Early Achievers program to obtain a high school diploma or higher education credential and will include opportunities for scholarships and grants.
  - Requires DEL to authorize the Working Connections Child Care program for a 12 month enrollment period regardless of change in circumstances.

**NCSL OFFERS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA), BUT WHAT IS TA?**

NCSL technical assistance (TA) is designed in consultation with legislators and staff. NCSL staff can assist you identify state innovations and ask the right questions to understand what would work best in your state. We can help you find out what other states are doing. We have 50-state charts and maps to show the different policies across the country. We publish issue briefs and legislative summaries.
We can travel to your state to help you solve the most pressing issues in early care and education. We also provide opportunities for you to meet the experts in the field as well as opportunities to talk with your peers from across the country on how they tackled today’s tough issues in their legislatures. We host meetings and workshops; convene teams of state leaders to spend a day or two diving deep into specific policy issues. Here are a few common examples:

- Presentations, informal briefings, and testimony before committees and hearings;
- Written research and analyses;
- Assisting with drafting and reviewing legislation; or
- Informal conference calls with legislators and legislative staff in other states to discuss their experiences with early childhood.

NCSL staff, recently, had the distinct pleasure to make two presentations about early care and education. In February 2014, NCSL staff presented to the Montana Education and Local Government Interim Committee generally on the policy issues related to early childhood. Then in July 2014, NCSL staff presented to the Wisconsin Legislative Council Steering Committee Symposia Series on Supporting Health and Early Brain Development. Be sure to call 303-364-7700 or email cyf-info@ncsl.org if you are interested in learning about how NCSL can help you and your state.

**THE STATE OF CHILD CARE**

Child care in the United States is the focus of conversation from local and state levels to the national level. Each week there are approximately 11 million children who are cared for by someone other than a parent while parents are at work. Child care is provided by licensed centers, grandparents or other relatives, and a variety of private care providers.

Research supports that quality child care can have a positive impact on children, promoting healthy child development and school readiness and setting the course for a child’s experience and success in education. Research has linked quality child care and pre-K with long term benefits like increased high school graduation rates and college attendance. Efforts to improve child care and early education have included the development of programs that meet standards as set by National Institute of Early Education and Research (NIEER) and the Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS).

Child care in the United States is expensive and quality care is not accessible to all families. According to Child Care Aware of America, it is estimated that only 10 percent of child care can be considered high quality and likely to have a positive impact on children’s outcomes. Affordable care should be around 10 percent of a family’s income, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. A 2014 Child Care Aware of America survey found that the average cost for infant child care in a center was anywhere from seven to 16 percent of median state income, depending on the state, for a married couple, and more than 23 percent of median income for a single parent.

The high cost of child care is not reflective of compensation for child care workers. Child care remains one of the lowest paying professions in the country. In 2013, the average salary for a child care professional was $21,490. According to a 2014 report released by the Center for the Study of
Child Care Employment

Approximately 46 percent of child care workers are among families receiving some type of public assistance compared with 25 percent of the U.S. workforce as a whole.

States are taking a variety of approaches to address the need for affordable quality child care and to develop the means to increase compensation for child care professionals. Approaches include:

- Supplementing child care salaries with stipends.
- Using K-12 salary scales for pre-K teachers.
- Encouraging businesses to support family friendly policies and better child care for employees.
- Using “pay for success” models to finance quality child care

References:

Child Care Aware ® America (2014). *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care.*

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2014). *Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years after the National Child Care Staffing Study.*

NCSL’S EARLY LEARNING FELLOWS PROGRAM CONTINUES IN 2015

NCSL’s Early Care and Education project is gearing up for a fourth round of the Early Learning Fellows program. This program is designed to support legislators and legislative staff who are experienced or emerging leaders on early childhood and early learning issues. The program is geared toward those chairing or serving on human services, education or appropriation committees who want to expand their knowledge and learn from other legislators and experts across the country.

Over the past three years a bi-partisan group of more than 80 legislators and 10 legislative staff members from 38 states and Puerto Rico have participated in this premier program. The program has hosted a total of five face-to-face meetings and eight webinars on a myriad of hot and emerging topics related to early care and education. The program also fosters a peer-learning environment for participants to work with one another and put together an early learning plan (a road map which can guide them in their efforts back in their state). Some of the best sessions included:

- Hearing from Art Rolnick, former senior vice president at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, about the economic case for investing in early childhood education.
- Learning through informative presentations about brain science from talented researchers such as Deb Leong from Tools of the Mind and Al Race from the Center on the Developing Child.
- Hosting exciting webinars about the building blocks of early childhood development with respected researchers Ron Haskins and Jack Shonkoff from the Brooking Institution and the Center on the Developing Child, respectively.
- Experiencing firsthand what quality child care and a two-generation approach look like by participating in site visits and tours to Educare in Denver, Colo. and the Jeremiah Program in Minneapolis, Minn.
- Allowing for the opportunity to network and learn from colleagues around the country.
The selection process for the 2015 class of Early Learning Fellows will launch shortly. If you are interested in learning more about the steps to become a Fellow please be sure to visit NCSL’s website to learn more. Specific questions about the program, email alison.may@ncsl.org or call 303-856-1473.

FEDERAL UPDATE

FEDERAL UPDATE: WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT ON EARLY LEARNING
Many state legislatures continue to focus on developing and funding expansion in state prekindergarten programs to support children’s readiness for school. This topic will be one to watch in 2015.

During a first-of-its-kind Summit on Early Education hosted by the White House on Dec. 10, 2014, the federal government announced it was awarding 18 states grants under the Preschool Development Grant program. The grants would expand preschool infrastructure in some states and help develop preschool programs in others.

Currently 41 states and the District of Columbia provide a total of $5.3 billion in state funding for preschool programs. And at least half the states provided additional funding or enacted preschool legislation in 2014.

The body of knowledge that indicates the importance of high-quality prekindergarten programs continues to grow. From the 36 submitted applications to the departments of Education and Health and Human Services, five states will receive development grants and 13 will receive expansion grants.

Development grant recipients include: Alabama, Arizona, Hawaii, Montana and Nevada. Expansion grant recipients include: Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia.

Additional information about the grant types and dollar amounts awarded may be found through the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. In total more than $226 million will be awarded under the Preschool Development Grant program.

It was also announced that $500 million from the Department of Health and Human Services is going to 40 states through the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn’t mention the launch of Invest in US, a public awareness campaign that calls for increased investment in early childhood opportunities from the public, private and philanthropic entities. So far financial commitments of more than $330 million in new funds have been made by corporations, foundations and individuals. Invest in US was launched at the Summit in partnerships with the First Five Years Fund.

“The grant received will benefit many early learners by giving them a head start on their education," said Montana House Minority Whip Edith “Edie” McClafferty, who serves as vice chair of House Education Committee. She is also a member of the Education and Local Government Interim Committee, and an alumna of NCSL’s Early Learning Fellows program. "A lot of us worked together to obtain the grant from the Department of Education. This is a great
opportunity for our children in Montana.” Her state received $10 million in development grant funds.

Another NCSL Early Learning Fellow from Montana, staffer Pad McCracken, said the “grant award provides even more of a guarantee that early learning will be one of the top issues in the 2015 Montana Legislature, and makes me even more grateful for the policy understanding I gained through the fellows program.”

As always, the early care and education project at NCSL has a wealth of relevant information for the work being done in your state and throughout all states and territories. Recently updated information about prekindergarten, school readiness and early literacy as well as the one stop shop web document entitled ECE 101 will help you learn more.

NCSL will continue to track this and all early care and education legislation in our bill tracking database.

**FEDERAL UPDATE: CCDBG REAUTHORIZATION 2014**

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG): Reauthorization of 2014

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 was signed into law on Nov. 19, 2014 and makes improvements to the health, safety and quality of child care, while also providing better and sustained access to child care assistance for low-income working families. The CCDBG is the primary federal law that funds child care for low-income families and their children. In FY 2014, it is funded at $2.36 billion in discretionary funding and $2.9 billion in mandatory funding. States are required to contribute a match, which totaled about $1.28 billion in FY 2014.

The law currently has very few specific requirements giving states significant latitude to set licensing, health and safety requirements as well as quality standards. The reauthorization makes some significant changes to the original law that will have direct implications for states. Some major changes include (view a comprehensive list of all changes):

- Improving the health and safety of children in child care including increased training and monitoring.
- Making the program more family-friendly by streamlining eligibility policies and prioritizing the most vulnerable children and families.
- Increasing investments in quality child care including specific funds for infants and toddlers.
- Ensuring parents and the general public have transparent information about the child care choices available to them. Improving the overall quality of early learning and afterschool programs.

The CCDBG Reauthorization will create a number of changes for states. Some of these changes will be simple and clear-cut while others will be more complex and require more time to implement depending on the number and types of changes a state will need to make. NCSL will be releasing a Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization Primer in the coming month that will provide detailed information specifically designed for legislators.
RESOURCES OF INTEREST

The 2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book
Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation/KIDS COUNT—Summer 2014
The KIDS COUNT Data Book is an annual publication that assesses child well-being nationally and across the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Using an index of 16 indicators, the 2014 report ranks states on overall child well-being and in four domains: (1) economic well-being, (2) education, (3) health, and (4) family and community. Read the data book.

Experimental Evidence on Early Intervention: The Impact of Full-day Kindergarten
Source: University of Virginia researcher Chloe R. Gibbs—September 2014
A new study finds that full-day kindergarten may be substantially more effective than half-day programs, especially for Hispanic students. University of Virginia Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy researcher conducted a first-of-its-kind randomized trial of full-day kindergarten, finding sizable benefits for all students, but especially for Hispanic students and those with low literacy skills. The report discusses how these results could help narrow or close the achievement gap early on. Read the full report.

First Steps for Early Success: State Strategies to Support Developmental Screening in Early Childhood Settings
Source: Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)—October 2014
Developmental screenings, which indicate whether a child is meeting expected developmental milestones or may have a developmental delay that requires further assessment, are part of a broader set of preventive health care practices recommended by experts, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). In general, developmental screening tools are formal, research-based instruments that include questions about a child’s development at particular ages. Read the full paper.

Creating Opportunities for Families: A Two-Generation Approach
Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation—November 2014
Low-income families face daily struggles that can seem insurmountable and have long-term consequences for children. KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, released a report focused on strategies for poverty reduction that reach both generations. The policy report makes the case for creating opportunity for families by addressing the needs of parents and their children simultaneously. Read the full policy report.

Connecting the Dots: Raising A Reader Builds Evidence Base for its Parent Engagement and Early Literacy Program
Source: Child Trends—November 2014
A new report issued by Child Trends on the early literacy and parent engagement program, Raising A Reader. This program is in 32 states and serves about 130,000 young children and families. More than four of 10 of the families they serve are Hispanic. The report found promising results in terms of outcomes. Raising A Reader is preparing for a large random control trial to provide further evidence. Read the full report.

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: Smart Investments Build Strong Systems for Young Children
Source: ZERO TO THREE—November 2014
This new report by ZERO TO THREE is the latest addition to their compilation of resources that help policymakers and professionals understand the importance of investing in home visiting
programs as part of a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for young children and their families. The report highlights one of the lesser known values of the MIECHV program: its role in enhancing state efforts to build high-quality, comprehensive statewide early childhood systems. Such strong systems are critical in making sure that federal investments are maximized to most efficiently meet the needs of young children when it matters most—during the early learning years. Read the full report.

State of Young Hispanic Children
Source: Child Trends—December 2014
This one-page fact sheet, composed by the Hispanic Institute at Child Trends, shows the state of Hispanic young children. View the one-pager.

Learning While They’re Little
Source: THINK/KERA—December 2014
In December 2014 as many researchers traveled to Fort Worth, Tex. for a statewide summit on early learning public radio station KERA conducted an interview with Dr. Neal Halfon, a pediatrics professor and director of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities; James Heckman, a Nobel Prize-winning, University of Chicago professor of economics, and Robert H. Dugger, Chairman of the ReadyNation Advisory Board and Invest in Kids Working Group. The interview covers the topics of: achievement gaps, parent engagement, kindergarten readiness, and the importance of being able to play well with others. Listen to the interview.

Social Programs That Work
Ron Haskins is co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution and co-author of “Show Me the Evidence: Obama’s Fight for Rigor and Results in Social Policy” and recently authored this article for The Opinion Pages of the New York Times newspaper. Haskins suggests that the government should only fund social welfare programs that work. Read the full article.

Quality Counts Introduces New State Report Card
Source: Education Week—January 2015
The 2015 edition of Education Week’s Quality Counts report—Preparing to Launch: Early Childhood’s Academic Countdown—explores the complex landscape that defines early-childhood services and programs in this country. The report examines how new academic demands and accountability pressures are reshaping the learning environment for young children and the teachers and administrators serving them. Read the report.

Outside links are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute an endorsement by NCSL.

This e-update is made possible by the generous support of the Alliance for Early Success. This e-update is an informational service for state legislators and legislative staff who are part of NCSL's Child Care and Early Education Legislative Network. Contact Alison May for more information at 303-856-1473 or to offer information from your state. You may also request to subscribe, if you are a legislator or legislative staff, or unsubscribe by emailing cyf-info@ncsl.org.