

September 2019



Utah Establishes Early Childhood Advisory Council and Governor’s Early Childhood Commission

Representative V. Lowry Snow (R), chair of Utah’s House Education committee and a 2015 Early Learning Fellow, sponsored early childhood legislation [in 2019](#). Signed by Governor Gary Herbert in March, [HB 47](#) mandates establishment of an early childhood advisory council within the Department of Health and an early childhood commission in the governor’s office. The bill was cosponsored by Senator Ann Millner (R), a 2016 Early Learning Fellow.



Although an early childhood [advisory council](#) has been in place since 2011, HB 47 provides direction for the council and integrates its work with the new commission in the governor’s office. The advisory council is required to produce a report for the governor’s commission outlining the quality and availability of early childhood education and health and development programs and services for children in early childhood.

Snow shared, “This legislation passed because Utah sees the importance of the early years and providing the best outcomes for Utah’s children.” Millner added, “the new law will provide better data intergration for Utah policymakers to make informed decisions.”

Washington State Expands Early Learning Access to 3-Year-Olds



Washington Senator Lisa Wellman (D), a 2018 Early Learning Fellow, introduced legislation to increase access to the state’s prekindergarten program. [SB 5089](#), enacted earlier this year, allows 3-year-olds who are receiving early intervention services or are enrolled in Early Head Start to be eligible for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), the state’s prekindergarten program. The new law requires the Department of Children, Youth and Families to adopt rules that allows a

child to enroll in ECEAP, as space is available, if the child turns 3 years during the school year and meets certain criteria, including: has a family income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, or meets at least one risk factor, and has received early intervention services or participated in Early Head Start.

Wellman, who chairs the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, commented, “This law provides better educational continuity, and ensures that our state’s most vulnerable children have access to high-quality programs that will set them up for success.”

Did You Know?

NCSL’s Early Care and Education staff can travel to your state and help facilitate a one-day meeting for you and your colleagues. Check out what we’ve done in [Wisconsin](#) and [Washington](#).

Next month NCSL will travel to Wichita, Kan. to host a meeting for legislators and legislative staff. We’ll discuss early brain architecture, the economic case for investing in the early years, and host a conversation with Kansas stakeholders invested in early childhood. We’ll also provide an update on federal funding opportunities.

Contact alison.may@ncsl.org if you’d like to discuss options for your state.

Are you participating in state activities that you would like to share? Let us know so we can include it in the next Legislative Corner. Email alison.may@ncsl.org.