Early Care and Education E-Update – Winter 2014

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IN MEMORIAM, JACK TWEEDIE

The National Conference of State Legislatures joins with the family of Jack Tweedie in mourning his passing on January 29 after a long, hard-fought battle with cancer. As Director of the Children and Families program at NCSL, Jack was a well-known expert and leader on state policies affecting children and families. He worked with many states and wrote many articles on ways to strengthen welfare programs and help parents move from welfare to work. He challenged his staff to be better thinkers and encouraged ideas and innovation. He served on national boards and spoke to many audiences across the country. He was a staunch supporter of state legislators, state legislative staff and the legislative institution. But he always felt his most important job was being the father of two sons, Zeke and Zane. He will be missed.

2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION – EARLY CARE & EDUCATION INTRODUCED LEGISLATION

As of the week of January 13, 2014, 32 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have convened the 2014 legislative session. Four states—Montana, Nevada, North Dakota and Texas—will not hold a regular session in 2014. For the most up-to-date status and description of early care and education legislation from the 2008 to 2014 legislative sessions for 50 states and the territories, please visit the NCSL Early Care and Education Database, updated every two weeks beginning on Jan. 14, 2014. To read about the 2013 legislative session and 174 enacted laws on early care and education in 38 states and Puerto Rico, see the full 2013 State Legislative Action on Early Care and Education report.

So far in 2014, lawmakers in 32 states and the District of Columbia have introduced more than 60 bills on various early care and education state policy issues such as:

- **Child care** licensing (California, D.C., Florida, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin)
- Child care assistance policy (Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, Missouri, Washington and Virginia)
- Child care quality and tax incentives (Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Oklahoma and Virginia)
- Training, professional development and support for the early childhood workforce (Colorado, Indiana and Mississippi)
- **Pre-K** access (California, Missouri, New York and Virginia)
- **Kindergarten** expansion (California, New Jersey and South Carolina)
- **Assessments** (D.C., Indiana and New York)
- **Governance** (North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont and West Virginia)
- Early childhood **data** (Colorado and West Virginia)
- Early literacy development (Alaska, Hawaii, Michigan, New Mexico, Oklahoma and South Carolina)
- **Home visiting** (Alabama, New Mexico and Georgia)
- Comprehensive **early childhood systems** (Minnesota, New Mexico, Washington and Wyoming)
- Comprehensive **financing** of early childhood programs (Mississippi and New Hampshire)

**Selected Bills of Note** (as introduced)
- **California SB 837**: Implementing a statewide transitional kindergarten program for four-year-olds and requiring the state to appropriate formula funding for the program starting in FY 2015-16. The bill also requires the program to be integrated and aligned with the existing child care and the elementary education systems and requires the curriculum to be developmentally appropriate and focused on building social-emotional skills such as perseverance, self-control and self-esteem.

- **Colorado HB 1072**: Creating a new refundable child care tax credit that is independent of the actual federal credit amount claimed for individuals earning less than $25,000 annually.

- **Nebraska LB 691**: Increasing the child and dependent care tax credit by two percent to 27 percent of the federal credit.

- **Indiana HB 1004**: Requiring implementation of the kindergarten readiness assessment for children enrolled in the Early Education Scholarship pilot program (created in 2013 in five counties) and allows the state to remove funding from providers who fail to meet school readiness standards in two consecutive years. **Indiana SB 26** sets early childhood development training requirements for providers and **HB 1036** requires training as a condition for receiving federal child care assistance funds. **SB 158** exempts property taxes for child care providers who participate in the state early education evaluation program and meet high QRIS ratings.

- **Mississippi SB 2108**: Requiring assistant teachers for kindergarten-4th grades to hold an AA or equivalent certification in addition to obtaining specialized early childhood development training by 2016. The bill also proposes a 3 percent income tax increase on gaming winnings as a funding source to implement the Early Education Collaborative Act of 2013.

Sources: State Net, NCSL and state legislatures. 2014.

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**NCSL EARLY LEARNING FELLOWS WRAP UP YEAR TWO AND LOOK AHEAD TO YEAR THREE**

The second class of NCSL’s Early Learning Fellows concluded its time together at a final meeting Dec. 6-7, 2013 in Washington, D.C. While the weather in other parts of the country was wintry, making for tough travel, the Fellows were able to come together one last time to cover such topics as early literacy and share their own legislative experiences as they relate to early care and education. The agenda and meeting materials can all be found [HERE](#).

NCSL is pleased to offer the Early Learning Fellows program for legislators and staff in 2014, the third year of the program. The Fellows program is designed for current and emerging leaders on early childhood issues and targets those chairing or serving on human services or education committees. Similarly to the last two years, the program will focus on those who want to expand their knowledge, learn from other legislators and experts across the county as they tackle issues such as quality child care, early learning best practices with preschool, teacher training and assessment, family support issues like home visiting, and accountability with data systems and governance challenges in their state.
Selection for the third class of Early Learning Fellows will start in late January 2014 with the program kicking off with a face to face meeting in Denver, Colo. mid-May 2014. The experience for selected Fellows will also include two webinars, June and September 2014, and a second face-to-face meeting mid-August 2014 in Minneapolis, Minn. In order to be considered as a Fellow you must be nominated or gain clearance with leadership in your state, or receive permission to apply by your staff director, complete the application fully and be selected by NCSL staff. Legislators and legislative staff will be chosen based on application responses as well as geographic representation and balance of political party make-up. The Early Learning Fellows program is made possible by a grant from the Alliance for Early Success. If you have any questions about the Early Learning Fellows program contact Alison.May@ncsl.org or call 303-856-1473.

Read a recent Blog post about the Early Learning Fellows HERE.

**Brain Matters, NCSL’S STATE LEGISLATURES MAGAZINE ARTICLE**

Read NCSL’s January 2014 State Legislatures magazine article, "Brain Matters," on how states are using research on how the brain develops to shape early childhood policies and programs and mitigate the effects of child maltreatment and trauma. Read the article HERE.

**By the Numbers**

- 700: The number of new neural connections made every second during the first few years of life
- 18 months: Age when disparities in vocabulary first appear in children; differences correlate with parents’ educational level and income
- 90-100%: Chance of developmental delays in children with at least six toxic stresses, such as poverty, maltreatment, single parent, mental illness of caregiver, etc.
- $4-$9: The range of savings for every dollar invested in early childhood programs for low-income families.

(Source: The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University)

**AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE TWO-GENERATION STRATEGY**

There is a new term—Two-Generation Strategy—is increasingly showing up in our vernacular. What does it mean? A two-generation strategy focuses on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both vulnerable parents and children together. First, it can refer to policy, programs or research, and second, it includes components of early childhood education, job training/post secondary education, and wrap-around family support services.

With recent attention on the successes and failures of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, this seems an opportune time to highlight current thinking and explore innovation in the field for improving the educational and economic outcomes of low-income families and addressing intergenerational poverty. According to the Aspen Institute, an education and policy studies organization that has been taking the lead on this issue, “a two-generation approach presents the potential to multiply the return on investment in early childhood education for children and in postsecondary education for young parents.”
The National Center for Families Learning recently released a report from three years of research on Toyota Family Literacy Program—a two-generation program—that’s being implemented in seven select communities. The research shows that two-generation learning can increase student achievement, expand parent engagement, improve adult reading behaviors and prepare parents to help their children with school.

There are model innovation programs operating in various locations across the country. To read about these programs and find more in-depth information about a two-generation approach, visit Ascend at The Aspen Institute.

NCSL OFFERS TA, BUT WHAT IS TA?

NCSL technical assistance (TA) is designed in consultation with legislators and staff. NCSL helps promote state innovation and support your work through technical assistance.

What does NCSL technical assistance look like?

Technical assistance activities can take various forms. NCSL staff can help lawmakers and staff with issues around state early care and education through:

- 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 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 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. We also come to you and work with you in your state to help you solve the most pressing problems. Here are a few other examples:

- Presenting a day-and-a-half meeting with legislators from other states and national experts;
- Testifying to an oversight or Senate committee;
- Making presentations to party caucuses;
- Organizing a legislative briefing;
- Arranging consultant services for state-specific research and analysis; and
- Co-sponsoring a legislative forum.

RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE RECAP OF STATE GRANTS

Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) is a federal discretionary grant program and joint effort between the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The purpose of the grant is to provide funding for states to improve early care and education outcomes for low-income, at-risk children. Starting in 2011, thirty-five states, in addition to the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have applied for the RTT-ELC grants through three competitive grant cycles. State applications must
indicate states’ commitment to increase the effectiveness and coordination of their early childhood systems, promote high quality early childhood programs through mechanisms such as state Quality and Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS), build a competent and skilled early childhood workforce and promote family involvement strategies. States that have won grants also use these resources to strengthen the accountability of programs, measure the progress of children across developmental and early learning domains through the use of assessments, and analyze data on student progress and outcomes to improve practices and inform state policies and investments.

During the first phase of the grant, nine states were awarded a total of $500 million, ranging from $45 million (Minnesota) to $70 million (California). Other 2011 grantees included Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Washington. The next five highest scoring states—Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington—received grants totaling $133 million in the second phase of the RTT-ELC in 2012. Grant amounts ranged from $10 million (Oregon) to $18 million (Illinois). In December 2013, six additional states received a total of $280 million, ranging from $40 million in Vermont to $52 million in Georgia.

State Annual Performance Reports

\[\text{Phase I (2011): 9 states} \]
\[\text{Phase II (2012): 5 states} \]
\[\text{Phase III (2013): 6 states} \]

To date, 20 states have submitted annual performance reports indicating their progress in achieving RTT-ELC state outcomes and performance measures as initially outlined in state applications. Some of the themes in state implementation of RTT-ELC include the following:

- Updating child care licensing standards (Minnesota, Ohio and Rhode Island);
- Refining state child care subsidies and assistance programs (Maryland);
- Expanding developmental and behavioral screening services in partnership with medical and social services providers (Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio and Rhode Island);
- Improving state early childhood data systems and/or aligning early childhood data to state longitudinal data systems (Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio and Rhode Island);
- Increasing coordination of state and local programs to improve family involvement (Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio and Washington); and
- Leveraging federal RTT-ELC funds to expand existing home visiting programs (California, North Carolina and Rhode Island).

Additional State Resources on Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Grants

- Abstracts of FY 2013 RTT-ELC Grantees (Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont):
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems – Themes from State Annual Performance Reports
  [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/qris_in_rtt_elc_program_aprs_508c_final.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/qris_in_rtt_elc_program_aprs_508c_final.pdf)
- Workforce Initiatives – Themes from State Annual Performance Reports
  [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/workforce_initiatives_in_rtt_elc_program_aprs_508c_final.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/workforce_initiatives_in_rtt_elc_program_aprs_508c_final.pdf)

RESOURCES OF INTEREST

**Being Black is Not a Risk Factor: A Strengths-Based Look at the State of the Black Child**
Source: National Black Child Development Institute — October 2013
This report is designed to challenge the prevailing discourse about black children – one which overemphasizes limitations and deficits and does not draw upon the considerable strengths, assets and resilience demonstrated by our children, families and communities. Read the report.

**The Research Base for a Birth through Age Eight State Policy Framework**
Source: Child Trends and the Alliance for Early Success — October 2013
Early experiences in childhood lay the foundation for later success. Throughout early childhood, from birth through age eight, children need early, consistent, high-quality supports to promote and sustain their developmental gains. State policies can help build a strong foundation that puts young children, particularly vulnerable young children, on a path to success. Read the report.

**Making the Case for Early Childhood Intervention in Child Welfare**
Source: Casey Family Programs — October 2013
This brief, describes a national scan of interventions targeting families with young children and makes several recommendations to safely reduce the number of young children in foster care. Read the brief.
The Youngest Americans: A Statistical Portrait of Infants and Toddlers in the United States
This report covers indicators related to early childhood. It not only presents a demographic profile of young children from birth through age eight, but also includes information about their health status, access to educational and social service programs, and their families. Read the report.

Investing in Young Children: A Fact Sheet on Early Care and Education Participation, Access, and Quality
Source: CLASP and National Center for Children in Poverty—November 2013
This fact sheet provides information about the percentages of young children in each state experiencing risks related to poor educational outcomes as well as trends in federal and state investments in early care and education programs and state policies related to both access and quality. Read the fact sheet.

National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool
Source: Office of Child Care—December 2013
The Crosswalk Tool was developed through a public-private partnership to help State and Territories that are developing and aligning early childhood program standards across sectors. The tool allows users to search and compare the content of national early childhood program standards across 10 topics and multiple subtopic areas. Use the tool.

Making Kids Less Expensive: A Conservative’s View
Source: Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity—December 2013
Kids are expensive. This exclusive commentary by John Feehry of Quinn Gillespie and Associates highlights four ways that we can make caring for children less expensive for families with two working parents. Read the article.

Two Generations, One Future: Innovations in Early Childhood
Source: Ascend the Aspen Institute - December 2013
This brief offers insights from the Forum on Innovations in Early Childhood. Two-generation approaches focus on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of children and their parents together. Read the brief.

State by State Fact Sheets: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2013
Source: National Women’s Law Center – January 2014
The National Women’s Law Center’s 10th annual review of key child care subsidy policies in all fifty states and the District of Columbia reveals that in 2013, families were worse off in 24 states than they were in 2012 under one or more child care assistance policies, but were better off in 27 states. View the fact sheets.

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 Alison.May@ncsl.org.
Include bills recently introduced by year-round state legislatures. Bill summaries are current as of date of introduction and may not include provisions added, removed or amended during subsequent legislative stages. For questions, comments, additions or corrections, please contact Phuonglan.Nguyen@ncsl.org or 303-856-1582.