



Early childhood education

in ESSA: Helping America's governors coordinate and improve their existing early learning programs, and reach more children.

States have been investing in early childhood education more and more each year because governors and state lawmakers from red and blue states alike understand that doing more in the early years allows more kids to show up to kindergarten ready to learn and succeed. In fact, well over half of all governors this year specifically mentioned early care and learning in some of their biggest speeches of the year. Here is what governors across the country are saying:

ALABAMA GOVERNOR ROBERT BENTLEY (R)

"We will work to give young children a new, strong foundation with the opportunity for a good education in a voluntary pre-K program. At the end of the next four years we will be able to tell every parent in Alabama, there is a pre-K classroom available for your child." – Inaugural Address, Jan. 19, 2015

DELAWARE GOVERNOR JACK MARKELL (D)

"Ninety percent of children's brain development occurs before they even enter kindergarten. So thanks to your support, we have enrolled more than 3,000 additional high-needs children in the best early childhood centers in the past two years. And we've given grants to 89 top early learning programs to offer the highest quality infant care to more of our neediest kids. We know that care is expensive and hard-to-find, yet key to our children's success." – State of the State Address, Jan. 22, 2015

INDIANA GOVERNOR MIKE PENCE (R)

"We've increased support for schools, approved the first-ever state funding for quality pre-K ... Graduation rates are up. Test scores are up, the doors of our pre-K program are already open to disadvantaged kids ... building on the historic first step we took last session, we will invest \$10 million a year to fund scholarships for our new pre-K pilot, because every Hoosier child deserves to start school ready to learn." – State of the State Address, Jan. 13, 2015

KENTUCKY GOVERNOR STEVE BESHEAR (D)

“We increased enrollment in preschool programs. And we developed a screener to gauge whether early education programs were preparing our kids to hit the ground running on day one of kindergarten.” – State of the Commonwealth Address, Jan. 7, 2015

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER (R)

“We should be absolutely proud, we have been a leader in the nation with early childhood and preschool education. The last two years we made major budget commitments; \$65 million a year for a total of \$130 million in an on-going basis. We created over 29,000 new opportunities for people in need, young people in need to get pre-schooled.” – State of the State Address, Jan. 20, 2015

MISSISSIPPI GOVERNOR PHIL BRYANT (R)

“Funding early childhood learning programs began in our first legislative session together, and this year I will support doubling the funding for the Pre-K Collaborative Program with a total appropriation of \$6 million.” – State of the State Address, Jan. 21, 2015

MISSOURI GOVERNOR JAY NIXON (D)

“My budget will invest an additional \$11 million in preschool, so that more children, regardless of their circumstances, start kindergarten ... ready to learn.” – State of the State Address, Jan. 21, 2015

NEVADA GOVERNOR BRIAN SANDOVAL (R)

“I submit to you this evening that an education system for this century requires bold new ideas to meet the reality of our time ... This work begins with our youngest learners. Nevada has the lowest preschool attendance of any state in the nation. Thanks to a recent federal grant, and matching funds provided in my budget, we will improve this worst-in-the-country statistic.” – State of the State Address, Jan. 15, 2015

NEW MEXICO GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ (R)

“On my watch, we’ve more than doubled pre-K funding, and I’m proposing more this year.” – State of the State Address, Jan. 20, 2015

TEXAS GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT (R)

“To improve our schools we must begin by building a strong foundation at the very beginning... To begin the process of building a better education system in Texas, we must improve early education. This is why I’m declaring early education as my first emergency item as governor. Our children and their future have no time for delay.” – State of the State Address, Feb. 17, 2015