



First Five Years Fund



Federal Support for Early Childhood Education in the New Administration and Congress

America's greatest resource is its people; their creativity, skills, drive, and productivity. Developing that resource starts at birth, and the foundation for its strength is built in the first five years. Loving families and quality early childhood education help parents and caregivers provide their children with the skills they need to succeed in life.

All children need high-quality early childhood development, but low-income children are the least likely to get it. More than a third of Americans living in poverty are children under the age of six (15.5 million children in 2014) and less than half of low-income children have access to high-quality early learning programs. The access gap is particularly acute in the years from birth to age three, when children's brains are developing most rapidly, and stand to benefit the most from high-quality early learning experiences.

Many states and communities are working to do their part by investing in quality systems and effective local delivery. However, a reimagined partnership with the federal government is necessary to serve all the children who need a strong start in life and to ensure all children have the fundamental opportunity to enter kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed. This can be achieved by establishing a comprehensive federal early childhood education approach that supports and grows state and local innovation with the delivery of high-quality, affordable, early childhood education from birth through age five.

This vision to create a well-financed federal continuum of care is predicated by public demand for the new Administration and Congress to work together to achieve concrete solutions. Ninety-percent of voters want Congress and the next president to work together to make quality early childhood education more accessible and affordable to low- and middle-income families.¹

¹ 2016 FFYF National Bipartisan Poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research



I. Establish A Continuum Of High-Quality Early Learning And Care

- Extend and expand the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Law.
- Significantly grow the Early Head Start—Child Care Partnership Initiative (EHS—CCP).
- Use and leverage the newly-authorized Preschool Development Grant program (PDG) to strengthen state efforts toward building strong early learning systems aligned with K-12 education and improve transitions from early learning programs to kindergarten.

II. Address Cost To Improve Access To High-Quality Early Learning And Care

- Reach a bipartisan, long-term solution to budget constraints to ensure Child Care, Head Start, and other critical programs have sustained funding to support both access and quality. This relief will allow additional children to be served by established federal programs.

Program	Current Funding Level	Children Served
Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program	\$400 million	145,500*
Child Care and Development Block Grant	\$5.7 billion	1.4 million
Early Head Start—Child Care Partnerships	\$635 million	40,000
Early Head Start/Head Start	\$8.5 billion	950,000
Preschool Development Grants	\$250 million/year x 4 years	172,000 in 18 states

* Number of parents and children served as reported by HRSA

- Address the high cost of quality early learning by implementing reforms to the tax code through the expansion of existing support and incorporating similar strategies to those used to assist with higher education expenses.

III. Build Systems And Promote Program Integration

- Strengthen the structure, organization, and efficiency of federal early childhood programs, including coordinating programs for better service delivery.
- Implement demonstration projects with the purpose of testing emerging state and local models of integrated service delivery for core federal and state early childhood programs.
- Support research and evaluation to ensure that the federal government, states, and communities continue to learn from experience and engage in evidence-based best practices.
- Institutionalize intergovernmental supports and structures to ensure specific focus and attention on early learning.