

Congress: Bipartisan Champions for Early Learning and Care

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INTRODUCTION

For years, Congress has showed continued bipartisan support for early learning programs. Members of both parties have worked together to significantly increase funding, while also enacting reforms and improvements, to existing early childhood programs that elevate quality and leverage state and local leadership. National polling over the last decade shows Americans agree with Congress, quality early childhood education is a top priority issue for people of every political persuasion. Americans see high-quality early learning as a starting point for enabling individual opportunity and achievement that build the society all Americans want. With Congress as a powerful advocate, children from birth to age five have better access to critical resources that prepare them for elementary school and beyond.

The First Five Years Fund commends Congress on their continued efforts to ensure our youngest learners have access to a continuum of high-quality early learning from the very start of their lives. The legislation highlighted below shows Congress' recent efforts to improve care and learning for young children across the country. To learn more about these about these programs, the importance of early care and learning on children's development, and The First Five Years Fund visit www.ffyf.org.





<p>Creation of <u>Preschool Development Grants Birth – 5 (PDG B-5)</u></p> <p>Enacted: as part of ESSA</p> <p>Funding Opportunity Announcement: September 7, 2018</p>	Description	
	<p>PDGs B-5 were authorized as part of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and are an innovative competitive grant program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services in coordination with the Department of Education. Members from both sides of the aisle including Senate Isakson (R-GA) and Senator Murray (D-WA), with support from Senator Alexander (R-TN), Congresswoman Foxx (R-VA), and Congressman Scott (D-VA) championed the creation of this program.</p> <p>The grants, which will be awarded across multiple years, are designed to support states in holistically improving their continuum of early care and learning. The grants foster partnerships among various stakeholders to maximize parental engagement and choice, improve transitions for children within the early learning system, and improve the quality and delivery of existing programs.</p> <p>The first year the PDG B-5 is specifically designated for planning. States will use grant money to complete both a needs assessment based on their current birth to five early learning systems and a strategic plan based on their vision for improvement. Subsequent grant years will assist states in the implementation of the strategic plan. The grants offer states flexibility in their approach and require states match 30% of the funding they receive from the federal government. By leveraging grant funding, states will be able to determine their needs and improve their early learning systems.</p>	
	What This Means for Kids	
	<p>The overall goal of these grants is to empower states to improve early learning systems so that more children, especially those from low- and middle-income families, are ready to succeed as they enter kindergarten. Ensuring that children are prepared as they enter kindergarten sets children up for success throughout their academic career.</p> <p>Recognizing that programs such as Medicaid and CHIP play a vital role in young children's development, the PDG B-5 prioritize integration of early learning systems across agencies. This integration will improve access for children and families to a variety of services to create a more cohesive system of care and learning.</p>	



<p>Reauthorization of</p> <p><u>Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)</u></p> <p>Enacted: February 9, 2018 House Vote: 240 – 186 Senate Vote: 71-28</p>	Description
	<p>MIECHV funds the implementation of voluntary, evidence-based, home visiting programs in communities across the country. Nurses, social workers, and other trained professionals support pregnant women and families with young children by tailoring programing to meet their specific needs and connecting families with critical resources. Providers are also trained to help families meet the developmental needs of their children.</p> <p>The House Ways and means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee were instrumental in recognizing the benefits MIECHV provides for children and families. Together, these Committees worked to create a long-term reauthorization for MIECHV. Ultimately, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 reauthorized MIECHV for five years with bipartisan majorities in both chambers of Congress. This long-term reauthorization speaks to positive impacts of voluntary home visiting for children and families.</p>
	<p>What This Means for Kids</p> <p>Voluntary home visiting programs are a valuable resource that help parents be the best advocate for their child’s learning and development. The partnership between families and home visitors is proven to improve health and development for children while also preventing child injuries, reducing emergency room visits, reducing domestic violence, and improving family economic self-sufficiency. MIECHV is also shown to improve the coordination between and referrals to other community resources so that children have access to additional services as soon as they need them. All of these positive outcomes set children and families up to lead healthier lives.</p> <p>Many families who participate in voluntary home visiting live in rural parts of the country. Often that means families are a long distance from critical services, making the support they receive from home visiting all the more critical to child and family outcomes.</p>



<p>Reauthorization of</p> <p><u>Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)</u></p> <p>Enacted: November 19, 2014 House Vote: Voice Vote Senate Vote: 98-1</p>	Description
	<p>First enacted in 1990, CCDBG is the primary federal funding source that provides financial assistance to low-income working families to access affordable child care. Funds from CCDBG flow to states, and ultimately local providers, allowing children to enroll in child care while also providing quality requirements for providers.</p> <p>The bipartisan reauthorization of CCDBG in 2014 included improvements for child care safety standards, as well as improvements for care quality, access, affordability, and care continuity. In order for states to meet these new standards, additional investments by the federal government were necessary to build both provider and state-level system capacity to deliver, support, and oversee quality programs. In March of 2018, Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill that included \$5.226 billion increase to CCDBG's discretionary funding, effectively doubling the funding. With the additional funds, states are better able to implement the new 2014 standards, resulting in higher quality child care.</p>
	What This Means for Kids
	<p>The cost of high-quality child care can be prohibitive to many families. CCDBG's 2014 reauthorization improved health, safety, and quality standards to ensure that children from all backgrounds have the cognitive and socio-emotional skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.</p> <p>Without the assistance of CCDBG, working families may be unable to enter or reenter the workforce, use multiple less reliable providers, or compromise on the quality of provider for their child. Research shows that attending a low-quality provider can actually be harmful to a child's development. CCDBG's commitment to providing assistance so that children can attend high-quality providers is vital for children's healthy development.</p> <p>Continued funding and enhanced standards ensure that vulnerable children have access to high-quality learning and care during a critical developmental period.</p>



● BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

The Role of Federal Funds in Early Childhood Programs

States and communities rely on multiple sources of federal funding to provide children, especially those from low- and middle-income families, with the care and learning opportunities they need to be prepared for school and beyond. Without funding from the Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG), Head Start and Early Head Start, Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Child Care Tax Credit states would need to generate enormous revenue to provide these services or eliminate them all together.

In addition to federal funding that goes to all states, there are supplemental funding opportunities from Congress. These opportunities are often competitive grants, such as the Preschool Development Grants and the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Grants. Those programs incentivize states and localities to try innovative programming that expands access to quality of programming.

Having consistent and varied funding for early childhood care and learning programs has been key to improving the quality of programs, access to programs, and the state's overall level early learning systems. Congress' continued efforts to support, through sustained and increased funding, early care and learning is vital to the continued quality and access improvements.





<div><u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>2019 “Minibus”</u> <u>Appropriations</u></div> <div>Enacted: September 28, 2018 House Vote: 361 - 61 Senate Vote: 93 - 7</div>	Description
	<p>The FY2019 appropriation minibus included funding for the Departments of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies. The minibus preserved or increased funding for many specific early childhood programs.</p> <p>FY2019 saw a \$200 million increase for Early Head Start and Head Start, including an additional \$50 million to expand the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships grant program. There was also a \$50 million increase for Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG) and a \$10 million increase for IDEA Part B (preschool grants). IDEA Part C (grants for infants and families), Child Care Access Mean Parents in School (CCAMPIS) and Preschool Development Grants received level funding.</p>
	What This Means for Kids
	<p>Consistent funding is vital as states and localities plan for programing that meets the needs of children and families. Increasing funding for Early Head Start, Head Start, CCDBG, and IDEA Part B increases the quality of care and allows for local communities to better meet the needs of children and families.</p> <p>Continued funding for programs like PDGs, CCAMPIS, IDEA Parts B and C mean that children have access to services they need and parents have access to quality care while they attend work or school.</p> <p>Programs like the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships are unique solutions that have proven successful at expanding capacity to quality care and learning. Child care providers have access to Head Start resources, which ensures that more children are in environments that meet Head Start standards. Congress’ support of these innovative solutions means that more children will access resources they need such as development screenings and be ready for Kindergarten.</p>



Fiscal Year 2018
Omnibus Annual
Appropriations Act

Enacted:
March 23, 2018
House Vote: 256 – 167
Senate Vote: 65 – 32

Description

Senator McConnell (R-KY) and Senator Schumer (D-NY) led a bipartisan effort to reach the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for FY2018 that had far reaching benefits for children and families.

The FY2018 Omnibus spending bill included a historic increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program to \$5.226 billion. That increase represents the single largest increase to CCDBG in the program's history with an additional \$2.37 billion over FY2017 levels. This effectively doubled the program's discretionary funding.

Other early learning and care programs received additional funding to support improved access to high-quality learning environment. FY2018 saw a \$9.86 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start, with \$755 million to continue Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships grants.

Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) received an additional \$50 million, \$5 million for infant and early childhood mental health, \$381.12 million for IDEA Part B (preschool grants), \$470 million for IDEA Part C (grants for infants and families), and \$250 million for the Legacy Preschool Development Grant Program.

What This Means for Kids

The FY2018 appropriations included vital funding for early childhood programming. The historic increase to CCDBG supported states in their efforts to implement quality and safety improvements from the 2014 reauthorization. The additional funding allowed states to fund activities to improve the quality and safety of child care programs, increase provider reimbursement rates, and ensure health and safety standards are met. These improvements will ensure that more children have access to the sort of quality care and learning that research shows prepares children to learn in school.

An additional \$610 million for Head Start / Early Head Start helped grantees provide full day full year services. And funding the Preschool Development Grant Program allowed for a new grant competition now that the program is being administered by HHS. Reaching bipartisan consensus was key to providing additional funding for integral early learning programs.



<p><u>Fiscal Year 2017</u> <u>Omnibus Annual</u> <u>Appropriations Act</u></p> <p>Enacted: May 5, 2017 House Vote: 309 - 118 Senate Vote: 79 - 18</p>	Description
	<p>The FY2017 Omnibus spending bill built upon the nearly \$1 billion in new money for early care and learning from the FY2016 Omnibus bill and included additional increases for early education programs. These increases included \$85 million in new funds for Head Start and Early Head Start, with an additional \$5 million for Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships grants, and \$95 million in new funds for the Child Care and Development Block Grants. The Preschool Development Grants received level funding.</p>
	<p>What This Means for Kids</p> <p>The additional \$95 million for CCDBG helped states meet the increased quality standards set in the new law and allowed parents to receive additional support to meet their children’s early education needs. An additional \$85 million for Head Start allowed grantees to have the funding capacity needed to provide full-day full-year services. Continued support for the Legacy Preschool Development Grants allowed the 18 currently funded states to develop and expand quality state-based preschool programs that help prepare children for school and reduce the need for expensive education and remediation. Together, this additional funding for early childhood programs increased the quality of and access to programing for children across the country.</p>



◆ ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the core programs that specifically serve young children, there are numerous federal programs that support early learning as well as a broader segment of the population. Programs that support children's mental health, connections between early learning and elementary school, and provide training to the early learning workforce also play a vital role in strengthening the overall early learning system. More information about some of these programs are highlighted and explained below.

<p><u>Introduction of Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act</u></p> <p>Enacted: October 24, 2018 House Vote: 393 - 8 Senate Vote: 98 -1</p>	Description
	<p>In response to the opioid epidemic ravaging communities across the country, Congress passed the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. Several provisions included in the legislation addressed the unique needs of young children effected by the epidemic.</p> <p>These provisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization for the CDC to support states' in collecting and reporting data on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through existing public health surveys.• The creation of an interagency task force to make recommendations about best practices to identify, prevent, and mitigate the effects of trauma on infants, children, youth, and their families.• Grants for educational agencies to link their work to mental health systems, which increases access for students to evidence-based trauma support services.• Provisions for Plans for Safe Care which provide grants to states to improve and coordinate their response for infants affected by substance use.
	What This Means for Kids
	<p>The stress and trauma associated with having a caregiver who misuses opioids, or being born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) create unique needs for young children who are exposed to the opioid epidemic. Prolonged stress during early childhood can damage a child's brain architecture, which in turn can lead to lifelong problems with learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.</p> <p>The SUPPORT Patients and Communities Act's provisions aimed at young children are meant to ensure that children have access to the supports they need. It specifically aims to support children who have experienced trauma. The Plans for Safe Care grants will support the Department of Health and Human Services efforts to keep children and families together when it is in the best interest of the child.</p>



<p>Reauthorization of <u>Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act</u></p> <p>Enacted: July 31, 2018 House Vote: Voice Vote Senate Vote: Voice Vote</p>	Description
	<p>This bipartisan reauthorization of the 2006 Carl D. Perkins Act increased access to career and technical education (CTE) programs. The aim of the reauthorization was to provide students with more hands-on opportunities to develop academic, career, and technical skills at the secondary and post-secondary education level within a subject area.</p> <p>During the reauthorization of CTE, Congress saw a need for more qualified early childhood educators. Because of this reauthorization, states are now allowed to use CTE funds to provide child development courses and learning opportunities. The reauthorization included additional provisions to elevate the need for qualified early childhood providers. There are now competitive grant opportunities to identify and support innovative strategies to improve CTE and alignment, which includes the early childhood sector. There is also now emphasized alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</p>
	What This Means for Kids
	<p>Provider shortages and turnover plagues the early learning and care sector. Getting the appropriate credentialing can be time consuming and costly. Therefore, having access to opportunities to gain certification and career training in high school and college is critical to increasing and improving the supply and quality of the early education workforce.</p> <p>The alignment between workforce training and education legislation will encourage increased quality for early care providers. Increasing the quality of care and learning is a key lever in providing high quality care for children and supporting their development.</p>



<p>Preservation of Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)</p> <p>Updated: December 20, 2017 House Vote: 224 – 201 Senate Vote: 51-48</p>	Description
	<p>The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) allows families to claim eligible child care expenses up to \$3,000/child or up to \$6,000 for two or more children in order for parents to work, go to school, or actively look for work. The CDCTC provides a non-refundable tax credit of 20-35 percent of the first \$6,000 spent on care for two or more children.</p> <p>During the tax reform debate in 2017 there was a proposal to eliminate this tax credit. Ultimately, the CDCTC was preserved in the legislation. Though still non-refundable, the preservation does allow many families to offset a portion of child care costs.</p>
	Member Proposals
	<p>While the CDCTC was ultimately preserved in 2017, it is still non-refundable. For most low- and some middle-income families this means that they are unable to utilize this credit to offset the rising cost of child and dependent care.</p> <p>Recognizing the rising cost of care member of Congress currently have proposals to make CDCTC refundable and in turn help families manage the cost of child care.</p> <p>Below are two proposals that were introduced in the 115th Congress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Promoting Affordable Childcare for Everyone (PACE) Act (S.208) was introduced by Senator King (I-ME) and Senator Burr (R-NC) on January 24, 2017. It would make the CDCTC refundable and increase the rate of the credit while also adjusting for inflation after 2017.• Its companion bill (HR 3632) was introduced by Representative Yoder (R-KS) and Representative Murphy (D-FL) on July 28, 2017.
	What This Means for Kids
	<p>The mounting costs of child care rivals the cost of housing and in-state college tuition in many states. This exorbitant cost puts quality child care out of reach for many working families. For some families remaining out of the workforce is less costly than childcare. However, this creates lost economic opportunity for businesses and means that children may not have access to early learning environments. Making the CDCTC refundable could help working families afford quality child care. Being able to afford care strengthens the economic security of families by enabling them to enter or remain working full time and ensuring children are prepared for kindergarten and beyond.</p>



<p>Reauthorization of <u>The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</u></p> <p>Enacted: December 10, 2015 House Vote: 359 – 64 Senate Vote: 85 – 12</p>	Description
	<p>ESSA, which replaced its outdated predecessor No Child Left Behind, is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Senator Alexander (R-TN), Senator Murray (D-WA), and Congressman Scott (D-VA) worked across the aisle to create a forward thinking reauthorization of ESEA that provided incentives for innovative solutions to long-standing problems in education.</p> <p>ESSA shifted decision-making responsibility to the state level with federal guardrails to ensure quality. For the first time, ESSA specifically allowed funding to be used for early childhood programs and alignment between early learning systems and the K-12 system. As part of ESSA, Preschool Development Grants allowed states to apply for dedicated funding for early learning.</p> <p>A review of state ESSA plans showed that states used the newly elevated early childhood education opportunities in the law by electing to use ESSA funds to build on state and local early learning efforts. One indicators of this shift is that sixteen states have identified ECE as an important element to consider for school improvement under Title I.</p>
	What This Means for Kids
	<p>ESSA equipped states with added flexibility to strengthen and expand connections between ECE and elementary schools. Early care and learning provides the foundation for children’s healthy development; however, without adequate alignment between early learning and elementary school, children may not be successful. ESSA’s efforts for alignment are vital to developing a continuum of care and learning for children.</p> <p>Creating a cohesive system of care and learning can be a costly endeavor for communities and states. ESSA’s federal investment is a critical for states to leverage local innovations and expand high-quality early learning for children.</p>