

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CARE:

An Opportunity Issue for American Voters





A message from First Five Years Fund

**Executive
Director
Sarah Rittling:**

Dear Friend,

There is increasing recognition that America has a child care challenge. Thank you for prioritizing the issue as part of your campaign. I hope this briefing book is useful to you in consolidating some of the most salient points and supplementing what you might already have.

Working families are struggling to find and afford high-quality opportunities for their children from birth through age five. With sixty percent of children under the age of six having all available parents in the workforce, and working mothers now making up forty percent of the workforce, access to quality child care is not a luxury for families – it's a necessity.

Parents understand the importance of early learning and development in the first few years of life, and they want to find the highest quality child care options for their children while they work or attend school. But quality child care, whether center-based or in a home-based setting, is an expensive service to provide – especially for families who are already struggling to get by. In fact, the average cost of care in most states is higher than in-state college tuition or a family's mortgage.

The good news is, there is a growing sense of urgency among voters and policymakers alike to identify early learning solutions for children and families. Years of thoughtful, deliberate, and bipartisan advocacy have helped create political and policy opportunities for our nation's elected leaders from both parties, at every level of government, to put forth bold and innovative ideas on behalf of the families they represent.

As with most policy issues, how those solutions are talked about greatly affects voters' perceptions and support. When it comes to child care, the right messages and framing has the opportunity to unite Americans from across the aisle behind a viable, progressive proposal that could actually come law.

At the same time, the overwhelming bipartisan support for child care that exists today is not immune from the political polarization that has befallen other important policy issues when they entered the spotlight. We cannot overstate the importance of framing child care as a unifying consensus issue.

In this briefing document you will find data-tested messages and ideas for further elevating child care and early learning in your campaign in a way that effectively reaches voters across the political spectrum, as well as the history of success at state and federal levels. Lastly, this document includes a synthesis of useful facts and figures about the issues facing working families, as well as the power of early learning and care on brain development.

We have reached an exciting moment of opportunity to make a real and meaningful difference in the lives of countless American families. By leveraging stronger and sustained federal investments and policies that fuel efforts at the state and community level in support of families and providers, we can ensure that all children – particularly those from low-income families – have access to the high-quality care and education opportunities they need to succeed in life.

First Five Years Fund (FFYF) is here as a resource for you, and we would love to schedule a meeting with your team to discuss these important issues. Please feel free to contact us at info@ffyf.org or 202-730-0943.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of early learning and care and the undeniable positive impact these opportunities will have for our families, our economy, and our character as a nation.

Sincerely,

Sarah Rittling

Executive Director

First Five Years Fund



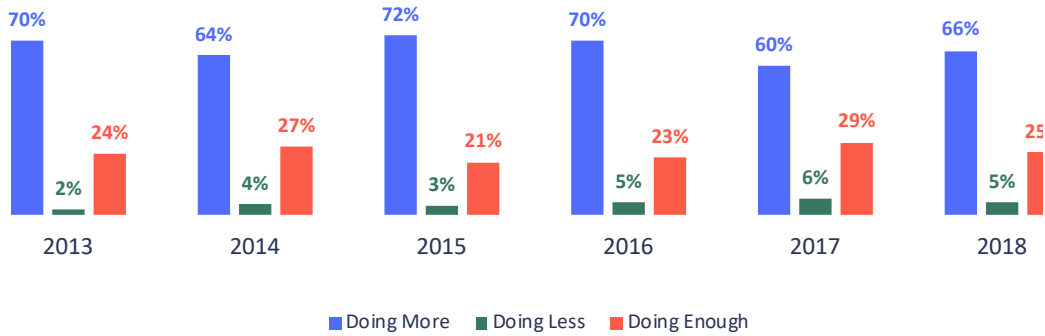
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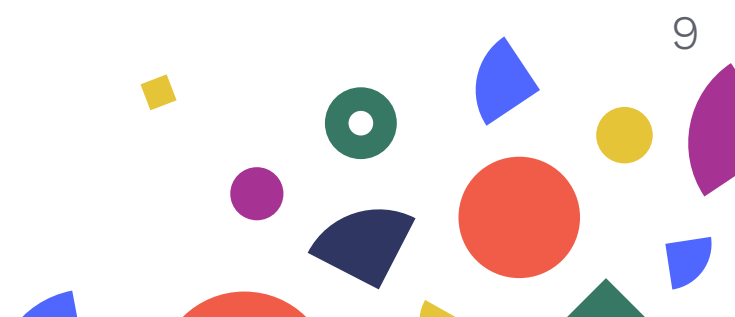
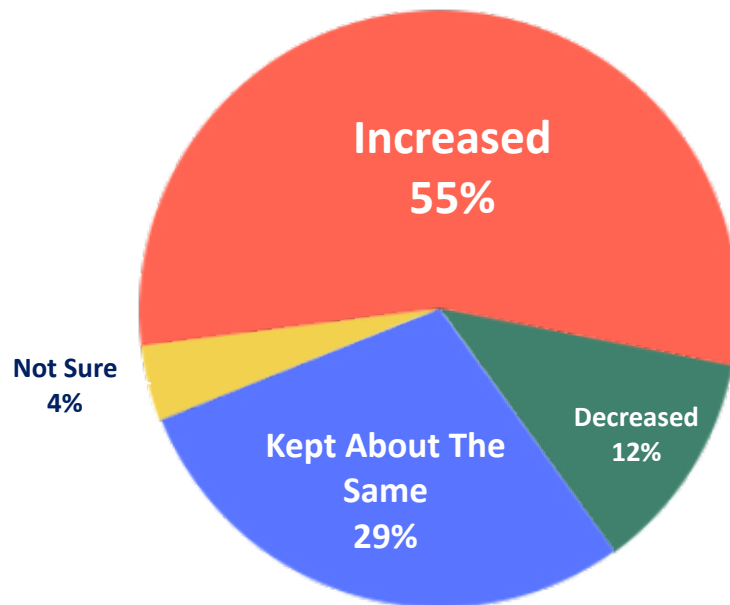
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Recent Polling on the Issue

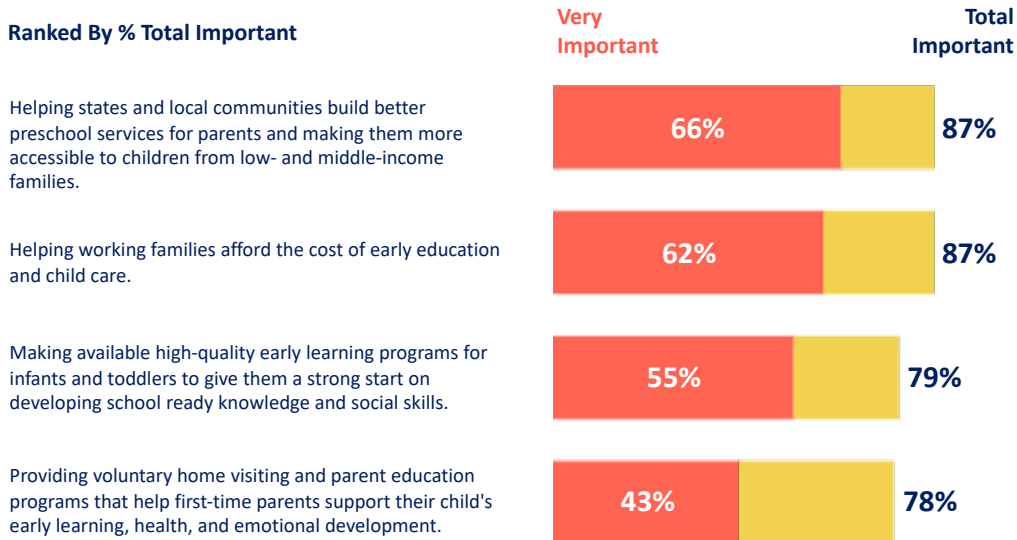
Two-thirds of American voters say we need to do more to ensure children start kindergarten better prepared.



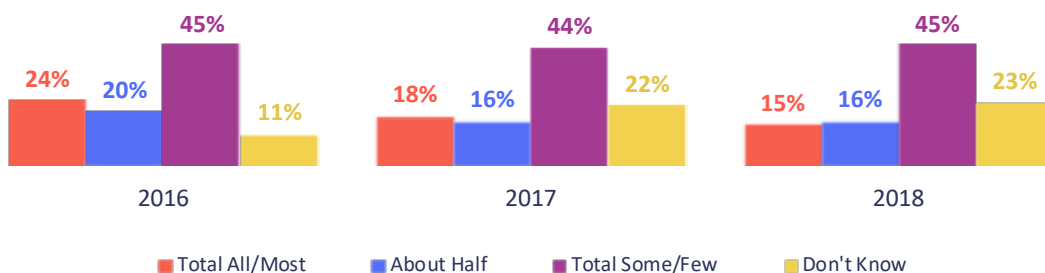
Voters are more than four times as likely to say federal funding for child care and preschool should be increased than decreased.



A vast majority view a variety of investments in early childhood programs as important; affordability ranks highest.

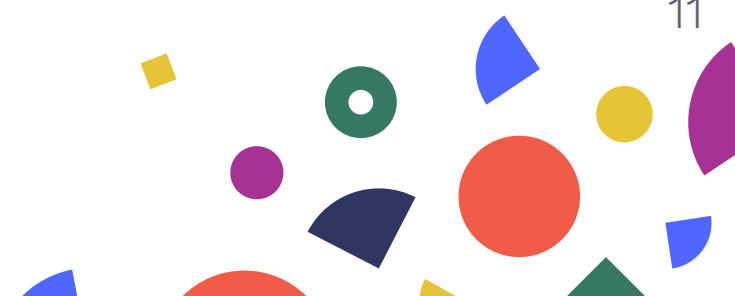
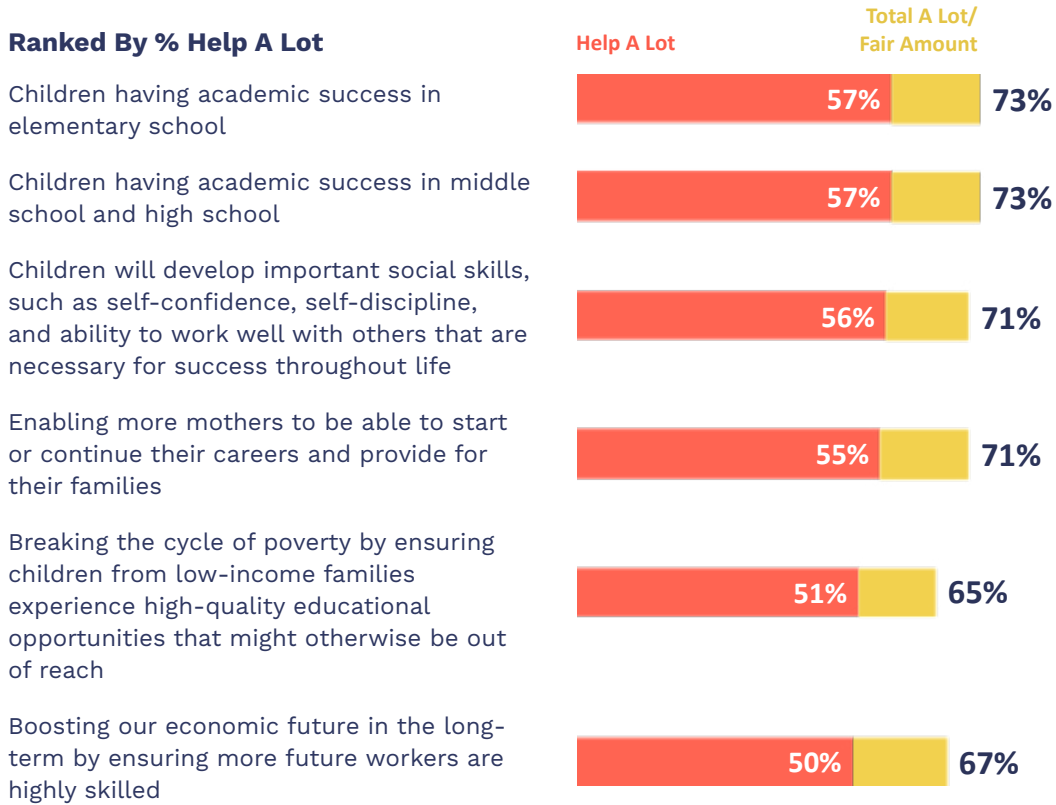


Voters continue to perceive a need for affordable, high-quality early education programs. Far more say that there are only some or very few programs that offer high-quality, affordable programs for lower- and middle-income families in their area.



Voters say there are many benefits to children attending high-quality early education, including academic benefits throughout kids' school years.

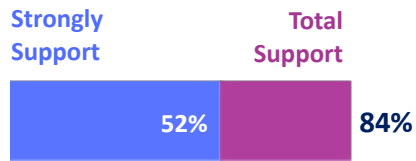
Ranked By % Help A Lot



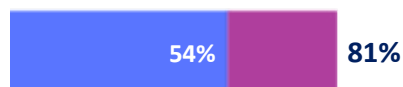
Every single proposal tested receives overwhelming support; the greatest intensity of support is for greater funding for Head Start.

Ranked By % Total Support

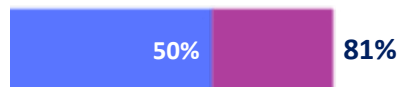
Provide tax incentives to businesses that provide or help their employees afford quality early childhood education programs.



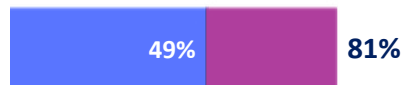
Increase federal funding to states to create or build on their own programs that directly help low-income children, so their parents have quality child care while they work or attend school.



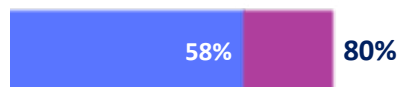
Increase the child care tax credit to help parents better afford quality child care and early education programs, with low- and middle-income parents who need more help getting a larger credit.



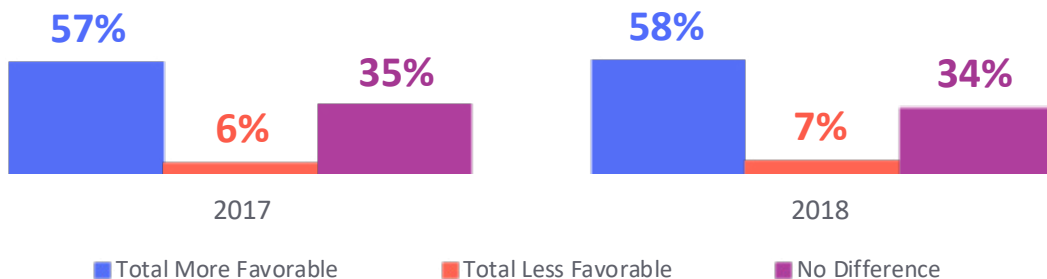
Expand the federal partnership through grants and policies that enable states and communities to improve access to quality early childhood education for children from ages birth through five who are from low- and middle-income families.



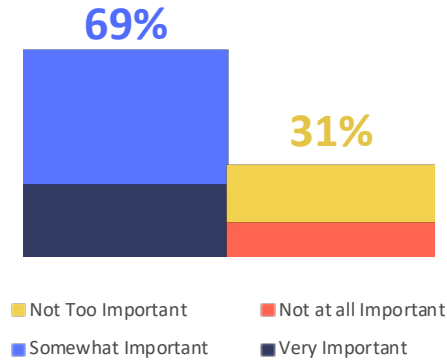
Provide greater funding to Head Start and Early Head Start, which provide quality early education, nutrition, and support services to children in low-income families, so more programs can serve more children and families.



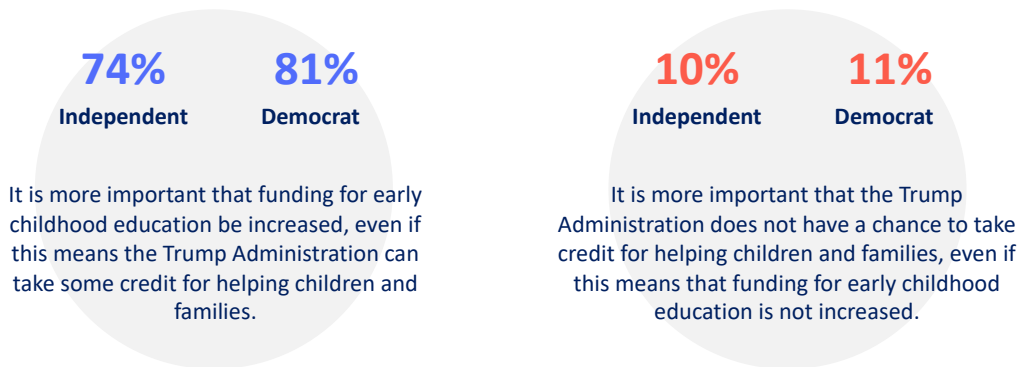
A candidate's support for funding early education continues to impress voters.



More than two-in-five say that early childhood education is a primary factor in decisions about elected officials.



Democrats and independent voters overwhelmingly want to see action taken to increase funding, even if this means the administration is able to take some of the credit.



Learn more about the overwhelming bipartisan voter support for early learning and care [here](#).

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Effectively Talking to Voters about Child Care and Early Learning

Hart Research (D) and New Bridge Strategy (R) recently conducted an online survey of 826 likely 2020 voters across 14 key states on behalf of First Five Years Fund. The sample included an oversample of Republican women, for a total of 250 of this important swing audience. The survey was preceded by four focus groups with Republican women in two electorally important states, Pennsylvania and Colorado. The research and this memorandum provide guidance on effective ways to make the case for a significant federal investment in quality child care for working parents.

Important Contextual Points

- Fully 82% of voters support a hypothetical proposal that would provide federal funding to states that allow every working parent who wants to do so to send their child under age six to a high-quality child care or early learning program. This includes nearly half of voters who strongly support this. Total support is nearly universal among Democrats (93%) and is very high among Independents (74%) and Republicans (72%).
- Sixty-six percent (66%) of voters say it is essential or very important for candidates for president to have policies that help working parents afford child care and early learning programs. This includes majorities of voters across partisan groups, but is especially high among Democrats (79%) and Republican women (61%).
- Three factors help to explain the attitudes above:
 - ▶ Voters are fully aware of the difficulty child care presents for parents. More than three in four (77%) say finding affordable, high-quality child care is a big challenge for parents of children from birth to age five.
 - ▶ Just 14% of voters say that all or most of the programs in their area are both high quality and affordable.
 - ▶ Eighty-two percent (82%) of voters say that their community would benefit from a proposal like the one above. This includes 88% of parents and 80% of those who do not have children under age 18.

Effective Messaging Around Child Care and Early Learning

- Focusing on specific benefits for working parents and broad benefits for the economy strongly makes the case in favor of federal funding for child care and early learning.

Two messages we tested have particular resonance:

- ▶ Research has shown time and again that children who attend high-quality child care and early education programs are better prepared for school socially, emotionally, and academically. They are more ready to learn, do better in school, and eventually become more productive workers, which improves the economy overall. And a better economy is good for everyone. Forty-nine percent (49%) of voters say this is very convincing.
- ▶ Working parents, in particular, stand to benefit from investments in child care and early learning programs. Parents with reliable, quality care miss fewer work days, are more productive, are less stressed, and are better able to provide for their families. Forty-five percent (45%) of voters say this is very convincing.

Republican women also find a message focused specifically on working mothers to be compelling:

- ▶ With a record number of women in the workforce today, working moms, in particular, stand to benefit from public investments in child care and early learning programs. Mothers with reliable, quality care miss fewer work days, are more productive, are less stressed, and are better able to provide for their families. Forty percent (40%) of Republican women say this is very convincing.
- In terms of language, child care access “for all” is more effective than “universal” child care. When provided with a list of phrases to describe a federally funded child care program, “child care access for all” is the most appealing to Democrats at 37%, while “child care for all who need it” is the top choice among Republicans at 30% (the two phrases score equally with Independents). While many Democrats are okay with the phrase “universal child care,” it drops far down for Republicans, particularly Republican women. In our focus groups, Republican women said that, in their minds, the term “universal” sounds like mandating that children attend child care and also brings to mind socialized healthcare, two ideas they find immensely negative.

- It is appropriate to talk about government’s and society’s responsibility in this area, though the framing should never be that these entities are solely responsible. When asked about the level of responsibility of different entities to help working parents afford programs, 73% say state government has a lot or some responsibility, 71% say this of local government, and 62% say it of the federal government. (These are all substantially lower than the 82% who expressed support for a more specific federally funded program, as noted earlier.) However, when presented as a binary choice—parental vs. societal responsibility—there is a close divide: 54% say society should have a responsibility to help working parents in this area, while 46% say working parents should have sole responsibility.
NOTE: A majority of government child care supports today are funded by the federal government, including through programs that provide funding to states to administer their own programs.

Research Methodology:

- Four focus groups among self-identified Republican women
 - ▶ Convened in suburban Philadelphia and suburban Denver (two groups each)
 - ▶ Discussions held in mid-September 2019
- Online survey in 14 states
 - ▶ Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin
 - ▶ A cross section of 700 likely voters interviewed in these states, plus an oversample of 125 Republican women (for a total of 250)
 - ▶ Interviewing conducted November 18 to 25, 2019
 - ▶ Credibility interval is $\pm 3.7\%$ for the multistate sample and $\pm 6.2\%$ for the Republican women sample

3

National Snapshot of Early Learning and Care



Early Childhood Education: a National Snapshot



Across the country, state and federally funded early childhood opportunities serve more than 4,498,946 children and families¹

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) is proven to dramatically improve a child’s opportunities for a better future—particularly children from low-income families—while offering parents improved job stability and overall economic security. Research shows that every \$1 invested in the education and care of children from birth through age five generates \$7.30 in return for our country. To ensure all children can access high-quality early learning and care, the federal government partners with states to support local efforts and innovations.

Over time, ECE programs have been created to meet the diverse needs of children and families. These programs vary in their purpose, services offered, and demographics served. A 2017 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that these programs work in conjunction to benefit those they serve. To learn more about the specific programs that support young children and their families, read FFYF’s [ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams](#) resource.

Much of the progress at the state and local level has been made possible by strong partnerships with the federal government aimed at expanding access and increasing quality for more children. Many state and community programs are funded exclusively with federal dollars, while others leverage federal funding to create and expand high-quality early learning and care opportunities beyond what is possible with state funding alone. Together, these investments from federal and state governments create an effective mixed-delivery system that supports the care, education, and healthy development of children.

¹ This figure includes beneficiaries of Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, MIECHV, state-funded Pre-K, and IDEA Parts B Sec. 619 and C. In some cases, children and families are served by more than one program.

Across the country, the child care industry has an estimated economic impact of

\$99.24 B

including revenue generated by child care providers and spillover or related productivity in other sectors. ²

Across the country,

51%

of residents live in a “child care desert”. ³

\$7,881

is the average annual cost of home-based child care in the US.

20.3%

decline in availability of home-based care from 2010 to 2016. ^{4,5}

\$10,132

is the average annual cost of center-based child care in the US.

12%

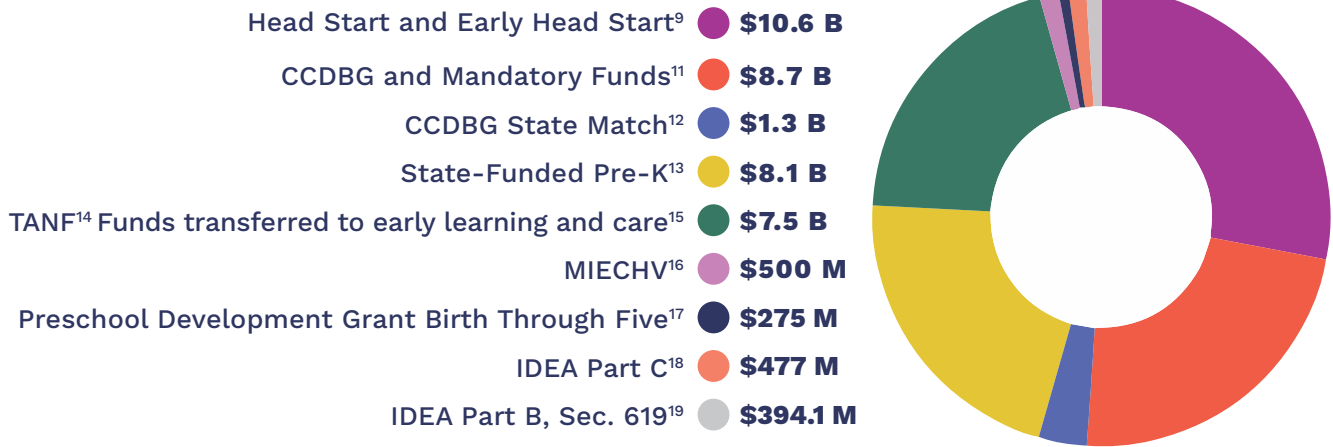
of the average state median income ^{6,7}

Across the country, more than

2 M JOBS

are sustained by the child care sector. ⁸

Federal and State Early Childhood Education Funding



The Economic Impact of Early Learning and Care

In the US, there are 14,945,418 children under six with all available parents in the workforce, meaning those families need to seek some kind of care for their children.²⁰ In addition to the significant impact of early childhood education on children and families in the short and long term, early learning and care can have an immediate impact on the economy. Access to affordable child care can increase labor force participation and support parents seeking additional education and training, which contributes to higher earnings over an individual’s lifetime.

Impacts of the High Cost of Care

Various programs support children and families before they enter school. While this patchwork of programs supports local innovations, there is still unmet need, and the cost of care prohibits many parents from entering or remaining in the workforce. In 2017, the average cost of center-based infant care exceeded the cost of a year at a public college in 28 states and the District of Columbia.²¹ Further, the supply of home-based care, which is often the more affordable and flexible option, has decreased since 2010.

To view state specific data, [visit FFYF’s website.](#)

² Committee for Economic Development ³ Center for American Progress defines “child care desert” as any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers OR more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots. ⁴ Child Care Aware of America Cost of Care ⁵ Committee for Economic Development ⁶ Child Care Aware of America Cost of Care ⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Committee for Economic Development ⁹ U.S. Department of Education ¹⁰ Ibid. ¹¹ Office of Child Care ¹² Office of Child Care FY2018 CCDF Allocations (Including Redistributed Funds) ¹³ The National Institute for Early Education - State of Preschool 2018 ¹⁴ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) ¹⁵ Office of Family Assistance TANF FY2017 Financial Data ¹⁶ Health Resources and Services Administration ¹⁷ Office of Child Care ¹⁸ U.S. Department of Education ¹⁹ Ibid. ²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau ²¹ Child Care Aware of America Cost of Care



4

Bipartisan Federal Investment in ECE

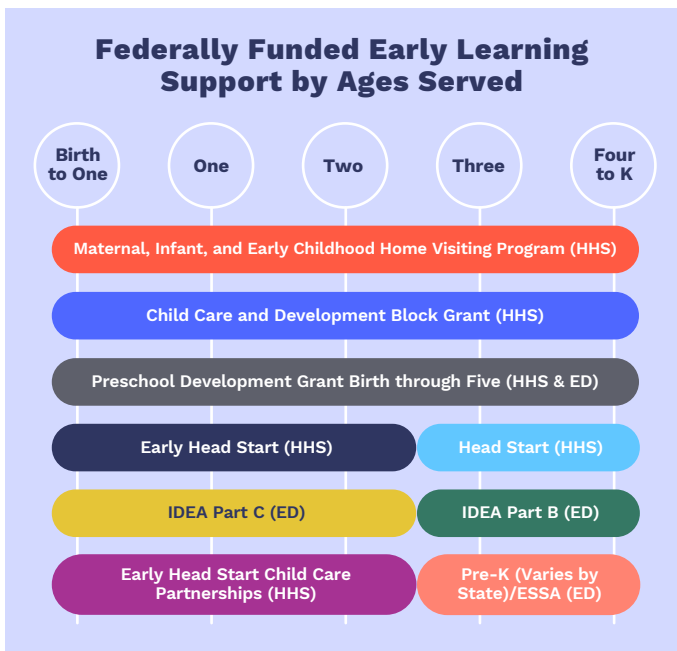
ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams



Every year, millions of low-income children from birth through age five benefit from the array of federal early learning and care programs. Each is governed by specific legislative and regulatory requirements; targets different age groups; and serves families in a variety of settings, including home visiting and

home- and center-based opportunities. Together, they form an effective mixed-delivery system supporting the care, education, and healthy development of children living in poverty that prioritizes parental choice and children's individual needs.

Federally Funded Early Learning Support by Ages Served

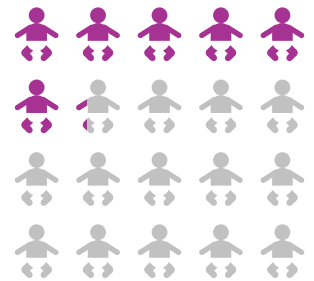


Head Start

WHAT IT DOES Funds public and private organizations and tribal entities to provide high-quality early childhood education and other health, nutrition, and family engagement and support services to three- and four-year-old children living in poverty

WHO IT SERVES Children from families with income below federal poverty guidelines (under \$25,750 for a family of 4); who are receiving TANF or supplemental security income (SSI); or who are experiencing homelessness; children in foster care

31% Eligible Served²



732,711

Children Served Nationwide

FY 2020 Funding

\$10,613,095,000

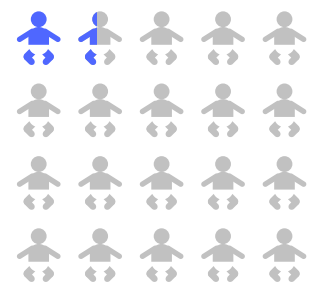
(\$550 million above FY 2019)

Early Head Start*

WHAT IT DOES Provides services to infants and toddlers from low-income families to promote their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development and enable parents to fulfill their roles as primary caregivers and teachers of their children

WHO IT SERVES Children from families with income below federal poverty guidelines (under \$25,750 for a family of 4); are receiving TANF or SSI; or are experiencing homelessness; children in foster care

7% Eligible Served³



154,352

Children Served Nationwide

FY 2020 Funding

\$10,613,095,000

(\$550 million above FY 2019)

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

WHAT IT DOES Funds states, territories, and tribal entities to develop and implement a subsidy program for low-income families with children under age 13 (the majority of children served are under 5; subsidies can be used for care of children ages 5-13 while they are not in school) and improve the quality of child care available

WHO IT SERVES Children from families with income below 85% of the state median income (average \$50,808 annually for a family of 3); additional state limits allowed

15% Eligible Served¹



2,100,000

Children Served Nationwide

FY 2020 Funding

\$5,826,000,000

(\$550 million above FY 2019)

¹ FY 2015; Government Accountability Office (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/696930.pdf>)
*Funding provided within Head Start

² 2017; National Head Start Association (https://www.nhsa.org/files/resources/2017-fact-sheet_national.pdf)

³ Ibid.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships*

WHAT IT DOES Early Head Start grantees partner with local child care providers—both home- and center-based—who serve low-income children receiving child care subsidies to support the child care providers in meeting Head Start Performance Standards and providing comprehensive wrap-around services to meet children’s health, nutrition, and other comprehensive development needs

WHO IT SERVES Children from families with income below federal poverty guidelines (under \$25,750 for a family of 4); are receiving TANF or SSI; or are experiencing homelessness; children in foster care

32,000⁴ **\$905,000,000**⁵
 Number of Children Directly Benefiting FY 2020 Funding (\$100 million above FY 2019)

Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)

WHAT IT DOES Provides campus-based child care programs to college students, including before- and after-school services

WHO IT SERVES Low-income parents who are eligible for a Federal Pell grant

5,000 **\$53,000,000**
 Approximate Number of Parents Served FY 2020 Funding (\$3 million above FY 2019)

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)

WHAT IT DOES Competitive grant program to help states strengthen early childhood systems for children from birth through age five. In the first year, funds state-level needs assessments and strategic planning with the goals of: maximizing parental choice, improving transitions within early care and learning programs and with elementary schools, and improving overall quality of programs. 46 states were awarded initial grants in 2018. In 2019, 20 of the initial 46 jurisdictions were awarded implementation grants, and 6 new awards were made for initial planning grants.

WHO IT SERVES All 56 states, territories, and commonwealths were eligible to apply for initial grants.

20 states **\$275,000,000**
 Received 3-year implementation grants in 2019 FY 2020 Funding (\$25 million above FY 2019)

6 states
 Received initial planning grants in 2019

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

WHAT IT DOES Funds states, territories, and tribal entities to develop and implement evidence-based, voluntary home visiting services to families considered at-risk; home visitors meet with parents in their homes from pregnancy through their child’s kindergarten entry to help lay the foundation for the health, education, development, and economic self-sufficiency of the entire family

WHO IT SERVES Children from families living in at-risk communities as identified in a statewide needs assessment

156,297⁶ **\$400,000,000**
 Participants Served Nationwide FY 2020 Funding (equal to FY 2019)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

WHAT IT DOES Awards block grants to states to design and operate programs that help low-income families achieve self-sufficiency, including child care, state preschool, and other early education programs

WHO IT SERVES Financially needy families with children; exact financial eligibility rules and benefit amounts are determined by states, which have discretion over program requirements

\$1,529,468,501
 FY 2017 Funding (\$141 million above FY 2016)⁷

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

WHAT IT DOES IDEA Part C provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; IDEA Part B provides special education and related services to children and youth ages 3 through 21

WHO IT SERVES Children with a disability

IDEA PART C **390,216** **\$477,000,000**
 FY 2020 Funding (\$7 million above FY 2019)

IDEA PART B (AGES 3-5) **773,595**⁸ **\$394,120,000**
 Children Served Nationwide FY 2020 Funding (\$3 million above FY 2019)

* 2017 (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/ehs_ccp_brochure.pdf)

⁴ This funding is both for Early Head Start Expansion Grants and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.

⁵ FY 2017 (<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/MaternalChildHealthInitiatives/HomeVisiting/pdf/programbrief.pdf>)

⁶ FY 2017 Early Care and Learning Expenditures (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-financial-data-fy-2017>)

⁷ 2017-18 (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>)

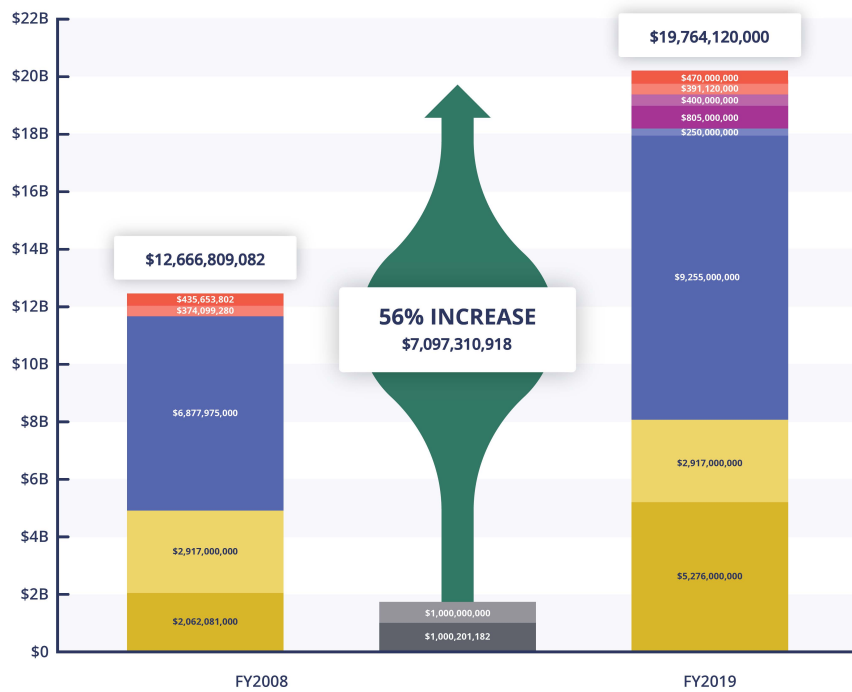
⁸ 2017-18 (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>)



Child care isn't a Democratic priority or a Republican priority — it's an American necessity. As demonstrated by FFYF's years of national polling, as well as research conducted by others, American voters across the political spectrum recognize that increasing access to quality early learning and care is critical to the well-being of working families — and the nation. Yet we know from extensive qualitative and quantitative research that a person's political views often affect how they think about the ways in which public policies and investments might be used to help families who are struggling to find and afford care. Because early childhood education is such a rare, unifying issue that both Republicans and Democrats have prioritized at the federal, state, and local levels, over the past decade, federal early learning programs have achieved significant progress in increased funding and bipartisan support from Congress and the White House.

Federal ECE Investment Fiscal Years 2008-2019

- Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG) [Discretionary]
- Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG) [Mandatory]
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Preschool Development Grants (PDG B-5)
- Early Head Start – Child care Partnerships
- Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program [Mandatory]
- IDEA Preschool Grants [Part B (619)]
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Grants for Infants and Families [Part C]



- From FY14-FY17, an additional \$1,000,000,000 was spent on Preschool Development Grants (Legacy).
- From FY11-FY13, an additional \$1,000,201,182 was spent on Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge.

5

Leveling the Playing Field for Children Living in Poverty

Investing in quality early childhood education is a solution that creates upward mobility by ensuring all children have the opportunity to build foundations for long-term success in life.

During the first five years, a child's brain is at its most flexible, making this a critical period for learning and growth. Science tells us that children's experiences and relationships early in life lay the foundation for later academic, social, and health outcomes. During the earliest years, children build the capacity to ask for and receive help, manage frustration, persist at tasks, and control their impulses. These skills lay the groundwork for more complex social and cognitive skills as children grow. Countless studies have reported better life outcomes for children fortunate to have access to quality early education: greater high school and college completion rates, higher earnings, and better health.

At the same time, children who face adversity in the first years of life, often related to living in poverty, are more at risk for experiencing lifelong effects from toxic stress.

Prolonged stress during childhood can literally alter the way a child's brain develops, which can lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.

Toxic stress is what happens when children are in a state of chronic fight or flight because of their continual exposure to stressful experiences. It is normal for children to encounter some level of stress, and learning coping skills from parents and caregivers to manage stress is important for children. However, when stressful experiences are prolonged, especially in young children, this stress can lead the body to over produce hormones associated with stress causing them to reach a toxic level.

Of course, there are different kinds and levels of stresses affecting children. However, traumatic events such as abuse, neglect, food insecurity, or family dysfunction are shown to produce a prolonged stress response resulting in toxic stress. These stresses and risk factors are especially common in low-income communities and families living in poverty.

In response to stress, the brain produces the hormone cortisol. During prolonged exposure to stress, cortisol levels remain too high for too long, which inhibits brain development. Over time, this can change the architecture of a child's rapidly developing brain. Altered brain architecture can result in long-term problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health. These consequences include things like increased risk for substance misuse, liver

disease, poor academic achievement, and reduced executive function or ability to self-regulate behavior.

Prevention and mitigation through high-quality early learning and care provides the support children need to build a foundation for a healthy and productive future.

Supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress in children. Often, these relationships exist between parent and child, but many children experience these “serve and return” interactions from other adults, like teachers.

Federal programs such as MIECHV, Head Start, and Child Care, in addition to many other evidence-based interventions, can support children and families to help reduce risks and support children’s healthy development. Additionally, these programs provide stable, supportive relationships with adults to the children they serve. Those relationships are a key component of mitigating the effects of toxic stress on children. In the absence of those important relationships, children’s brain development is altered, which can lead to long-term negative behavioral, physical, and mental health outcomes.

What’s more, the overwhelming evidence shows that children who enter kindergarten behind – both socially and emotionally, as well as academically – are likely to remain behind throughout their educational careers and beyond. These gaps in achievement are difficult and expensive to close with K-12 education alone, and they can last a lifetime, particularly for children from low-income families.

Preparing a child for kindergarten requires a focus on five areas of development that begin at birth and are influenced by quality early experiences: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, cognitive skills, language and developing literacy, and the ability to concentrate and follow directions.

Waiting until kindergarten is too late. Children from low-income families who receive a high-quality early childhood education are proven to be more likely to earn higher wages, live healthier lives, avoid incarceration, raise stronger families, and contribute to society. The benefits of high-quality programs from birth through age five do not end with one child, but instead extend to their entire family, now and in the years to come.

To learn more about the importance of high-quality early childhood development, [click here](#).



6

Support for Working Families

In addition to the proven benefits of early childhood education for children, access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality early learning and child care opportunities provides working families with better job stability and overall economic security. Unfortunately, the need to access this critical support far outpaces their current capacity, and many families across the country cannot afford the cost of quality child care. In fact, the cost of quality child care is as high or higher than the cost of in-state college tuition in most states across the country.

Without access to early learning and care, parents tend to miss work, lowering household incomes and potentially leading to job loss. Many parents are unable to enter or return to the workforce at all, due to a lack of affordable, reliable care for their children. Supporting families with the cost of quality preschool and child care will result in a more efficient and productive American workforce in both the short- and long-term.

- Child care helps parents enter or return to the workforce and [generate an additional \\$79,000 in lifetime earnings for mothers](#).
- Seventy-four percent (74%) of working parents report their jobs have [been affected by childcare problems](#): falling behind on work, missing work, and losing pay because of absences.
- [Almost half of parents](#) are absent from work at least once every six months due to child care issues.
- More than three-quarters of mothers and half of fathers had passed up work opportunities, switched jobs, or quit their job [due to a lack of paid leave or child care](#).
- [Single mothers](#) who receive assistance for child care payments are “nearly 40% more likely to maintain employment over two years” than those who do not.
- A lack of child care causes businesses to [lose an estimated \\$4.4 billion annually](#) due to employee absenteeism.
- Nationally, working families who can’t access affordable child care [lose \\$8.3 billion in wages annually](#).

Learn more about the importance of early learning and care for working families [here](#).

7

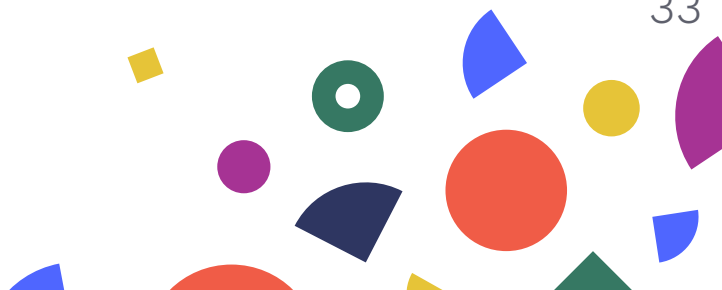
Bipartisan Progress in States

Across the country, states have championed the support and implementation of bipartisan early learning and care policies through federal partnerships and investments at the state level. FFYF's state fact sheets provide a high-level overview of the various early childhood education opportunities that exist within states, including those made possible with federal funding.

For example, in December 2018, [46 states and territories](#) were awarded funding through the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), a competitive federal grant designed to improve states' early childhood infrastructure. Originally, the Department of Health and Human Services planned to award 40 grants, but because of overwhelming interest in the program, resulting in 47 applications, a greater number of grants were ultimately awarded ranging between \$538,000 and \$10.6 million. The first year of the grant program funds state-level needs assessments and strategic planning to build upon existing federal, state, and local early learning and care investments. Then in December of 2019, 26 states were awarded funding for the second year of the PDG B-5 program – 20 received renewal grants to implement the strategic plans they developed using the first-year grants, and 6 received first-year funding to develop strategic plans.

Governors have also reaffirmed their commitment to early learning and care with proposals for increased state funding. According to a Center for American Progress [analysis](#) of the latest budget proposals of governors from 49 states and the mayor of Washington, D.C., the nation's governors proposed a combined \$2.9 billion in new state funding for child care, preschool, and home visiting programs.

States led by Democratic and Republican governors alike have championed early learning and child care to ensure children from birth through age five—especially those from low-income families—have opportunities to succeed in school and in life. A [majority of governors](#) across the country from both parties used their 2019 State of the State addresses as an opportunity to highlight their state's investment in early childhood education. Overall, 26 governors discussed early learning and care plans and opportunities during their speeches—some of the top moments include the following:



- **Governor Kay Ivey (R) Praised Alabama’s Record Increase In Funding For The State’s “First Class Pre-K” Program:** “For a child to reach their fullest potential later in life, they must first build a strong educational foundation. Under the nationally-recognized leadership of Secretary Jeana Ross, the tremendous efforts of the Department of Early Childhood Education have enabled Alabama’s First Class Pre-K to be ranked as the nation’s highest quality program for the 12th consecutive year! Most importantly, our efforts are giving more of Alabama’s children a strong start. Last year, we increased funding by \$18.5 million dollars, which was the largest, single-year increase ever approved. And because of that historic investment, 107 new First Class Pre-K classrooms were added last fall, which led Alabama to officially break the 1,000-classroom mark.” (“Alabama Governor Kay Ivey’s 2019 State Of The State Address, [WAAY](#), 3/5/19)
- **Governor Asa Hutchinson (R) Celebrated Arkansas’ Increased Budget For Pre-K And Number Five National Ranking In Three-Year-Old Education Access:** “Together, we have invested in pre-K education. Our budget for pre-K has increased from \$111 million to \$114 million in recent years. We rank 17th nationally in spending on pre-K and Number 18 in four-year-old pre-K access; and we rank Number 5 in the nation in terms of three-year-old access to early education.” (“Governor Asa Hutchinson State Of The State Address,” [arkansas.gov](#), 1/15/19)
- **Colorado Governor Jared Polis (D) Proposed The Biggest Expansion Of Early Childhood Education And Noted Bipartisan Efforts For Early Education:** “What we are proposing is the single biggest expansion of early childhood education in Colorado history. It is an essential first step in our broader strategies for both early childhood and K-12 education, setting kids up for success right from the start. In fact, it will free up resources to get closer to an even more ambitious goal: full-day preschool available for every Colorado child, which the families of this state deserve, and which we are committed to achieving. And I want to be clear: this is not a mandate, either for parents or for school districts. But for parents who believe public preschool and full-day kindergarten are the best option for their kids — and for school districts who want to offer these vital opportunities to families — we will do everything possible to make it happen. School districts, education nonprofits, and bipartisan state legislators

have done amazing work to raise public awareness of the benefits of full-day kindergarten and make it a top priority in this state.” (“Transcript & Video: Gov. Jared Polis’ First Colorado State Of The State Address,” [Colorado Public Radio](#), 1/10/19)

- **Governor J.B. Pritzker (D) Proposed A \$594 Million Early Childhood Block Grant For Illinois, Noting That Early Childhood Is The “Single Most Important” Education Policy With Significant Return on Investment:** “Real focus on the learning that happens from birth to age 5 can determine the entire arc of a person’s life. Investing in early childhood is the single most important education policy decision government can make, and it has proven to provide a significant return on investment. That’s why I’m proposing funding the Early Childhood Block Grant at \$594 million, an increase of \$100 million from fiscal year 2019. It will allow us to begin the march toward universal preschool so that every child in Illinois will have a real opportunity to succeed.” (“READ: Text Of Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s Budget Address,” [Chicago Sun-Times](#), 2/20/19)
- **Governor Phil Bryant (R) Lauded Mississippi’s Improved Early Childhood System, Saying “Mississippi’s Workforce Of Tomorrow Is In Daycare Today”:** “Now Mississippi’s youngest students will be better prepared for school and successful careers by learning the soft skills necessary for any vocation. Mississippi’s workforce of tomorrow is in daycare today. Together, we can help them become the best in America.” (“Watch Live: Gov. Phil Bryant’s Final State Of The State Address,” [Clarion Ledger](#), 1/15/19)

FFYF has developed a series of state fact sheets to provide a high-level overview of the various early childhood education opportunities that exist within states, including those made possible with federal funding. Go [here](#) for learning and care opportunities from state to state.



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Ideas for the Campaign Trail

Below are several enriching ways to elevate the importance of quality early learning and care in communities across the country.

- Host a community meeting/roundtables with early learning providers and professionals to discuss their experiences.
- Meet with parents/families who have been positively affected by child care subsidies or access to high-quality ECE opportunities.
- Meet with parents to learn about the struggles in finding affordable and quality care in their communities.
- Meet with nurses or other home visiting practitioners funded by the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting ([MIECHV](#)) Program.
- Host a roundtable with business leaders about the importance of access to quality child care for [their employees](#).
- Meet with governors/local officials to discuss the impact of ECE programs on local/state economies.
- Tour a child care facility on your next campaign stop and meet with the care providers.
- Read a book to children in a child care or early learning setting.



9

Early Childhood Education Syllabus

Check out these recent news stories and resources for more on the current state of early childhood education in America.

- [New York Times](#): As Washington Limpes Along, Head Start Thrives
- [Wall Street Journal](#): Long-Term Study Shows Free Pre-k Helps Low-Income Students, And Their Children
- [NBC News](#): Head Start Program Offers Low-Income Children A Chance to Thrive
- [Center for American Progress](#): Governors Propose Nearly \$3 Billion Of Investments In Early Learning Programs
- [Bipartisan Policy Center](#): The Future of Working Families; How We Care For Our Children
- [Education Week](#): Democrats, Independents Want Early Childhood Funding, And Don't Care Who Gets Credit
- [Video](#): America Works With Quality Child Care
- [Brookings Institution](#): Does Head Start Work? The Debate Over the Head Start Impact Study, Explained
- [The Economist](#): Republicans and Democrats Are Taking Early Education More Seriously
- [Fortune](#): Child Care Costs More Than College Tuition In 28 U.S. States
- [TIME](#): The Child Care Crisis

