



## **2018 High-Quality Early Learning and Care Toolkit**

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## Overview

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This document has been prepared by the First Five Years Fund (FFYF) to serve as a resource regarding access to affordable early childhood education opportunities. The document also provides facts and messaging about policies and programs that, directly or indirectly, help achieve the goal of improving access to affordable early learning and child care from birth through age five.

This resource is intended for policymakers and their staffs, as well as early childhood education stakeholders and advocates, and serves as an up-to-date guide for ways to discuss federal support for, and investments in, early learning and child care. With your leadership, we have achieved significant progress over the past year in advancing priorities that benefit our nation's youngest learners. This document will help your team articulate all of the gains you have helped secure, as well as identify opportunities for you to demonstrate how this support benefits your community.

This resource is by no means limited to these identified audiences. We hope anyone seeking to learn more about the importance of investing in early learning and child care initiatives finds this document useful.

If you have follow-up questions on the material in this document or are interested in additional information on a specific topic or policy, feel free to email Amanda Guarino, FFYF Policy Director, at [aguarino@ffyf.org](mailto:aguarino@ffyf.org). Please also contact us for assistance in scheduling a site visit or tour in your state or district. For more information on local programs and providers, see page 19.

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# I. Key Early Childhood Education Facts and Talking Points

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## **Effective Ideas and Phrases**

Whether you choose to adapt and use the talking points below or craft your own message, here are some key phrases and ideas to keep in mind for effective messaging. These phrases and ideas have been used consistently by supporters of early childhood education, and tested to determine their effectiveness when discussing the importance and popularity of investment in early childhood education initiatives.

### **Ideas that resonate with a bipartisan audience:**

- Parents are a child’s first and best teachers, and high-quality early childhood programs help them support their children’s healthy development and education while they work or attend school
- Expanding access and options for parents to provide their children a quality early childhood education has proven benefits for individuals and society in reduced healthcare costs, increased school achievement and a more educated workforce
- The overwhelming evidence shows that children who enter kindergarten behind are likely remain behind throughout their educational careers and beyond.
- We can help ensure children show up to kindergarten ready to learn by providing our youngest learners with options to access to high-quality early childhood education.
- Access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality child care opportunities provides working families with better job stability and overall economic security, while ensuring children are developing the skills that prepare them for school and a lifetime of success.

### **Key narratives to highlight:**

- During the first five years, a child’s brain is at its most flexible, making this a critical period for learning and growth. What children learn and experience in these first years of life can change the course of their lives.
- Quality child care is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Yet child care is often one of the largest expenses families face each month.
- Participants in high-quality early childhood education also show long-term gains in the form of lower rates of incarceration, lower rates of arrest for violent crimes, and are less likely to have received government assistance later in life.
- A vast majority of American voters want Congress and the administration to work together to improve the quality of child care and preschool, and make it more affordable for parents.
- Most Americans say they would be willing to pay higher taxes to address children's issues, even if their own children wouldn't directly benefit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

## **Sample Talking Points**

**Investing in early childhood education now is an investment in our community's future. That's why I'm proud of our recent efforts in Congress to provide federal support for early learning and child care programs throughout our state.**

- Children from low-income families who receive a high-quality early childhood education are more likely to earn higher wages, live healthier lives, avoid incarceration, raise stronger families, and contribute to society.
  - High-quality early childhood education is also associated with long-term health benefits, including reduced rates of depression, smoking, and substance abuse.<sup>2</sup>
  - Other long-term gains include lower rates of incarceration (46 percent reduction) and lower rates of arrest for violent crimes (33 percent reduction), and lower likelihood of receiving government assistance (26 percent reduction).<sup>3</sup>
- The benefits of high-quality programs from birth through age five do not end with one child but extend to their entire family, now and in the years to come.
  - The positive effects of early childhood interventions are evident even 30 years in the future.<sup>4</sup>
  - Access to stable, high-quality child care also helps parents improve labor productivity by allowing parents to increase hours worked, miss fewer work days, and pursue education.<sup>5</sup>

**This year, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have come together multiple times to take bipartisan action in support of our nation's youngest constituents.**

- The FY2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill included a huge funding increase for some of the nation's vital early learning and care programs.
  - The bill increased funding for the Child Care Development Block Grants (CCDBG) program to \$5.226 billion – the single largest increase to CCDBG in the program's history. This represents an increase of \$2.37 billion over FY2017 levels and effectively doubles the program's discretionary funding.
  - The bill also included significant funding levels for Early Head Start and Head Start, as well as the Preschool Development Grants program, setting funding for those programs at \$9.86 billion and \$250 million respectively.
- In February, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) was reauthorized for five years under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.
  - This critical program provides funds to states and local grantees for developing and implementing voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs to support at-risk families.

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<sup>2</sup> Lynn Karoly, Anamarie Auger, "Informing Investments In Preschool Quality And Access In Cincinnati," [Rand Corporation](#), 2016

<sup>3</sup> [Coalition For Evidence-Based Policy](#), Website, Accessed 1/4/17

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Reynolds Et Al., "Effects Of A School-Based, Early Childhood Intervention On Adult Health And Well-Being," [Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine](#), 2007

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Bartik, "Early Childhood Programs As An Economic Development Tool: Investing Early To Prepare The Future Workforce," [W.E. Upjohn Institute For Employment Research](#), 2013

- Home visitors meet with families at home and work with parents, 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. Visits by caring, experienced professionals can turn good intentions into good parenting, breaking generations-long cycles of poverty.
- Prior to its reauthorization, the program expired in September of 2017.

**These investments will allow more access to high-quality programs to give children a strong foundation for the future, regardless of socioeconomic background.**

- When children enter kindergarten behind their peers, they are more likely to stay behind.<sup>6</sup> Particularly for children from low-income families, these achievement gaps persist through high-school, impacting the rest of their lives.
  - High-quality early childhood education reduces attendees' timidity and improves attentiveness.<sup>7</sup>
  - High-quality early learning programs aimed at disadvantaged children help close the achievement gap, increasing IQ scores by up to 10 points.<sup>8</sup>
- Investing in high-quality care in a child's first five years ensures they develop the skills necessary for learning, decreasing the need to invest in costly inventions later in life.
  - Preschool reduced the percentage of children repeating a grade by 15 percent. It also lowered the rate of special education placement by 10 percent.<sup>9</sup>
  - Early learning and care increases high school graduation rates by 14 percent.<sup>10</sup>

**Early childhood education programs help support working parents across the country. With a record number of women in the workforce today, working moms in particular stand to benefit from these investments in child care and early learning programs.**

- Without access to early learning and care, parents tend to miss work, lowering household incomes and potentially leading to job loss.
  - A lack of child care causes businesses to lose an estimated \$4.4 billion annually due to employee absenteeism.<sup>11</sup>
  - Working families who can't access affordable child care lose \$8.3 billion in wages annually.<sup>12</sup>
- Access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality early learning and care opportunities provides working families with better job stability and overall economic security.
  - Child care helps parents return to work and generate an additional \$79,000 in lifetime earnings for mothers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Why All Children Benefit From Pre-K," [The Pew Charitable Trust](#), 2005

<sup>7</sup> Greg Duncan, Katherine Magnuson, "Informing Investments In Preschool Quality And Access In Cincinnati," [Rand Corporation](#), 2016

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Lynn Karoly, Anamarie Auger, "Informing Investments In Preschool Quality And Access In Cincinnati," [Rand Corporation](#), 2016

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Jane Glynn, Danielle Corley, "The Cost Of Work-Family Policy Inaction," [Center For American Progress](#), 2016

<sup>13</sup> "2016 Report: Parents And The High Cost Of Child Care," [Child Care Aware Of America](#), 2016

- Unfortunately, the need to access this critical support far outpaces current capacity, and many families across the country cannot afford the cost of quality child care.
  - Today, center-based care costs families an average of \$10,000 dollars per year.<sup>14</sup>
  - A lack of child care causes 45 percent of parents to miss work.<sup>15</sup>

**Supporting families with the cost of quality preschool and child care will result in a more efficient and productive workforce for years to come, strengthening our communities and setting a strong foundation for the future.**

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## II. Why Make High-Quality Early Childhood Education a Priority?

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- **Overwhelming research shows the earliest years of a child's life – birth through age five – are critical for their physical, social, language, and cognitive development, all of which are essential to future success.**
  - During these first five years, a child's brain is most flexible, making this period of learning and growth critical for future development.
  - More than one million new neural connections are formed every second in the first few years of life,<sup>16</sup> and 90 percent of the physical volume of a child's brain develops as early as five years old.<sup>17</sup>
- **Science tells us that children who face adversity in the first years of life, such as poverty and prolonged exposure to trauma like hunger, parental incarceration or family drug abuse, are more at risk for experiencing damages to their brain architecture, which can lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.<sup>18</sup>**
  - High-quality early learning and care is proven to help mitigate the effects of toxic stress on a child's brain by providing safe, supportive, nurturing relationships that support healthy development.<sup>19</sup>
  - Parents and other primary caregivers help teach children how to regulate their emotions and establish a sense of safety, which are essential aspects of physical and emotional development.<sup>20</sup>
- **Studies show support for early childhood education is one of the greatest uses of public funding in terms of return on investment.**
  - According to a recent study led by Harvard Education Professor Dana McCoy, early childhood education reduces special education placement, reduces time spent in the same grade, and increases high school graduation rates.<sup>21</sup>
  - Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman's research supports these results. Heckman's work showed targeted early childhood education programs aimed at disadvantaged children produced a 13.7 annual return on investment, amounting to \$7.30 in societal gains for each dollar invested.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [Center On The Developing Child At Harvard University](#), Website, Accessed 4/21/17

<sup>17</sup> Donald Huelke, "An Overview Of Anatomical Considerations Of Infants And Children In The Adult World Of Automobile Safety Design," [Association For The Advancement Of Automotive Medicine](#), 1998

<sup>18</sup> [Center On The Developing Child At Harvard University](#), Website, Accessed 4/21/17

<sup>19</sup> MacKenzie et. al., "Separating Families at the Border — Consequences for Children's Health and Well-Being," [New England Journal of Medicine](#), 6/15/17

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> McCoy, Dana, et al., "Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes," [Educational Researcher](#), November 2017

<sup>22</sup> James J. Heckman Et Al., "Quantifying The Life-Cycle Benefits Of A Prototypical Early Childhood Program," [National Bureau Of Economic Research](#), 2017



- **Unfortunately, too many children, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, do not have access to the high-quality early childhood education proven to offset the effects poverty can have on their development.**
  - Less than half of low-income children have access to high-quality early childhood programs that could dramatically improve their opportunities for a better future.<sup>23</sup>
- **States have made significant progress in implementing policies that support high-quality early childhood education.**
  - For example, states have increased pre-k funding by 47 percent in the last five years, and research shows these are smart investments.<sup>24</sup>
- **Waiting until kindergarten is too late.**
  - Expanding access to high-quality early childhood education and making it more affordable is an investment that leads to short- and long-term gains, not only for the individuals impacted, but for their families, their communities, and society at large.

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<sup>23</sup> Kris Perry, "Child Care, Day Care, Preschool — We Should Invest More In It," [The Hill](#), 11/7/16

<sup>24</sup> Bruce Atchison, Emily Parker, and Louisa Diffey, "How States Fund Pre-K: A Primer For Policymakers," [Education Commission Of The States](#), 2/2018

### III. Evidence for National Bipartisan Support

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Congress has a strong, bipartisan track record of support for funding early learning programs. Members on both sides of the aisle have worked together in the spirit of bipartisanship to significantly increase funding, while also enacting reforms to existing early childhood programs that elevate quality and leverage state and local leadership.

Because Congress has been a powerful advocate, more children from birth through age five are able to access critical resources to prepare them for school and life. Congress' continued efforts will help ensure our youngest learners have access to a continuum of high-quality early learning from the very start.

This year, Republican and Democratic Governors from every corner of the nation have used their annual State of the State addresses to highlight their commitment to early childhood education. In fact, one in three U.S. governors who delivered State of the State addresses in 2018 specifically highlighted early learning initiatives. Of those, 59 percent were Republican Governors, and 41 percent were Democrats.

The legislation enacted, as described below, are just a few of the most recent examples of Congress' commitment on behalf of children across the country.

#### FY2018 Omnibus Bill

- **Enacted:** 3/23/18 (House Vote: 256-167; Senate Vote 65-32)
- **Description:** The FY2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill included a historic funding increase for some of the nation's vital early learning and care programs. The bill officially funds the government through the end of September 2018. The bill increased funding for the Child Care Development Block Grants (CCDBG) program to \$5.226 billion – the single largest increase to CCDBG in the program's history. This represents an increase of \$2.37 billion over FY2017 levels and effectively doubles the program's discretionary funding.
  - The bill also included significant funding levels for Early Head Start and Head Start, as well as the Preschool Development Grants (PDG) program, setting funding for those programs at \$9.86 billion and \$250 million respectively. This funding for Head Start and Early Head Start represented an increase of \$610 million over FY2017, and includes an expansion of Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.
  - The FY2018 Omnibus also includes:
    - \$755 million for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships;
    - \$50 million for Child Care Means Parents in School;
    - \$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 Preschool Development Grant program.
- **What This Means:** Overwhelming bipartisan support on Capitol Hill for early childhood education made greater funding levels possible. CCDBG, which currently enables states to serve approximately \$1.4 million children, was last authorized in 2014. The funding

increases in the 2018 Omnibus Bill will ensure states are equipped with the resources needed to continue implementing health and safety quality standards, which will in turn promote learning and healthy development.

### **Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)**

- **Reauthorized:** 2/9/18 (House Vote: 245-182; Senate Vote: 71-28) under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018
- **Description:** Home visits, conducted by nurses, social workers, and trained professionals, support pregnant women and families with young children by providing access to critical resources in the early years. The extension of MIECHV under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 maintained current funding levels of \$400M per year.
- **What This Means:** The partnership between families and home visitors improves health and development, prevents child injuries, reduces ER visits, reduces domestic violence, improves family economic self-sufficiency and improves the coordination and referrals for other community resources. Many families who participate in voluntary home visiting live in rural parts of the country, a long distance from critical services, making the support they receive from home visiting all the more critical to child and family outcomes.

### **Child And Dependent Care Tax Credit**

- **Reauthorized:** 12/22/18 (House Vote: 227-203; Senate Vote: 51-48) under the Tax Cuts And Jobs Act
- **Description:** The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) is the only credit in the tax code specifically created to help families with the the cost of work-related child care expenses. After months of uncertainty surrounding the fate of the CDCTC within the tax reform discussion, bipartisan leaders in the Senate prevailed in early December in protecting the credit from being eliminated in the legislation. Last-minute efforts to include an amendment that would have made the credit refundable were unsuccessful, however, leaving the credit unchanged and still out of reach for many low- and middle-income families with lower tax liability.
- **What This Means:** The CDCTC was created in 1976 to help working parents with work-related child care expenses. Congress approved a temporary increase to the credit in 2001, and in 2012 a bipartisan majority voted to make that expansion permanent. Because the CDCTC is not a refundable credit, most low- and some middle-income, tax-paying families with qualified expenses are unable to take advantage of the credit. Therefore, higher-income families have benefited most from the tax credit. FFYF is working with bipartisan leaders to strengthen the CDCTC so that more families – particularly those who would benefit most – are eligible to receive it.

### **The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

- **Enacted:** 12/10/15 (House Vote: 359-64; Senate Vote: 85-12)
- **Description:** The biggest education law replaced its outdated predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA accomplishes the following:
  - Shifts decision-making responsibility to states with federal guardrails for quality;
  - Incorporates early learning provisions throughout; and

- Authorizes dedicated funding for early learning through the Preschool Development Grants.
- **What This Means:** States have the opportunity to use federal dollars to invest in early learning, enabling them to build upon local innovations to coordinate an early childhood system and allowing states to take the lead on increasing access to preschool. The departure from NCLB's federal emphasis means that states will take on more decision-making responsibilities and will be able to address early learning needs as they exist within a state's specific context.

### **Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)**

- **Reauthorized:** 11/19/14 (House Vote: Voice Vote; Senate Vote: 98-1)
  - Funding increase of \$2.37 billion was included in recent FY2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill, essentially doubling the program's funding.
- **Description:** First enacted in 1996, CCDBG is the primary federal funding source providing financial assistance to low-income working families that access child care. In November 2014, the CCDBG Act was reauthorized with bipartisan support for the first time in 18 years. In order to improve the quality of child care programs, the reauthorized law includes reforms aimed at promoting family involvement, strengthening health and safety standards, improving training for the child care workforce, enhancing continuity of care, and increasing the percentage of children from low-income families in high-quality programs. An increase of \$2.37 billion in FY2018 for CCDBG, as agreed to in the recent Omnibus bill, will help states implement the quality improvements put forth in the Act, leading to better outcomes for children from low-income families.
- **What This Means:** States are struggling with the cost of implementing the critically important reforms included in CCDBG reauthorization. Increased funding in the Omnibus Bill will enable states to provide children and families access to high-quality child care without being forced to reduce the already shrinking numbers of children who receive child care assistance or reduce payments to child care providers. The reforms Congress passed into law hold great promise, but without continued funding increases, the goals of CCDBG reauthorization could go unfulfilled and working parents will find it even more challenging to obtain the help in paying for child care that they need to find and keep a job to support their children.

## IV. Recent Budget and Appropriations Developments

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Federal funding is crucial to promoting investment in early learning at the state and local level. This support ensures early learning programs can properly serve families and accomplish the goals and activities authorized by law. Fortunately, even in the face of limited resources, Congress has consistently increased funding levels for early learning and care programs with overwhelming bipartisan support. The following programs make up the core federal support for early childhood education and child care.

### Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG)

- Congress provided a much-needed increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program in its FY2018 bipartisan budget deal. As a result of the two-year budget deal, the House FY2019 allocation for CCDBG is level with FY2018 which amounts to an increase of nearly \$5.9 billion over the two fiscal years.
- CCDBG, in partnership and coordination with other early learning funding at the federal, state, and local levels, allows parents to work while their children attend child care that promotes learning and healthy development. Establishing continuous access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality early learning and care opportunities promotes job stability for working families and overall economic security.
- HHS' FY2019 budget documents state that CCDBG and Head Start "offer a two-generation strategy toward upward economic mobility that allows parents and guardians to pursue self-sufficiency while helping their children receive care and education."<sup>25</sup> By significantly increasing investment in CCDBG, American families and the American economy stand to benefit both from a child development and a workforce standpoint.

### Preschool Development Grants (PDGs)

- The most recent Omnibus Appropriations bill reauthorized funding for the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program at \$250 million, which is the same as the FY2017 level.
- The purpose of PDGs is to improve the coordination and quality of, as well as access to, early childhood education programs for low- and moderate-income children from birth to age five.
- PDGs encourage thoughtful strategic planning and promote sharing of best practices among early childhood education program providers. This collaboration ensures federal, state, and local resources are used effectively to support a continuum of care for young learners.<sup>26</sup>
- The PDG program was authorized with bipartisan support under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as a way to improve the delivery of high-quality early learning for our most vulnerable children by bolstering coordination and collaboration.

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<sup>25</sup> "FY2019 Budget In Brief," [U.S. Department Of Health And Human Services](#), 2/19/18

<sup>26</sup> "Joint Letter On Implementation Of Preschool Development Grants Program," [First Five Years Fund](#), 4/26/18

## Head Start

- The most recent Omnibus Appropriations bill included significant funding levels for Early Head Start and Head Start, setting funding for those programs at \$9.86 billion. This funding for Head Start and Early Head Start represented an increase of \$610 million over FY2017, and includes an expansion of Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.
- Head Start centers on empowering families and communities with the knowledge and resources they need to ensure that the next generation is able to succeed at every stage of life.<sup>27</sup> It is an especially critical resource for families who would otherwise lack access to high-quality child care and early learning services. According to a 2018 report from the Center for American Progress, Head Start serves nearly every rural county in America, delivering educational, health, and parent education services.<sup>28</sup>
- Research shows that continuous access to full-day, full-year early childhood education improves the likelihood of successful outcomes for young children from low-income backgrounds. Based on this research, HHS revised its Head Start Program Performance Standards in November 2016 to focus on positive child outcomes, including the expectation that, over time, all Head Start programs would serve children for a full school day and full school year.
  - However, HHS recently had to waive a requirement that 50 percent of Head Start center-based programs extend their services to the equivalent of full-day, full-year by August 2019. The notice of the waiver stated that this action was necessary due to insufficient funding. Despite this, the FY2019 budget request for HHS only called for increasing funding for Head Start by \$22 million.
  - 100 percent of Head Start center-based programs will need to provide the equivalent of full-day, full-year by August 1, 2021.

## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

- Congress demonstrated its continued commitment to the importance of the Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CC Partnerships) by including a \$115 million increase in the recently passed FY2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill.
- EHS-CC Partnerships bring together the best of Early Head Start and child care through layered funding to provide comprehensive and continuous services to low-income infants, toddlers, and their families. Under EHS-CC Partnerships, 275 grantee partners with more than 1,400 local child care centers and 1,000 family child care programs are providing quality early childhood education for over 32,000 infants and toddlers.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start for FY2019, Led by Stivers and Jenkins," [First Five Years Fund](#), 4/9/18

<sup>28</sup> Rasheed Malik and Leila Schochet, "A Compass for Families: Head Start in Rural America," [Center For American Progress](#), 4/10/18

<sup>29</sup> "Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships," [National Center On Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships](#). Accessed 4/30/18

<b>EARLY LEARNING FUNDING ADVOCACY EFFORTS</b>				
<b>PROGRAM</b>		<b>FY18 FUNDING LEVEL</b>	<b>FY19 HOUSE APPROPS SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>FY19 SENATE APPROPS SUBCOMMITTEE</b>
<b>HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START</b>	<b>TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING</b>	<b>\$9.863 billion</b>	<b>\$9.913 billion</b>	<b>\$10.1 billion</b>
	Funding Increase	+\$610 million	+\$50 million (over FY18)	+250 million (over 2018)
	Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP)	\$755 million	780 million	\$755 million
	EHS-CCP Increase	+\$115 million	+25 million	Level
<b>PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS</b>	<b>TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING</b>	<b>\$250 million</b>	<b>\$250 million</b>	<b>\$250 million</b>
	Funding Increase	Level	Level	Level
<b>CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT</b>	<b>TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING</b>	<b>\$5.226 billion</b>	<b>\$5.226 billion</b>	<b>\$5.2 billion</b>
	Funding Increase	+\$2.37 billion	+\$2.4 billion (level with FY2018 - maintains funding increase)	+\$2.4 billion (level with FY2018 - maintains funding increase)

## V. Top 10 Early Childhood Education In-District Activities<sup>30</sup>

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In-district work periods are times for members to go home and reconnect with the communities they serve. At home this summer, here are ten things you can do to promote early childhood care and education.

**1. Host a neighborhood roundtable on quality child care in your area.**

Early childhood care and education is a priority for voters. According to FFYF's national poll, 89 percent of voters support making quality early childhood education for children more affordable for working families. Seventy-nine percent of voters want Congress and the Administration to work together to improve the quality of child care and preschool, and to make it these opportunities more affordable.<sup>31</sup>

**2. Meet with nurses or other home visiting practitioners funded by the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, and accompany them on a visit.**

Parents are a child's first and best teacher. But for parents who are experiencing poverty, drug addiction, language barriers or geographic isolation, voluntary home visiting can be a valuable resource for supporting them to be the best advocate for their child's learning, health and development in the early years, including serving pregnant mothers. Through regular, planned, and voluntary home visits, parents develop skills aimed at supporting their family's health and economic self-sufficiency.<sup>32</sup> Meeting with a trained home visiting provider and joining a home visit is a great way to learn more about this vital lifeline to families across America.

**3. Host a community meeting with early learning providers and professionals to discuss their experiences in the classroom.**

Teachers are on the front lines when it comes to early learning and child care. Thus, conversations with teachers are critical to finding out about the issues affecting children in your community. These conversations are also a great way to empower teachers to make positive changes and advocate for the policies that they believe in.

**4. Tour a child care facility.**

Pick a local child care facility and schedule a visit to learn more and connect with local children and child care professionals. Not sure where the closest child care facility is located? Reference our list of contacts for each state on page 19 of this resource.

**5. Visit with families participating in home-based daycare.**

Most children in America are cared for by home-based child care providers. Every day, thousands of Americans open their homes and hearts to children from their communities. These small businesses are on the front lines of making sure children start out strong. Visit with these professionals and the families they serve to see the importance of diversity in options for parents, and the needs of these providers.

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<sup>30</sup> Adapted from the Center For American Progress' "10 Things To Do This Recess For Child Care"

<sup>31</sup> FFYF 2017 National Poll.

<sup>32</sup> "Home Visiting," [HRSA, U.S. Department of Health And Human Services](#)



**6. Read to a group of children in your community.**

Reading and speaking to children is one of the best ways to build their vocabulary and help their brains grow and develop. Taking an afternoon to read to local children is a great way to promote the value of reading and education in your community, and encourage literacy for children and adults.

**7. Write an op-ed on federal support for early childhood care and education.**

As a Member of Congress, your support for early childhood education can mean the world to families struggling to find options for their children. Writing an op-ed on your support for the programs that many of these families rely on is a great way to connect with your constituents, and use your platform to speak up for the youngest constituents in your community.

**8. Organize a task force on early childhood education.**

Convening community stakeholders is the best way to find out information about the issues that are truly affecting children and families in your area. Local providers and educators are a great start; in addition, try inviting local professors, entrepreneurs, health care professionals, and parents from the area. This type of task force can serve as a driving factor behind local early childhood education initiatives throughout the year.

**9. Meet with a child psychologist to discuss the effects of the opioid epidemic on children and families in your community.**

The opioid epidemic has presented new challenges to early learning and child care providers and psychologists in communities across the U.S., as these individuals are on the front lines when it comes to childhood trauma. Exposure to adverse childhood experiences or potential dependencies at birth, such as those resulting from a parent's addiction to opioids, can have an emotional and developmental effect on children for the rest of their lives.<sup>33</sup> As noted in a House Dear Colleague Letter in April 2018, Head Start programs are already treating neonatal abstinence syndrome and employing other resources to help families overcome addiction.<sup>34</sup> Home visiting has also been proven to have a positive effect on at-risk families who may be struggling with addiction.<sup>35</sup> By supporting programs like Head Start and home visiting, lawmakers can ensure families receive personal support from pregnancy through their children's first years of life.

**10. Ask business leaders about the importance of access to quality child care for their employees.**

Research shows lack of access to affordable child care has a dramatic effect on businesses and economic productivity in the U.S. In addition to causing about half of parents to miss work at least once every six months due to child care breakdowns, lack of access to affordable child care contributes to a nationwide cost of \$8.3 billion in lost wages annually.<sup>36</sup> Access to stable, high-quality child care helps parents improve their labor productivity by increasing work hours, missing fewer work days, and pursuing further education.<sup>37</sup> Visiting with local business owners to discuss the need for affordable child care options is a great way to show support for pro-family workplace policies that encourage both economic growth and access to high-quality early childhood education.

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<sup>33</sup> "Oprah Winfrey's 'Life-Changing' Report on Childhood Trauma," [First Five Years Fund](#)

<sup>34</sup> "House Dear Colleague Letter Supporting Head Start for FY2019, Led by Stivers and Jenkins," [First Five Years Fund](#), 4/9/18

<sup>35</sup> "Access to Home Visiting Can Save Families Affected by Opioid Crisis," [First Five Years Fund](#), 2/6/18

<sup>36</sup> Child Care Aware Of America "2016 Report: Parents And The High Cost Of Child Care," Accessed 12/6/16

<sup>37</sup> Timothy Bartik, "Early Childhood Programs As An Economic Development Tool: Investing Early To Prepare The Future Workforce," [W.E. Upjohn Institute For Employment Research](#), 2013

## VI. Opportunities for Congressional Involvement

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Congress has a strong bipartisan track record of working together on behalf of America's youngest learners and their families. Below please find information on relevant Congressional caucuses that are currently working to achieve strong investments and partnerships with states and communities through bipartisan federal advocacy.

### **Congressional Pre-K Caucus:**

The Congressional Pre-K Caucus is a bipartisan group that seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of early childhood education and promote policy recommendations to expand high-quality pre-k access in the United States.

- Rep. Joaquin Castro – (D-TX-20)  
(Co-chair)
- Rep. Katherine Clark – (D-MA-05)  
(Co-chair)
- Rep. Thomas Cole – R-OK-04 (Co-chair)
- Rep. Kevin Yoder – R-KS-03 (Co-chair)
- Rep. Stephen Cohen – (D-TN-09)
- Rep. Deborah Dingell – (D-MI-12)
- Rep. James Langevin – (D-RI-02)
- Rep. Richard Nolan – (D-MN-08)
- Rep. Tom O'Halleran – (D-AZ-01)
- Rep. Scott Peters – (D-CA-52)
- Rep. Robert (Bobby) Scott – (D-VA-03)

For information on joining the Congressional Pre-K Caucus, please reach out to the offices of the co-chairs:

Rep. Joaquin Castro  
202-225-3236  
1221 Longworth House Office Building  
<http://castro.house.gov/>

Rep. Thomas Cole  
202-225-6165  
2467 Rayburn House Office Building  
<http://cole.house.gov/>

Rep. Katherine Clark  
202-225-2836  
1415 Longworth House Office Building  
<http://katherineclark.house.gov/>

Rep. Kevin Yoder  
202-225-2865  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
<http://yoder.house.gov/>

## Congressional Baby Caucus

The Congressional Baby Caucus aims to ensure public policy reflects the latest research in understanding how children's brains are shaped and developed, how positive behaviors can be encouraged, and how investments in early childhood create success in later years. The group is also committed to ensuring families are supported with the resources they need to take advantage of scientific advances.

The Caucus focuses on a broad range of areas, including: nutrition and basic needs for babies; the effects of trauma; and federal programs like Head Start and Child Care Development Block Grants.

- Rep. Rosa DeLauro – (D-CT-03)  
(Co-chair)
- Rep. Charles Fleischmann – (R-TN-03) (Co-chair)
- Rep. Brendan Boyle – (D-PA-13)
- Rep. Robert Brady – (D-PA-01)
- Rep. Julia Brownley – (D-CA-26)
- Rep. Katherine Clark – (D-MA-05)
- Rep. Jim Cooper – (D-TN-05)
- Rep. Deborah Dingell – (D-MI-12)
- Rep. Raul Grijalva – (D-AZ-03)
- Rep. Jim Himes – (D-CT-04)
- Rep. Dave Joyce – (R-OH-14)
- Rep. Betty McCollum – (D-MN-04)
- Rep. Jared Polis – (D-CO-02)
- Rep. Mark Takano – (D-CA-41)
- Rep. John Yarmuth – (D-KY-03)

For information on joining the Congressional Baby Caucus, please reach out to the offices of the co-chairs:

Rep. Rosa DeLauro  
202-225-3661  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
<http://delauro.house.gov/>

Rep. Charles Fleischmann  
202-225-3271  
2410 Rayburn House Office Building  
<http://fleischmann.house.gov>

## VII. Opportunities for Local Involvement

High-quality early childhood education is a practical, non-partisan issue. While visiting your district, it is helpful to connect with advocates in your community to learn about the best ways to help children and families access high-quality early childhood education. These conversations can set the groundwork for legislative efforts all year round. Below please find contact information for an early childhood education advocacy group in your state helping to craft policies that provide lasting economic and social returns.

**If your state is not listed, please contact Helene Stebbins, Deputy Director at Alliance for Early Success, at [hstebbins@earlysuccess.org](mailto:hstebbins@earlysuccess.org) or (703) 769-2772.**

State	First	Last	Organization	Email	Phone
AL	Gail	Piggott	Alabama Partnership for Children	gpiggott@smartstartalabama.org	
AR	Rich	Huddleston	AR Advocates for Children and Families	jrhuddleston@aradvocates.org	
AR	Cory	Biggs	ForwARd Arkansas	cbiggs@forwardarkansas.org	
AZ	Kelley	Murphy	Children's Action Alliance	caa@azchildren.org	602-266-0707
CA	Karla	Pleitez-Howell	Advancement Project California	kpleitezhowell@advanceproj.org	
CA	Stacy	Lee	Children Now	slee@childrennow.org	213-973-5081
CO	Charlotte	Brantley	Clayton Early Learning	CBrantley@claytonearlylearning.org	
CO	Bill	Jaeger	CO Children's Campaign	bill@coloradokids.org	
DC	Shana	Bartley	DC Action for Children	sbartley@dckids.org	
FL	Brittany	Birken	Florida Children's Council	bbirken@floridacsc.org	
GA	Mindy	Binderman	Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students	mbinderman@gears.org	678-689-3482
IA	Sheila	Hansen	Iowa Child and Family Policy Center	shansen@cfpciowa.org	
IL	Ireta	Gasner	Ounce of Prevention Fund	igasner@ounceofprevention.org	
KS	Annie	McCay	Kansas Action for Children	annie@kac.org	
KY	Brigitte	Blom Ramsey	Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence	brigitte.blomramsey@prichardcommittee.org	
LA	Melanie	Bronfin	Louisiana Policy Institute for Children	mbronfin@policyinstitutela.com	504-228-0988
MA	Amy	O'Leary	Strategies for Children, Inc.	aoleary@earlyeducationforall.org	617-330-7384
MD	Clinton	Macsherry	Maryland Family Network	cmacsherry@marylandfamilynetwork.org	
ME	Rita	Furlow	Maine Children's Alliance	rfurlow@mekids.org	207-623-1868
MI	Michelle	Richard	Public Sector Consultants	mrichard@publicsectorconsultants.com	517-331-9466
MI	John	Bebow	The Center for Michigan	jbebow@thecenterformichigan.net	
MN	Nancy	Jost	West Central Initiative	njost@wcif.org	
MS	Rachel	Canter	Mississippi First	rachel@mississippifirst.org	

NE	Becky	Veak	First Five Nebraska	bveak@firstfivenebraska.org	402-261-9671
NJ	Cecilia	Zalkind	Advocates for Children of New Jersey	czalkind@acnj.org	973-643-3876
NM	Katherine	Freeman	New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership	katherinef@uwsfc.org	505-982-2002
NY	Betty	Holcomb	Center for Children's Initiatives	bholcomb@ccinyc.org	973-865-5315
NC	Tracey	Zimmerman	NC Early Childhood Foundation	tzimmerman@buildthefoundation.org	
OK	Debra	Andersen	Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness	debra.andersen@smartstartok.org	405-429-4219
OH	Shannon	Jones	Groundwork Ohio	sjones@groundworkohio.org	
OH	Brandi	Slaughter	Voices for Ohio Children	brandi@raiseyourvoiceforkids.org	
OR	Dana	Hepper	Children's Institute	dana@childinst.org	503-219-9034
PA	Joan	Benso	Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children	Jbenso@papartnerships.org	717-236-5680
PA	Nelida	Sepulveda	Public Citizens for Children and Youth	nelidas@pccy.org	
RI	Elizabeth	Burke Bryant	RI KIDS COUNT	ebb@rikidscount.org	401-351-9400
TN	Blair	Taylor	Memphis Tomorrow (Tennesseans for Quality Early Education)	btaylor@memphistomorrow.org	901-322-8080
TX	Mandi	Kimball	Children at Risk	mkimball@childrenatrisk.org	713-869-7740
TX	Stephanie	Rubin	Texans Care for Children	srubin@txchildren.org	512-473-2274
TX	Sophie	Phillips	TexProtects	sophie@texprotects.org	
VA	Kathy	Glazer	Virginia Early Childhood Foundation	Kathy@vecf.org	
WA	Jon	Gould	WA Children's Alliance	Jon@childrensalliance.org	
WI	Dave	Edie	Kids Forward	DEdie@kidsforward.net	

## VIII. FFYF Poll Fact Sheet

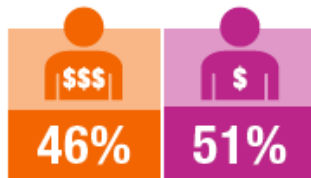
2017 NATIONAL POLL

# As political polarization becomes more extreme, early childhood education unites American voters.

**In fact, 79% of voters—including 80% of Trump voters and 79% of Clinton voters—want Congress and the administration to work together to improve the quality of child care and preschool, and make it more affordable for parents.<sup>1</sup>** At a time when divisive rhetoric, calls for resistance, and partisan distrust dominate the political headlines across the country, public support for investing in quality early childhood education from birth through age five has emerged as a unifying issue among American voters of every political persuasion. The First Five Years Fund's 2017 national bipartisan poll found that every single proposal tested—including expanding the federal partnership with states and communities through grants to improve access to preschool, tripling the current child care tax credit, and even providing greater funding for programs like Head Start—received overwhelming voter support regardless of partisan affiliation.

### Making quality early education more affordable is a bipartisan priority.

89% of voters support making quality early education for children from birth through age five, including child care, more affordable for working families to give children a strong start. This support transcends partisan lines.



### Voters see a critical lack of early education programs in their area that are high-quality and affordable.

In fact, respondents making over \$100,000 per year are virtually just as likely (46%) as those who earn less than \$40,000 per year (51%) to say that only some or few programs near them are affordable and high-quality.

### There is strong support for essential investments in quality early childhood education from birth through age five.

**89%** Important Making early education and child care more affordable for working families to give children a strong start.

**86%** Important Helping states and local communities build better preschool services for parents and making them more accessible to children from low- and middle-income families.

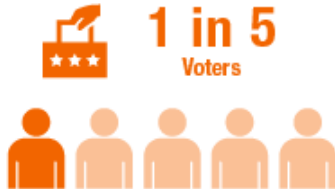
**78%** Important Providing voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help first-time parents support their child's early learning, health, and emotional development.

**78%** Important Making available high-quality learning programs for infants and toddlers to give them a strong start on developing school-ready knowledge and social skills.



**57% of voters say they would have a more favorable opinion of their member of Congress if he or she supported increased funding for quality early learning and care.**

Members of Congress who may have reservations about supporting funding for more families to have access to quality child care and preschool should not worry about alienating voters. Only 6% of the electorate says they would have a less favorable opinion of their member if he or she voted in favor of increased funding for quality early learning and care.



**Only 21% of American voters say Congress and the president are paying enough attention to early childhood education.**

58% of voters say that Congress and the president are not giving early childhood education the attention it deserves.

**As efforts on tax reform continue to heat up, voters support proposals that help parents better afford quality child care.**

81% of the electorate—including 74% of Trump voters—support providing a 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. And 70% say we should increase the amount of the existing child and dependent care tax credit from \$3,000 to \$9,000 for one child to better reflect today's child care costs. That includes 60% of Trump voters.

**85% of voters say there should be increased funding for child care that directly supports greater access to quality programs for low- and middle-income children while their parents work or attend school.**

Majorities across partisan lines agree—74% of Republicans, 79% of Independents, and 97% of Democrats. Only 10% of voters say federal funding for child care and preschool should be cut.

**85%**  
 Voters who don't want funding cuts.  
 74% of Republicans  
 79% of Independents  
 97% of Democrats



**Americans know that high-quality early childhood programs pay off.**

74% of the electorate says that quality early childhood education sets children up for academic success in elementary school, and 69% of voters say high-quality early childhood programs lead to a larger pool of highly skilled workers in the long term. Perhaps that's why 86% say that child care should include early learning to prepare children for success in school and life.

American voters agree: ECE must be a priority for Congress and the administration.  
 Learn more at [ffyf.org](http://ffyf.org)

\*Methodology: Public Opinion Strategies (P) and Hart Research (H) conducted a telephone survey of N=1,000 voters throughout the country on both landline and cell phones. The survey was conducted April 28-May 2, 2017 and has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.10%. The sample was distributed proportionally throughout the nation and is demographically representative of the electorate.