

Governors' 2012 State of the State Addresses: Mentions of Early Care and Education

Twenty-two governors mentioned early care and education in their 2012 state of the state addresses. Governors of several states, including Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, and Kentucky, expressed support for increased investments in early care and education. The governors of Rhode Island and Tennessee talked about protecting funding for child care assistance. Governors of some states, including Colorado, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, and Oregon, discussed efforts to reorganize or consolidate early care and education programs for increased focus, efficiency, and coordination. In addition, the governors of Delaware, Minnesota, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Washington, noted that their states were awarded Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grants.

The excerpts from the speeches related to early care and education, along with links to the entire speeches, are provided below. (Seven states have not had, nor are they scheduled to have, state of the state addresses.) All of the state of the state addresses are available at [here](#).

Alabama: [Robert Bentley \(R\), February 7, 2012](#)

“In my education budget, the Alabama Reading Initiative, ACCESS Distance Learning, the Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative, Advance Placement and our highly successful **Pre K programs will all be protected**. These are all proven programs that have helped our children achieve better results.”

Alaska: Sean Parnell (R), January 18, 2012

No reference

Arizona: Jan Brewer (R), January 9, 2012

No reference

Arkansas: Mike Beebe (D)

No state of the state address

California: Jerry Brown (D), January 18, 2012

No reference

Colorado: [John Hickenlooper \(D\), January 12, 2012](#)

“We seek your support in consolidating **early childhood services** under one roof to more efficiently and effectively aid children and parents. Currently, there are 23 separate funding streams administered through five different state agencies, each playing a role in **early childhood support and services**. Together, we are proposing a state-local strategy that integrates prevention and intervention, **quality early learning** and family support and engagement. Our plan will consolidate **early childhood services** in a new office in the Department of Human Services.

The lieutenant governor is leading an effort **to promote early childhood literacy**, and in February his office will release a report detailing findings from his recent state-wide literacy tour. Abundant research demonstrates that if a child fails to learn how to read by the third grade, that child is more likely to drop out of high school and faces an enormous uphill battle for the rest of his or her life. We must develop intervention strategies with parents and teachers to identify failing students long before

they reach the third grade and keep them from an illiterate future. We are working on bipartisan legislation to make Colorado a national model for early literacy and ask for your support to get this bill passed.”

Connecticut: [Dannel Malloy \(D\), February 8, 2012](#)

“First, we can enhance families’ access to **early childhood** education by creating new seats for 500 children who can’t afford preschool and by investing in a new rating system to improve quality. **Early childhood educators** are gifted, talented people and we need to support them. This funding is a good first step as we work to get to **universal pre-K access.**”

Delaware: [Jack Markell \(D\), January 19, 2012](#)

“Finally, pressing ahead means acknowledging what research has clearly established — raising student achievement **begins before children enter kindergarten.** I’ve heard this message from hundreds of teachers — children receiving **quality early care and education** are more likely to be successful in school and in life. Investments that promise high yields get my attention and, in the realm of public policy, there is no higher-yield investment than this one. Last spring, we joined together to make some of the most significant investments in **early childhood education** in our State’s history.

As it turns out, those investments are paying dividends sooner than we expected. The judges of the national **Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge** noted our commitment and rewarded us with significant additional federal funds. Here is our plan: (1) the professionals who care for our children will have the proper training; (2) the **early child care facilities** where our children spend their days will have the best teaching and learning tools; and (3) the successes and challenges of centers will be closely monitored to ensure continual improvement. That is our formula for success and we expect to **raise the percentage of high-need children in quality-rated programs** from 20 percent to nearly 80 percent over the next four years. To let us know where our kids stand when they start school, we will introduce a new kindergarten assessment. I thank DSEA and our kindergarten teachers for their work with us on this initiative.”

Florida: Rick Scott (R), January 10, 2012

No reference

Georgia: [Nathan Deal \(R\), January 10, 2012](#)

“Within education, I have called for a new focus on our youngest learners. The budget I’m proposing increases the **Pre-K** school year for 84,000 students by 10 days, bringing it to 170 days. I am proud to say that this will allow us to begin restoring **Pre-K** teacher salaries!”

Hawaii: [Neil Abercrombie \(D\), January 23, 2012](#)

“**Early childhood education** lays the foundation for a lifetime of learning and results in productive citizens who will someday manage our businesses, build our homes and offices, welcome our visitors, care for the sick, make new discoveries in science, and lead us into the future.

We are at a crossroads when it comes to **early childhood education.** For too long, we have continued old patterns that treated **early education** as something that is optional, a luxury for only those few who have the means.

‘Research shows that 85 percent of a child’s brain development takes place **before the age of five** and that children who have **quality early experiences** are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and contribute positively to the economy. Yet, many of Hawaii’s children are entering school unprepared. It’s time to invest in our children, and invest in our future, so that our state can thrive.’

This observation from Be My Voice Hawaii, illustrates without equivocation that **early education** is not just an option, it is a fundamental necessity if we are to set the broader educational stage for our children. It is not just about learning to read and write, it establishes healthy attitudes towards learning that will stay with them throughout their lives. We also know that **early education** greatly enhances a young person's sense of self-worth and confidence that, in turn, positively affects learning.

Early childhood education must be the initial step on the education ladder. Failure to act now virtually ensures that our children will fall behind. If they are not our priority, then we no longer know the meaning of the word.

The state's **Early Childhood Coordinator** Terry Lock has put together a team to create a unified framework. This **early education plan** for the state will be the guide for building a stronger **quality early care and education system** for our youngest children and their families.

...For these **early childhood education and health initiatives**, we are requesting \$1 million."

Idaho: C. L. "Butch" Otter (R), January 9, 2012

No reference

Illinois: [Pat Quinn \(D\), February 1, 2012](#)

"If we want 60 percent of Illinois adults to have a meaningful career certificate or degree by 2025, we must invest in our students from birth to higher education. That starts with investing more dollars in **Early Childhood Education**. Learning begins at birth and those first years of a child's life are the most important. Our youngest and most vulnerable citizens need our strongest support.

Research has shown that without an **early learning foundation**, children fall behind in school. Illinois, we can't leave our youngest behind.

That's why I'm calling for a major **investment in early childhood education** this year.

...We must invest in college scholarships, **early childhood education**, and 21st century schools."

Indiana: Mitch Daniels (R), January 10, 2012

No reference

Iowa: [Terry Branstad \(R\), January 10, 2012](#)

"...a new kindergarten assessment will measure whether **children start kindergarten ready to learn** and leave prepared to flourish in first grade.

...let's assure that children can read by the end of third grade. Otherwise, they will fall further and further behind. An intensive focus on literacy means working closely with families and providing more support for reading and writing in schools **starting in preschool**, and continuing through kindergarten, first, second, and third grades."

Kansas: Sam Brownback (R), January 11, 2012

No reference

Kentucky: [Steven L. Beshear \(D\), January 4, 2012](#)

"At the same time, if we truly want to build a vibrant workforce, one that makes Kentucky more competitive in this increasingly sophisticated world, then we have to start earlier. We have to **begin with our youngest children**.

Most brain development – the planting of the seeds for what we accomplish the rest of our lives – begins in **the years before we enter school**.

Right now too many Kentucky children get a poor start in life. Too many children enter school with preventable health problems, with undeveloped minds, with no sense of curiosity or engagement in life around them. In short, they start out behind, and they never catch up.

We were once America's frontier, known for invention, innovation and ingenuity. But fundamental weaknesses in **how we educate and care for our youngest children** have eroded our strengths. We must do better.

My vision for Kentucky guarantees every child the opportunity to succeed – every child, regardless of whether he or she is born in the suburbs, on a farm, in the inner city or in a mountain hollow. All of our children deserve a chance at a life of promise and meaning.

With help from a lot of people, including many here in this chamber, I've been working for four years to get our children off to a better start.

We will continue **restructuring our preschool and day-care programs** to ensure every child is mentally and physically prepared for kindergarten the day he or she enters the classroom. **Kindergarten readiness** is at the heart of our efforts to make sure our children succeed throughout their time in school. We've created a standard definition of school readiness, one that gives all of our programs – public and private – a consistent, singular mission.

By executive order, I created the **Early Childhood Advisory Council** to put this into action – and I'm seeking to formalize that move with legislation before you. Again, a bill like this could get lost. We must not allow that to happen.

We're also searching for funding to increase access to **high-quality early education and care programs**. We need to reach more children. As our revenues recover, early childhood development is one of the first areas where significant new investment must be made. Nothing will have more impact on the future of this state.

Louisiana: Bobby Jindal (R)

No state of the state address

Maine: Paul LePage (R), January 24, 2012

No reference

Maryland: Martin O'Malley (D), February 1, 2012

No reference

Massachusetts: Deval Patrick (D), January 23, 2012

No reference

Michigan: [Rick Snyder \(R\), January 18, 2012](#)

“Our children are our future, and we need to make sure they are not just college ready, but career ready. We need to start in **early childhood** and finish with lifelong learning, whether it's college or vocational training. We launched the Office of Great Start to focus on our youngest children. I want to thank the foundation community for helping champion **early childhood education**.”

Minnesota: [Mark Dayton \(D\), February 15, 2012](#)

“We expanded **Early Childhood Education**, and our doing so was crucial to Minnesota's winning the federal Race to the Top competition against 34 other states.

... We enacted Read by Third Grade, which will be a priceless gift to the children of Minnesota, and their parents, from a wonderful legislative leader.”

Mississippi: [Phil Bryant \(R\), January 24, 2012](#)

“I have always believed the responsibility for a child’s **earliest learning** belongs to the parents. I do realize in today’s society many of our children are in taxpayer funded day care centers. Head Start and other Federal programs provide Mississippi more than 241 million dollars annually for child care programs. I would suggest that we collaborate our efforts in **early childhood learning** by monitoring the learning opportunities in licensed child care centers to include more than just the room size and number of bathrooms.

Currently, the Department of Health receives funding from the Department of Human Services for inspection and monitoring of licensed child care centers. If we combine their functions into a **Division of Early Childhood Learning** under the Department of Human Services, we could streamline services and improve our ability to identify the quality of programs for early childhood learning. This can be done with enabling legislation that has no cost. The funding now being transferred from the Department of Human Services to the State health department will simply be retained and shared.

In the next year we will gather additional information from ongoing programs such as Building Blocks, Excel by 5, Allies for Quality Childcare Project, and the Quality Rating System, that will give us the metrics we need to determine the best practices for **Early Childhood Learning.**”

Missouri: Jay Nixon (D), January 17, 2012
No reference

Montana: Brian Schweitzer (D)
No state of the state address

Nebraska: Dave Heineman (R), January 12, 2012
No reference

Nevada: Brian Sandoval (R)
No state of the state address

New Hampshire: John Lynch (D), January 31, 2012
No reference

New Jersey: Chris Christie (R), January 17, 2012
No reference

New Mexico: [Susana Martinez \(R\), January 17, 2012](#)

“We protected health care for the most vulnerable, **expanded child care for working moms** and food stamps for the elderly and disabled, and provided school clothes for kids most in need.”

New York: Andrew Cuomo (D), January 4, 2012
No reference

North Carolina: Bev Perdue (D)
No state of the state address

North Dakota: Jack Dalrymple (R)
No state of the state address

Ohio: [John Kasich \(R\), February 7, 2012](#)

“[Wells Academy has] also successfully implemented an **early childhood education program**... You know, we got good news. Ohio just received a \$70 million grant. We were the fifth-best in the country and we’re going to be able to use that money and apply it to **early education**, making it work and making it better across the State of Ohio for the good of our children, and it’s fantastic news.”

Oklahoma: Mary Fallin (R), February 6, 2012

No reference

Oregon: [John Kitzhaber \(D\), January 13, 2012](#)

“For the first time, funding and governance will be aligned across the full continuum from **early childhood services** through K-12 and post-secondary education and training to achieve our state’s educational, social and economic objectives.

The Legislature also created the **Early Learning Council** focused on restructuring the fragmented, inefficient way we provide **early childhood services**. Currently, we spend over \$800 million every biennium on programs for children ages 0-5, yet 40 percent of our children still arrive at school at risk because their needs were not adequately addressed. Continuing to support a system with these outcomes should no longer to be acceptable to any of us.

...Try to imagine a child at age six, showing up for the first day of kindergarten, unable to match any spoken or written words, or understand that print is read from left to right. It’s difficult to imagine the huge disadvantage they have unable to sound out words – or worse yet, trying to do so while going hungry. But this is the reality for far too many Oregon children who are not getting **the health care, pre-school, nutritional and developmental services they need before age five** – including **prenatal care**. They do not arrive at kindergarten ready for school.

...All the research indicates that children who are ready for kindergarten, reading in first grade, and reading at grade level by third grade, are more likely to graduate from high school and find social and economic success. And **early childhood success** is a cornerstone of all of our broader educational and economic goals.

In 2006, the City Club adopted a report on **Early Care and Education** that noted the ‘multiple programs across numerous state agencies with no clear vision’ and called on state officials to ‘strengthen Oregon’s statutory effort to coordinate disparate **early childhood programs**.’

My **early learning bill** will do just that – implementing the recommendations of the **Early Learning Council** to streamline disparate programs as part of a plan to ensure coordination and accountability; consolidating boards and getting programs focused on outcomes for children and families. We need to serve more at-risk kids and make sure they’re ready to learn from day one. We need to be able to measure **program effectiveness before children reach kindergarten**, and better transition them once they reach the K-12 system.

...We can’t permit the absence of adequate funding to foreclose a real discussion about how to more effectively spend the resources we’ve got. After all, perhaps the best source of ‘new funding’ for K-12 would be for more 5-year-olds to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, reducing the need for expensive remediation at school. Yes, new resources will need to be put on the table. But we need to target existing resources to leverage points – like **early learning**, third-grade reading, and college completion – that are proven to significantly drive costs down.”

Pennsylvania: [Tom Corbett \(R\), February 7, 2012](#)

“One of our core functions is to provide for education at several levels **starting with our youngest**.”

Rhode Island: [Lincoln Chafee \(I\), January 31, 2012](#)

“After receiving a historic \$75 million Race to the Top grant, Rhode Island received an additional \$50 million for **early education funding**. **Quality early education** is the foundation for student success...

I should also note that Rhode Island is the only state in the country to receive both a Race to the Top **early learning grant** and level II health exchange funding...

We must preserve the basic, necessary services for the most vulnerable Rhode Islanders — services such as Medicaid prescription drug coverage for the poor and **subsidized child care for low-income families** as they get back to work. To protect these vital services, I propose a modest expansion of the sales tax to a handful of non-essential goods and services. While I do not like raising taxes on anyone, I sought to minimize the impact of these proposals on the working families of Rhode Island.”

South Carolina: [Nikki Haley \(R\), January 18, 2012](#)

No reference

South Dakota: [Dennis Daugaard \(R\), January 11, 2012](#)

No reference

Tennessee: [Bill Haslam \(R\), January 30, 2012](#)

“As many of you will remember, the budget two years ago included cuts to critical services as a result of the economic downturn. The state was able to delay those cuts by funding them with one-time money. However, \$160 million of those cuts were slated to go in effect this year. It included many critical programs for our state like the Coordinated School Health Program, extended teacher contracts, alcohol and abuse treatment programs, **child care benefits**, juvenile justice grants, diabetes prevention, and matching dollars for 401k programs for state employees. I am proud to say that this budget restores over \$100 million of those cuts to protect vital services for our citizens.”

Texas: Rick Perry (R)

No state of the state address

Utah: [Gary Herbert \(R\), January 25, 2012](#)

“With the help of Representative Mel Brown and Senator Lyle Hillyard, we have expanded **early intervention programs** for our at-risk students, programs empirically proven to help reach our critical goal of reading proficiency by the end of the third grade.”

Vermont: [Peter Shumlin \(D\), January 5, 2012](#)

“If we can reopen hundreds of flooded businesses in 14 weeks, we can transform Vermont into the innovative education leader, where from **early childhood** to higher education to continuing education, we train employees for the prosperous jobs of our future.”

Virginia: Bob McDonnell (R), January 11, 2012

No reference

Washington: [Christine O. Gregoire \(D\), January 10, 2012](#)

“Speaking of innovation and competition, let’s celebrate our work on **early childhood education**, resulting in a Race to the Top award of \$60 million!

...If we invest in **early learning** and make certain a child is really ready to learn by kindergarten, that child will succeed in school and life. We started the **Department of Early Learning** in 2006 and created a public-private partnership, **Thrive by Five.**”

West Virginia: Earl Ray Tomblin (D), January 11, 2012
No reference

Wisconsin: [Scott Walker \(R\), January 25, 2012](#)

“We will require the state’s Young Star program which works with child care providers to include a new focus on reading skills and new training on **early childhood education.**”

Wyoming: Gov. Matt Mead (R), February 13, 2012
No reference