

CHILD CARE

FACT SHEET

State Updates: Early Care and Education

June 2013

As most states gradually begin to recover economically after several years in which their budgets were under tremendous strain, a number of the states are taking this opportunity to make or consider new investments in early care and education. These states recognize that early care and education will advance their short- and long-term economic prosperity by enabling parents to work and giving children the strong start they need to succeed in school and ultimately contribute to the workforce. Unfortunately, a few states have looked to cut child care and early education. Cutting these services reduces families' access to the stable, high-quality child care that encourages children's learning and development. Additionally, these cuts prevent child care programs from filling their classrooms, forcing them to lay off staff or close their doors entirely.

- **Alabama** increased funding for the state's voluntary prekindergarten program by \$9.4 million, to \$28.5 million.¹ This amount, included in the final budget approved by the legislature and signed by Governor Robert Bentley,² was a significant expansion of the program, but less than the \$12.5 million increase originally proposed by the governor.³
- **Arizona's** final budget provides \$9 million in additional funding for child care assistance. In addition, the budget contains a new \$10.5 million contingency fund for unanticipated shortfalls in child protective services (CPS) or child care assistance. Governor Jan Brewer had originally proposed to provide \$9.6 million in additional funding to address the growing need for child care assistance for children in CPS and to prevent 4,000 low-income children currently receiving child care assistance from losing it. Since the governor made that proposal, the growth in the number of children in CPS needing child care assistance has slowed considerably; if this trend continues, some of the additional child care assistance funding could be used to expand the availability of child care assistance for other (non-CPS) children.⁴
- **California's** legislature approved a budget for 2013-14 that includes \$30 million to expand part-day state preschool slots, \$15.8 million in new child care funding to offset across-the-board federal spending cuts (sequestration), and \$10 million in unspent child care funds to provide child care assistance to additional low-income (non-TANF) families.⁵ The governor is expected to sign the budget measure.
- **Colorado** Governor John Hickenlooper's budget for FY 2013-2014 proposed an increase of \$23.9 million for local school districts to expand full-day kindergarten and preschool programs and improve teacher quality.⁶ In keeping with this proposal, a school finance reform package approved by the governor and legislature included an Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE) provision for the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP). This provision creates 3,200 more slots that school districts can use to either serve more children in CPP, add a second half of the day for children already being served in CPP to create a full day, or add the second half of the day for at-risk kindergartners.⁷ However, the school finance reform—and the ECARE provision—will only go into effect if voters approve a ballot measure to fund it.⁸ In addition, the state created the Infant and Toddler Quality and Availability Grant Program to fund quality improvement grants for infant and toddler providers and tiered reimbursement for children receiving child care assistance and attending participating providers.⁹ The budget also increased state funding for Early Intervention Colorado by \$4.5 million and the Nurse Home Visitor Program by \$800,000 to expand services to six additional counties.¹⁰ Finally, the state approved a measure to align early

childhood services by moving various programs for young children from separate state agencies into the Colorado Department of Human Services, which also houses the recently created Office of Early Childhood.¹¹

- **Connecticut** Governor Dannel Malloy followed last year's work on early childhood—which included an investment of \$9.8 million in early childhood initiatives, the creation of 1,000 new slots in early learning programs, and \$3 million for the state's quality rating and improvement system—with a proposal to create and fund a new Office of Early Childhood. The proposal would consolidate various early childhood programs currently housed in five separate state agencies into one office that would direct all early childhood programs. The legislature approved funding for the office, but failed to approve legislation creating the new state agency. The governor also proposed to cut funding for child care assistance by \$3.27 million in FY 2014; this cut was included in the final budget. In addition, the legislature adopted the governor's proposal to restrict eligibility for child care assistance. Families will still be able to qualify for child care assistance with incomes up to 50 percent of state median income, but will not be able to continue receiving child care assistance if their incomes increase above that amount; until now, families receiving child care assistance have been able to continue receiving it with incomes up to 75 percent of state median income.¹²
- **Georgia** restored the prekindergarten school year to a full school year by adding 10 days that had previously been cut. This change will also raise prekindergarten teacher's salaries by allowing them to be paid for a full school year. The restoration to a full school year was proposed in Governor Nathan Deal's budget¹³ and included in the final state budget for FY 2014 passed by the state legislature.¹⁴
- **Hawaii** provided \$6.4 million over the FY 2014-2015 biennium for a School Readiness Program, allowing 900 children from low- and moderate-income families to attend preschool or a Family-Child Interaction Learning program. The School Readiness Program will complement the existing Preschool Open Doors Program, and both programs will be operated by the Department of Human Services. This funding level fell short of the Governor Neil Abercrombie's original proposal for \$30 million to provide preschool to 3,500 four-year-olds, but it is seen as a first step. The program will be offered by early education providers that meet quality standards established by the Executive Office on Early Learning. However, for the program to be implemented, voters must approve an amendment to the state constitution to allow the state to use public money for private preschool.¹⁵
- **Indiana's** final budget includes \$2 million to establish an early education matching grant fund that will support prekindergarten programs for four-year-olds from families with incomes at or below the poverty level. Providers that have achieved a level three or four quality rating and that have obtained matching grants or gifts from foundations, other nonprofit entities, individuals, and/or for-profit entities are eligible to apply for grants from the early education fund.¹⁶ It is estimated that the program could serve about 800 children.¹⁷ Indiana had been one of only 10 states that did not fund a prekindergarten program.¹⁸
- **Iowa's** Senate's budget proposal includes \$4.4 million in additional funding to increase reimbursement rates for child care providers by 5 percent. The Senate's budget would also provide \$3.7 million in additional funding to extend the amount of time families can receive child care assistance without recertifying their eligibility from six months to 12 months. In addition, the Senate proposes an appropriation of \$75,000 for a study of the state's current quality rating and improvement system.¹⁹
- **Kentucky** froze intake for child care assistance for most families²⁰ as of April 2013 and lowered its income eligibility limit from 150 percent of poverty to 100 percent of poverty as of July 2013. These changes will eliminate child care assistance for an estimated 8,700 families and cut funding for child care assistance by \$57.8 million during the 2014 fiscal year.²¹
- **Massachusetts** Governor Deval Patrick, in his FY 2014 budget, proposed to spend an additional \$51.6 million for child care assistance to serve infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children who are currently on the waiting list. The governor also proposed to provide \$30 million for a new initiative related to the state quality rating and improvement system that would support teacher training, professional development, and classroom grants; \$13 million to increase reimbursement rates for providers serving children receiving child care assistance; \$17.6 million to fund bus monitors and other steps to improve the safety of transportation for children to and from

child care; and \$11.2 million for three new programs aimed at boosting children's school readiness, including a Comprehensive Support Services program, a Kindergarten Entry Assessment System, and a Family Engagement to Support Reading Proficiency by Grade Three program.²² Governor Patrick proposed to fund these initiatives by increasing the state income tax by one percent (to 6.25 percent), double personal exemptions, and eliminate certain itemized deductions in an attempt to distribute the burden of the tax increase based on ability to pay.²³ Unfortunately, the Massachusetts House's proposed budget for FY 2014 does not include funding for any of the initiatives proposed by the governor and in fact would reduce funding for child care assistance by \$17.5 million, or 8 percent, from FY 2013 levels.²⁴ The Senate Ways and Means Committee's proposal provides approximately \$13 million more than the House budget for the Department of Early Education and Care. The Senate's proposal dedicates \$15 million to reducing the waiting list for child care assistance; however, it also cuts funding for the state prekindergarten program, full-day kindergarten, and other early education programs.²⁵

- **Maryland** began serving most of the families on the state waiting list for child care assistance, reducing the number of children on the waiting list from over 17,000 as of February 2012²⁶ to just 76 as of March 2013.²⁷
- **Michigan** increased funding for the Great Start Readiness Program—the state's prekindergarten program for four-year-olds who are from low- and moderate-income families or who have other risk factors—by \$65 million (60 percent) for the 2013-2014 budget year. The additional funding, which had been proposed by Governor Rick Snyder, will be used to serve at least 10,000 more children and to increase the allotment per child from \$3,400 to \$3,625.²⁸
- **Minnesota's** final budget provides \$60 million in additional funding over the next two years to support child care and early education. The state will increase reimbursement rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance, simplify the rate structure, and, as of March 2015, increase differential rates for higher-quality child care (providers with three- and four-star quality ratings). Families using higher-rated providers will only be required to participate in authorized activities for 30 hours per week, instead of the usual 35 hours per week. The state will once again reimburse providers for up to 25 days per year while a child is absent as of February 1, 2014; the state had reduced the number of absent days per year for which it would reimburse providers to 10 as of January 1, 2013. The additional investment in child care and early education also includes \$46 million over two years for early learning scholarships—up from just \$6 million. As of July 2013, early learning scholarships of up to \$5,000 per year, which can be used to attend a three- or four-star child care, school-based, or Head Start program, will be available for three- and four-year-olds (and their younger siblings) in families with incomes at or below 185 percent of poverty.²⁹ In addition to the \$60 million for child care and early education, the budget includes \$134 million to fund a free full-day kindergarten option for families in every school district.³⁰ The final budget follows many of the proposals included in Governor Mark Dayton's budget, including proposals to increase child care provider reimbursement rates, expand scholarships for high-quality early education, and support full-day kindergarten.³¹
- **Mississippi** appropriated \$3 million for a new prekindergarten program. Local early learning collaboratives—which must include a public school district and/or a local Head Start affiliate, private or parochial schools, or one or more licensed child care centers, and may also include agencies or other organizations that work with young children and their families—will apply to the Mississippi Department of Education for funding. Early learning collaboratives will be required to match state funding, using local tax dollars, federal dollars, parent tuition, philanthropic contributions, and/or in-kind donations of facilities, equipment, and services required as part of the program. The Department of Education will award funds based on a community's capacity and need, taking into account factors such as evidence of existing local collaboration among early education stakeholders, low academic achievement in the community, and/or a shortage of high-quality prekindergarten options in the community.³²
- **Missouri's** legislature approved Governor Jay Nixon's proposal to increase state funding for Early Head Start by \$3.5 million. The legislature also agreed to the governor's proposal to increase the income eligibility limit to qualify for child care assistance from 127 percent of poverty to 150 percent of poverty, and to allow families receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it with incomes up to 175 percent of poverty (an increase from 132 percent of poverty). In addition, the legislature supported the governor's proposal to increase

reimbursement rates for licensed child care facilities by 3 percent. However, the legislature funded the Missouri Preschool Program at the same level as in FY 2012—\$11.8 million, which is higher than in FY 2013 but still lower than in FY 2011—rather than increasing funding to \$18.3 million as proposed by the governor. The legislature also rejected the governor’s proposal to provide \$3.5 million to restore grants to child care providers to help them improve their quality.³³

- **Montana** Governor Steve Bullock proposed investing \$2 million over the 2013-2015 biennium for quality improvement in early childhood education programs. The proposal aimed to support a framework of specific improvement strategies such as professional development, curriculum enhancement, program management, adequate staff-to-child ratios, and lower group sizes.³⁴ The legislature has designated up to \$1 million for such efforts to improve early childhood education programs. The department is awaiting final authorization for the actual amount to be awarded in the summer of 2013.³⁵
- **Nebraska’s** legislature has advanced a bill that would increase the income eligibility limit for child care assistance from 120 percent of poverty to 125 percent of poverty next year, and to 130 percent of poverty the year after that. The bill would also establish a five-tier quality rating and improvement system that would eventually be mandatory for all providers serving families receiving child care assistance and voluntary for all other providers.³⁶
- **New Jersey** Governor Chris Christie’s proposed FY 2014 budget includes \$648.1 million for Preschool Education Aid, which is an increase of \$14.4 million from the FY 2013 adjusted appropriation. This additional funding will be used to increase enrollment in existing programs.³⁷
- **New Mexico** used the state’s tobacco settlement money to provide an increase of \$9.75 million for early care and education, including \$2 million for home visiting, \$5.75 million for state prekindergarten, and \$2 million to raise reimbursement rates for providers that serve children receiving child care assistance and that have three-, four-, or five-star quality ratings. The legislature also appropriated an additional \$5.5 million for the state prekindergarten program and \$7 million for child care assistance. The additional funding for home visiting will allow an estimated 500 to 600 more families to receive services. The additional funding for prekindergarten (from the tobacco settlement money and the additional appropriation) will allow an estimated 3,000 more children to participate in the program.³⁸
- **New York’s** final budget for 2013-2014 includes an additional \$25 million in prekindergarten funding, as proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The funding will be focused on supporting full-day prekindergarten and targeted toward higher-need students in lower-wealth school districts through a competitive process.³⁹
- **North Carolina** Governor Pat McCrory proposed to increase funding for the state prekindergarten program by \$52 million over two years to serve 5,000 additional children.⁴⁰ However, the House proposed to reduce the income eligibility limit from 75 percent of state median income (approximately \$39,000 for a family of three) to 100 percent of poverty (approximately \$19,500 for a family of three).⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Senate’s proposed budget fails to renew funding for 5,000 slots in the state prekindergarten program that were added last year and would shift an additional 7,500 slots over the next two years from the prekindergarten program to the child care assistance program, which has weaker quality standards.⁴² The Senate budget would also shift the 42 percent of Smart Start funding used for child care assistance, which is currently administered by local partnerships, to the child care assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services.⁴³
- **North Dakota** increased its income eligibility limit for child care assistance from 50 percent to 85 percent of state median income, the maximum amount allowed under federal law. The state provided over \$2 million in contingency funds to be used if needed to support the expanded eligibility as well as to support an increase in provider reimbursement rates. In addition, the state provided \$300,000 for a grant program for child care, \$400,000 for staff recruitment and retention efforts, and \$2.6 million for grants for child care facilities. However, the state also increased maximum group sizes for child care centers (staff-child ratios were not changed though).⁴⁴

- **Ohio's** House and Senate proposed to provide supplemental funding for the state's prekindergarten program that would be used for highly rated community-based providers that meet state prekindergarten standards. The House proposed to provide \$10 million and the Senate proposed to provide \$30 million in supplemental funding over the 2013-2015 biennium.⁴⁵
- **Pennsylvania** Governor Tom Corbett's budget proposal includes a \$4.5 million increase in funding for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and a \$1.9 million increase for Head Start Supplemental Assistance. The governor also proposed to provide an additional \$3 million for tiered reimbursement and mentoring for the state's child care quality rating and improvement system (Rising STARS Initiative). In addition, the governor proposed to use \$7.1 million in savings from consolidation of the child care assistance program to serve 1,400 children currently on the waiting list.⁴⁶ The House budget bill contains the governor's proposed increases for Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance, but provides \$3 million less than the governor proposed for child care assistance.⁴⁷
- **Rhode Island** Governor Lincoln Chafee's budget proposal includes a \$1 million increase in funding for the state prekindergarten program, maintains state funding for Head Start, and provides \$1.5 million to conduct a 12-month pilot study of a policy that would allow families receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it with incomes up to 225 percent of poverty, which is higher than the state's income limit to initially qualify for child care assistance (180 percent of poverty).⁴⁸
- **South Carolina's** Senate is moving forward a proposal to provide \$20 million for prekindergarten, which would nearly double funding for the program.⁴⁹
- **Vermont** Governor Peter Shumlin proposed to provide an additional \$16.7 million to update the income eligibility limit for child care assistance for the 2013 federal poverty level (which would make more families eligible for assistance), reduce copayments for some families receiving child care assistance, and increase reimbursement rates for child care providers by 40 percent. However, the plan would have been partially paid for by reallocating a significant portion of the funding used for the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which provides essential support for low-income families. The legislature opposed the proposed EITC reduction, and did not identify another significant source of funding to support all of the governor's child care proposals. As a result, the final budget includes only \$5 million in additional funding for child care, which will be used to update the income limit for the 2013 federal poverty level, increase reimbursement rates by just 3 percent, support caseload increases, and provide incentives for the state's quality rating and improvement system (STep Ahead Recognition System, or STARS).⁵⁰
- **West Virginia** Governor Ray Tomblin proposed to provide a \$17 million supplemental appropriation to preserve the current child care assistance program, which last year faced severe cuts that almost resulted in 1,400 children losing their child care assistance;⁵¹ this funding was included in the final budget for FY 2014.⁵² The governor also signed legislation that will require prekindergarten programs that operate for a full day, five days per week to be available to four-year-olds in every county by the 2016-2017 school year.⁵³

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