Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call, May 4, 2021

Facilitators: Elizabeth Burke Bryant (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT) and Danielle Ewen (EducationCounsel)

Next Call: The next call will be on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, 4:00 ET (first Tuesday of the month at 4 ET). If you have registered, you will receive a reminder and zoom link in advance of the call. (To register for calls for the rest of the year: https://earlysuccess.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrfuqprT0rGtY5k0ySZFki-yRoEp_CMnSv)

And don’t forget: “Ask Me Anything” Call-In: Every other Tuesday at 1:00 ET –. Next call is Tuesday May 25th at 1 pm ET. To join: https://www.gotomeet.me/DanielleEwen You can also dial in using your phone.

MAY 4, 2021 STATEFEDCONNECT AGENDA:

- **Special focus on the American Families Plan** – Presentation by Grace Landrieu, Domestic Policy Council, Director of Labor and Workers, The White House and Katie Hamm, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families
- **Federal Update** (Danielle)
- **General Q & A** (Moderated by Elizabeth)

Presentation and Discussion - Grace Landrieu, Domestic Policy Council, Director of Labor and Workers at The White House and Katie Hamm, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families provided an overview of The American Families Plan, announced by President Biden on April 28th as an investment in our kids, our families, and our economic future.

The five sections of the plan are:
- Higher Education,
- Teachers,
- Early Childhood,
- Paid Leave and
- Nutrition
The plan provides help for middle class families by adding four years to education – universal pre-k for three and four year old’s and two years of community college.

The American Families Plan proposes $225 billion over 10 years to ensure all kids under 5 in families earning under 1.5 times the state median income have access to high quality child care. Some details:
  o Caps co-payments at 7% so that families pay no more than 7% of their income on child care.
  o Provides funding for true cost of quality including developmentally appropriate curriculum, professional development, small class sizes, and culturally and linguistically responsive environments that are also inclusive of children with disabilities.

The American Families Plan provides $200 billion to provide universal access to high-quality preschool for 3 and 4 year old’s, delivered in a diverse or mixed delivery system including child care, Head Start, public schools. Some details:
  o Provides that early educators in child care, Head Start and preschool expansion earn at least $15 per hour and parity with K teachers for those with comparable credentials.
  o Provides for small classroom size, inclusive settings, developmentally appropriate curriculum and credential support for teachers.
  o Federal state partnership proposal: Considering a state match over ten years, with 10% match at the start of 10 years, then increase to 50% by year 10, with states paying half and federal funding paying half. States that are currently paying for 4 year old’s will be able to use that as match.
  o There is also a $27 billion increase to Head Start, and the pay parity issue cuts across Pre-K and Head Start.

The American Families Plan also includes Paid Family and Medical Leave by creating a national, comprehensive family and medical leave program. Some details:
  o It would guarantee 12 weeks of paid parental, family, and personal sick leave by year 10 of the program
  o Includes wage replacement provisions that would make it more likely for low-income families to be able to use this benefit.

In addition, the American Jobs Plan provides $25 Billion for building the supply of child care and $5 billion in early childhood educator workforce development.

Reminder: The American Rescue Plan provides
  o $40 billion to stabilize the child care industry and previous COVID relief included $39 billion for child care. The amount of child care funding means more funding for infant/toddler child care.

The Administration will be releasing guidance, and that there will be a landing page for guidance on child care relief funds at the Administration for Children and Families website. There will also be monthly webinar series from ACF/Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start.
Federal Update – Danielle Ewen

- Will be important for advocates to connect with their members who serve on the HELP, Finance, Ways and Means, and House Education Committees
- Probably won’t see legislation until next month
- Now there are conversations on guardrails, diverse delivery, state match and suggested that advocates can work on a set of core principles
- Continue efforts to ensure that American Rescue Plan funds are used well

Summary of President Joe Biden’s American Families Plan
On April 28, President Joe Biden unveiled his American Families Plan, which is his third proposal to support recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The American Families Plan would provide an estimated $1.8 trillion over ten years and builds upon the president’s previously proposed $2.5 trillion American Jobs Plan, which is focused on the nation’s infrastructure, and the already-enacted $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARP).

The fact sheet released by the Biden Administration outlining the American Families Plan is here:


Key to Know:
- With the American Families Plan now proposed, much of the work to enact the proposal moves to Congress. The White House will need to work with Congressional leaders in order to more fully define the legislative details of the American Families Plan and garner sufficient support to pass the bill. While President Biden has expressed a preference for bipartisan solutions, it remains to be seen what counteroffers congressional Republicans will propose, and how much the White House and congressional Democrats are willing to compromise on both the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan.

- As was used to pass the American Rescue Plan, there is a strong possibility that the president and congressional Democrats will need to use the budget reconciliation process in order to pass the American Families Plan and the American Jobs Plan. By using the reconciliation process, congressional Democrats will only need a simple majority in the Senate to pass the packages – reconciliation bills are not subject to the 60-vote filibuster like regular order legislation. However, reconciliation is a procedurally challenging process, and some components of the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan may not make it through the political process or the stringencies of the Byrd Rules. Even though reconciliation bills only require a majority to pass the Senate, it is unclear whether all Senate Democrats will support the level of funding and all the specific investments proposed by the president.

- The president and Congressional Democrats will work to advance these packages quickly and the White House has asserted that it believes both packages should be advanced, not one over the other. However, the legislative process could take months, and the longer that it takes, the more difficult it will become to advance other legislation such as the FY2022 appropriations bills. Funding for FY2021 expires on September 30, 2021 and Congress will need to either advance a FY2022 spending package or complete a Continuing Resolution (CR). Bottom line – Congress and the White House have their work cut out for them this year.
Summary of Early Childhood and Child Care Provisions:

• **$200 billion for a federal-state partnership program to offer free, high-quality, accessible, and inclusive preschool to all 3 and 4 year-olds.**
  - Funding will be prioritized for “high-need areas,” and would enable families to choose settings that work best for them.
  - The plan suggests that the program would support access to high-quality programs by supporting low student-to teacher ratios, high-quality and developmentally appropriate curriculum, and supportive classroom environments.
  - All educators supported by the program would receive job-embedded coaching.
  - Programs would earn at least $15 per hour and those with “comparable qualifications” would receive compensation comparable to kindergarten teachers.

• **$225 billion to support access to high-quality, affordable child care.**
  - Families earning up to 150 percent of state median income would pay no more than 7 percent of their income for child care for children under five. For working families that are “the most hard-pressed,” child care costs would be fully covered.
  - The plan would provide families with a “range of options”, including child care centers, family child care providers, Early Head Start, and public schools.
  - The plan includes funding to cover the “true cost” of high-quality child care, including developmentally appropriate curriculum, professional development, small class sizes, and culturally and linguistically responsive environments that are also inclusive of children with disabilities.
  - The funding would also ensure that all child care workers would earn at least $15 per hour, and those with similar qualifications will receive compensation and benefits comparable to kindergarten teachers.

• **$225 billion to create a national comprehensive paid family and medical leave program.**
  - Ensure that workers are able to receive partial wage replacement for time taken to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill loved one, deal with a loved one’s military deployment, find safety from sexual assault, stalking or domestic violence, heal from a serious illness, or take time to deal with the death of a loved one.
  - The plan would guarantee 12 weeks of paid parental, family, and personal sick leave by year 10 of the program. Workers would receive three days of bereavement leave per year starting in year one.
  - The plan would provide up to $4,000 per month, with a minimum of two-thirds of average weekly wage replacement, and up to 80 percent for the lowest wage workers.

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*Alliance for Early Success does not endorse or advocate for specific legislation or candidates.*