Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call, June 1, 2021

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

Next Call: The next call will be on Tuesday, July 6, 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 June 22nd at 1 pm ET. To join: https://www.gotomeet.me/DanielleEwen You can also dial in using your phone.

JUNE 1, 2021 STATEFEDCONNECT AGENDA:

- Using Federal Relief Dollars to Support Compensation — Presentation by Lauren Hogan, Managing Director of Policy and Professional Advancement, and Lucy Recio, Senior Public Policy Analyst, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Ashley Williams, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE)
  - Federal Update (Danielle)
  - Update on virtual Hill visits in July and General Q & A (Moderated by Elizabeth)

Presentation and Discussion- Lauren Hogan and Lucy Recio, NAEYC and Ashley Williams, CSCCE shared strategies on how to ensure that federal relief funding from the American Rescue Plan be used to address child care compensation.

- The American Rescue Plan provides $39 billion in child care relief funding, including $24 billion for a stabilization fund for eligible child care providers and $15 billion for expanded child care assistance through CCDBG.
- Need to ensure that federal child care relief funds reach individual early care and education staff in the form of direct cash payments. Direct payments to child care providers, made equitably are strategic.
- Stressed the importance of prioritizing distribution of funding to programs in communities with the most need.
- CSCCE’s Workforce Index shows that median child care wages in any state don’t meet poverty threshold. Using federal relief funding for compensation signals that it is a priority for long-term systems change.
• States should require that a portion of stabilization grants to child care programs be spent on employee compensation. Multiple states are requiring that certain percentages of stabilization grant fund be spent on compensation for the workforce. One example is New Mexico which used CARES Act funding to get checks to workforce. ($8 million across 300 monthly checks directly to licensed caregivers). Another example is Connecticut which provides 25% bonuses if child care programs use federal relief funding on workforce compensation.
• To help ensure that direct cash payments/premium pay to providers does not make them ineligible for certain benefits, consider an income disregard. For example, Wisconsin provides an income disregard for up to $10,000 so that workers would not have to lose benefits due to COVID relief.
• Direct payments are not enough – should also increase access to benefits. Child care providers have little access to benefits, especially for people of color. Access to health care is through health insurance coverage is key. Washington state is an early adopter in paying for health insurance.
• Child care workers need child care subsidies for their own children – ensure that premium pay does not make them ineligible for child care subsidies. Instead of screening people out for benefits, screen them in.
• For family child care, establish substitute pools through family child care networks.
• Build equity, stability, and accountability. Raise eligibility and payment rates to increase access to subsidy and create scale. Invest in contracts and grants, pay on licensed capacity rather than attendance.
• Take steps to prepare for mixed delivery success and UPK parity through comprehensive scholarships and apprenticeship programs with built-in wage increases, increase equitable access to higher education, and establish a compensation schedule that leads to Pre-K parity.
• Invest in data and evaluation to examine the impact and utilization of ARP funding in order to inform future policies and resource allocation. There is need for provider-level, integrated data systems with disaggregated data by race, setting, and gender.

NAEYC’s new Issue Brief: Compensation Matters Most provides information on why and how states can use child care relief funding to increase compensation for the ECE workforce. Here is the link:
compensation_matters_most.pdf (naeyc.org)

You can also join NAEYC and the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment to learn more about why and how states can use child care relief funds to increase compensation for early childhood educators as the best way to address child care supply, quality, and equity by registering to their webinar: How the American Rescue Plan Can Increase Compensation for Early Childhood Educators on June 23rd from 3:00 to 4:00 pm. Here is the link:
Webinar Registration - Zoom

Federal Update – Danielle Ewen Presentation and Discussion: On May 28th, President Biden released his full fiscal year (FY) 2022 budget request. This follows the president’s “skinny” discretionary budget request that was released in April. The budget request, which totals nearly $6 trillion in federal spending, details the president’s vision for the federal government and builds upon his earlier proposals – the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan. Attached is a summary of core early childhood, elementary and secondary, and postsecondary education programs – including several new mandatory programs that the president is proposing.
• The budget document reflects the Administration’s values and priorities. As such, it includes some details on the American Families Plan and the American Jobs Plan, such as recommending mandatory funding of $425 billion for child care, UPK, and facilities.

• Additionally, the budget document includes a request to increase CCDBG by $1.5 billion and Head Start by $1.2 billion.

• We need to have key members ensure that child care and Head Start increases are in the base.

• Appropriations has to be done by September 30th or else they will need a Continuing Resolution.

• The President is pushing for his infrastructure proposal, which may come through reconciliation.

• Will be important for advocates to connect with their members who serve on the HELP, Finance, Ways and Means, and House Education Committees.

• Continue efforts to ensure that American Rescue Plan funds are used well.

The fact sheet released by the Biden Administration outlining the President’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 is here: FINAL-FY22-Budget-Overview-Fact-Sheet.pdf (whitehouse.gov)

Update on July Meeting. Elizabeth said that as previously noted, there will not be an in-person meeting of StateFedConnect in July in DC, however we urge state advocates to make appointments for virtual Hill visits with their members/staff in July, and we will ask them to share what happened at the visits to inform future progress. On our July call we will discuss key messages for these virtual Hill visits.

July Hill visits: As part of a national advocacy push to ensure that Congress prioritizes child care investments in any large package that gets passed, we are asking all state grantees to set up virtual Hill visits between July 12 and July 30. It is imperative that these meetings are in place. We will be providing toolkits, TA, links to office contacts, and other supports as needed to ensure that you can have productive meetings during this time. Be on the lookout for an announcement of additional Office Hours with Danielle and other national leaders to discuss next steps and goals for meetings.

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