Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call, October 5, 2021

Facilitator: Elizabeth Burke Bryant (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT)

Next Call: The next call will be on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 4:00pm ET (first Tuesday of the month at 4:00ET). 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_CMn5v)

“Ask Me Anything” Call-In: Every other Tuesday at 1:00 ET. Next call is October 12th at 1pm ET. To join: https://www.gotomeet.me/DanielleEwen You can also dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): 1 877 309 2073 United States: +1 (571) 317-3129 Access Code: 965-856-357

October 5, 2021 StateFedConnect Agenda:

- **New Birth to Five System Design Principles** – Caitlin Jensen – Executive Director, Zero to Five Montana – Presented on the newest resource from the Alliance: Principles for Investments in a Stronger and More Equitable Birth-to-Five Early Childhood System.
- **Federal Update** – Lauren Hogan, NAEYC
- **Build Back Better Priorities** – Katie Hamm – Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the Department of Health and Human Services – Shared information on the Biden Administration’s Build Back Better funding proposal for early childhood programs.

Birth to Five System Design Principles-- Caitlin Jensen, Executive Director, Zero to Five Montana

Caitlin shared a resource created by Alliance state and local leaders: State Advocates Release Principles for Investments in a Stronger and More Equitable Birth-to-Five Early Childhood System. Through the process of gathering folks from across the states and getting into the weeds on what successful early childhood systems look like, these principles reflect why investments in early care are so critical.

The system design principles are:

- Child care is affordable.
- Payments support the real cost of care.
- System reform policies are centered in equity.
- Providers have access to professional pathways.
- All providers earn a livable wage and benefits, with comparable compensation for those with comparable qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities, regardless of setting or age of children served.
- Child care is available and accessible in all communities.
- All children, regardless of age or type of setting, have access to quality care.
• Families are eligible for help paying for child care based solely on income.
• Access to child care assistance is simple.

More information on the new principles can be found here. Danielle Ewen lead this group and creation of the principles, and is interested in feedback on how Alliance members hope to use these principles; she can be reached at danielle.ewen@educationcounsel.com.

**Federal Update – Lauren Hogan, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

Legislation and decision-making continues to change rapidly on Capitol Hill. We remain hopeful that, in the end, there will be a deal that supports our priorities, but there are still a few things about what we actually know and don’t know about the federal situation right now:

• We know: There was no vote on the bipartisan infrastructure bill last week, despite a series of scheduled votes and high-stakes meetings.
  o We don’t know: When there will be a vote on infrastructure, nor on the Build Back Better reconciliation package (where the majority of investments supporting children, families, and educators are housed). For a variety of reasons, October 31 looks like another deadline possibility, but that is highly subject to change.
    ▪ The continuing resolution (CR) that was voted on last week keeps the government funded for just nine weeks.
• We know: President Biden has said that the infrastructure bill will not happen until there is an agreement on the reconciliation package. This is significant because it commits the two pieces staying together.
  o We don’t know: What exactly “an agreement” looks like.
• We know: The reconciliation bill will be less than $3.5 trillion.
  o We don’t know: What the ultimate top line number will be; there is some likelihood that it will fall between $1.9 and $2.3 trillion, based on current comments from Congress people. Today, progressives said $2.5 trillion; Manchin is still at $1.5 trillion.
• We know: There will be cuts, across the board and/or within specific programs.
  o We don’t know: Whether and what kind of cuts the child care, preschool, and community college parts of the bill will sustain. We will continue fighting for the entire proposal of $450 billion, but we have to consider the possibility that there may be trade-offs, and here are a few directions that those tradeoffs could go towards:
    ▪ Cutting entire programs or fundamentally altering the structure of the programs. While we don’t think ECE is going to be fully on the chopping block, there is concern about programs like free community college, which matter extensively for professional development and mixed-delivery success.
    ▪ If they do neither of those things, there are other methods to reduce spending:
      • They can reduce income eligibility and make the programs accessible to fewer people. For example, they could decide that pre-K won’t be universally eligible and it will instead only be available to folks under a certain income limit.
      • They can slow the phase-in – entitlement only kicks in in year five, rather than year 4.
      • They can shorten the length of the programs – it only lasts for 6 years instead of 7.
• They can lower the federal share of the match – from 90/10 to 80/20, for example, in the child care context.

Not saying any of these things will happen – only that there are lots of discussions about what could happen. We know that we have a lot of key champions on the Hill, and they need us to continue to reach out relentlessly to Congress about the importance and urgency of prioritizing child care and preschool investments. Leaders and members must understand why this remains doable, urgent, and a priority.

For Wednesday #SolveChildCare Day of Action, the following resources were shared and can be helpful throughout advocacy:

• Access your updated 2-page state-specific survey fact sheets in this Google drive.
• #SolveChildCare Day of Action Toolkit: https://ffyf.quorum.us/action_center/
• NAEYC State Survey Data updated with quotes from parents and educators: https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/user-74/naeyc_survey_statedatawithquotes_sep2021.pdf
• Moody’s Analytics has been supportive of the American Families Plan and the $3.5 trillion package as well: https://www.moodysanalytics.com/-/media/article/2021/american-families-plan-build-back-better-agenda.pdf
• Letter from women’s and civil rights groups that went out this week calling on the chamber and business roundtable on equity impact: http://womeneffectfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Oct._2021_Care_Letter_to_CEOs.pdf
• And don’t forget the power of sharing your experience talking with parents, providers, and other folks in the community.

Build Back Better Priorities—Katie Hamm, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the Department of Health and Human Services, provided Alliance members with insight on the Biden Administration’s priorities for early childhood programs in the American Families Plan. The presentation is here (slides attached), and a podcast with Miriam Calderon from the US Department of Education and Katie Hamm discussing the mixed delivery system also provides information.

Katie began her presentation by outlining the Biden Administration’s early childhood budget priorities for early childhood. This includes the $225 billion Child Care for American Families Program, $200 billion for universal preschool, and $25 billion to invest in child care infrastructure through the American Jobs Plan. While this is the proposed budget, this is funding that will have to go through budget reconciliation process to be issued. The House included some of these provisions in the bill, but she explained that during the reconciliation process, the “Byrd Rule” allows for provisions to be challenged and struck from the bill.

The Child Care for American Families Program has the opportunity to create new pathways to child care access. The proposed program allowed for children to be eligible based on 1.5 times the median income
in their state, though the House language includes 2.0 times the state’s median income. These eligible families pay no more than 7 percent of their income for child care, and the payments are calculated on a sliding scale based on income. Katie noted as an important part of this program that provider payments would be based on the cost of quality care rather than the market rate, including low ratios and developmentally appropriate curriculum. This requires the state to provide information about what it costs to provide quality child care in their communities.

Another major component of the program is to promote pay parity across settings, as a focus of access to child care is through a mixed delivery system. Katie noted that the administration recognizes that families should be able to choose the setting that works best for them, whether that is a family child care program, a Head Start program, a traditional school, or a child care center.

The Build Back Better plan outlines universal preschool as a partnership between states and the federal government. Katie acknowledged that while many states already have successful enrollment of four-year-olds, all states can use this program to expand enrollment of three-year-olds. Consistent with child care, provider pay parity is a priority for pre-k, as well as high-quality programs as defined by the preschool standards in Head Start.

Katie emphasized throughout her time on the call that the administration recognizes that addressing child care needs across the country requires investments in both families and in providers. She noted that the field has struggled in the past because policymakers focus on solving one issue within child care (i.e. quality, wages, access). This legislation is so important because it’s tackling all of these components together, rather than putting a band aid on just one. These programs are focused on helping both for families seeking child care and for child care providers and can help to aid systemic issues.

As Katie concluded her presentation, she shared a summary of priorities of the Biden Administration as they invest in families. The Build Back Better plan includes: the Expanded Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, the Expanded Child Tax Credit, Paid Family and Medical Leave, Nutrition Program Expansion, and Health Insurance Tax Credits.

There are two additional resources that were provided:
- The White House Build Back Better website: https://www.whitehouse.gov/build-back-better/

**Remember**, Wednesday Days of Action are pivotal to continuing our drumbeat! As Lauren noted, relentless does matter! We’re optimistic about this opportunity, and it is important that all members of Congress regularly hear how important it is to fund child care! The next StateFedConnect call will be on **Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 4:00pm ET**.