Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer
Zoom Call, September 14, 2021

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

- **Next Call:** The next call will be on **Tuesday, October 5, 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_CMnSv](https://earlysuccess.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrfuqprT0rGtY5k0ySZFki-yRoEp_CMnSv))
- **“Ask Me Anything” Call-In:** Every other Tuesday at 1:00 ET. Next call is **September 28th at 1pm ET**. To join: [https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6840261494?pwd=UUxwUy9KMVGVSHlS3FR0FFTeEp5dz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6840261494?pwd=UUxwUy9KMVGVSHlS3FR0FFTeEp5dz09). For access on Zoom, the Meeting ID is 684 026 1494 and the passcode is 830667. You can find your local number to call into the meeting by clicking here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kcUK7aMGB7](https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kcUK7aMGB7).
- **Help Needed:** We are interested in hearing what you would like to include on State-Fed calls. Please let us know if you would have issues to raise with the group or would like to lead a call on a particular topic.
- **Important new resource from the Alliance:** The recently released *Principles for Investments in a Stronger and More Equitable Birth-to-Five Early Childhood System* can be used to help guide policy conversations at the state and federal level: [https://earlysuccess.org/principles-for-investing-in-child-care-and-early-education](https://earlysuccess.org/principles-for-investing-in-child-care-and-early-education)

**September 2021 StateFedConnect Agenda:**
- **Federal Update** – Danielle Ewen, EducationCounsel
- **CHIP and Medicaid Update** – Elisabeth Wright Burak, Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy's Center for Children and Families
- **Upcoming Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood (MIECHV) Reauthorization** – Catriona (Cat) Macdonald, Linchpin Strategies
- **New Transitions Toolkit** – Laura Bornfreund, New America

**Federal Update (Danielle Ewen)**
The House Ways and Means Committee and House Committee on Education and Labor put together their early childhood proposals for the budget reconciliation package and included them in committee mark-ups in early September. They have included a child care entitlement
and funding for universal preschool. The Education and Labor language is [here](#). The First Five Years Fund has produced a [summary of the provisions](#).

From the House Committee on Education on Labor, the child care entitlement includes:

- Supports for all eligible families with children under 6.
- Family copays are based on income level, starting at 0%, scaled up, and capped at 7% based on state median income level.
- States will have to opt-in to the entitlement program, but if they do not, there is an option for localities to opt in independently. States that do not opt in will continue to provide subsidies through the existing Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).
- The bill includes a 90-10 federal-state match.
- Funding is designed to increase quality and build supply, improve compensation for all providers, and make quality child care affordable. The bill requires states to determine payments based on a cost of care model that includes the full cost of quality.
- States must implement a quality rating system for all providers, and help providers move to the top tier over the next several years.

The preschool language includes:

- A goal of creating “a universal high-quality, inclusive, mixed delivery” system available to families on a voluntary basis.
- Eligible providers include: local education agencies (LEAs), Head Start programs, and licensed center or family child care programs. LEAs must be licensed or otherwise meet health and safety requirements.
- Similar to the child care entitlement, if states opt out of the funding, there is a local opt-in option.

From the House Ways and Means Committee, the language includes:

- Paid 12-week family leave program
- Extends the child tax credit and makes permanent the recent changes
- Payroll credit for child care providers

An overview of the Ways and Means proposal is [here](#).

**Health Coverage Provisions in Budget Reconciliation (Elisabeth Wright Burak)**

Markup on the provisions has not yet begun as of the call, but the newly released language includes several great steps for kids:

- **12-month continuous eligibility (CE) requirement for all children** in Medicaid and CHIP, which is currently a state option. This means a child is guaranteed Medicaid or CHIP coverage for a full year 12 months, with minimal exceptions (e.g. ages out, requests disenrollment voluntarily). CE helps to improve continuity of coverage for children and
reduce “churn” on and off insurance as income fluctuates. Today, about half of the states have this in either Medicaid or CHIP.

- **12 month postpartum extension requirement for all states.** While American Rescue Plan (ARP) provided the option for states to extend postpartum coverage to 12 months, this bill would make that mandatory for all states and make the postpartum extension permanent (ARP had a 5-year sunset based on larger package negotiations).

- **Makes the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) permanent,** which means Congress wouldn’t have to come back and re-fund every few years, leaving states and families in a cloud of uncertainty if new funding is delayed. In addition to taking another legislative item off the table in the future, this would allow state to plan for many years at a time, which has been a challenge in recent years with short-term extensions.

- **Makes the ARP's new marketplace subsidies and cost protections permanent** - the ARP only increased marketplaces affordability for one year.

- **Creates a Medicaid expansion “fallback” for the 12 states that have not expanded Medicaid to all adults under 138% of the FPL.** In the short term, adults in this “coverage gap” would be able to receive enhanced marketplace subsidies to purchase plans. Starting in 2024, the HHS secretary will create a Medicaid “lookalike” plan to cover these adults.

You can read more about the Committee’s language in the blog post here.

**Updates on MIECHV Reauthorization (Catriona (Cat) Macdonald),**

MIECHV was first created in the Affordable Care Act in 2010 as a 5-year authorization. Congress was not successful in passing the reauthorization in 2015, but then provided 1-year and 2-year packages before a 6-month lapse in funding occurred. This lapse in funding was very disruptive for programs, as staff who worried that their jobs were insecure left their positions for other jobs.

- The current statute expires in September 2022, and Cat shared that the authorizing committees will most likely turn to working on MIECHV when the budget reconciliation process is complete.

- Champions for home visiting hope to put forth marker legislation no later than January and are looking to the field for recommendations on what should be included.
  - The National Home Visit Coalition is collecting feedback throughout this process and there are multiple forums to provide it. To sign up for updates on MIECHV reauthorization and other important information from the Home Visiting Coalition, use this link:
    https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1l6XNhnnH4IuWpBIIQ7LFnFb-wWJWLOZwn7TY5Lke-11/viewform?edit_requested=true

- To advocate for the best outcomes in MIECHV reauthorization:
  - Reach out to members of Congress on the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees to talk with them about how home visiting works in their
communities, the importance of home visiting, and the resources provided through MIECHV.

- Even if you don’t have specific recommendations or don’t receive MIECHV funding, they need to know the impact of home visiting in their communities.
- It’s ok to talk about the upsides and the downsides of MIECHV funding so that they understand how the program works. For example, the data collection and reporting burden is significant, and some programs don’t participate in MIECHV because they want their home visitors to have more time in visits to focus on addressing family needs.
- At its current funding level, the package only supports 3% of eligible kids.
  - The Home Visiting Coalition supports the following recommendations for MIECHV reauthorization:
    - 5-year reauthorization for funding predictability.
    - Funding should be increased by $2 million each year over the five years, which brings it to $1.4 billion by the end of this reauthorization.
    - One major goal for this round is to create more programs across the country so more kids can be served. This includes system strengthening and increased staff salaries.
    - Increase the tribal set-aside from 3% to 6% of total funding to assist Native American youth.
      - Currently of 675 eligible tribes and urban Indian organizations, only 25 can get home visiting grants and the average award is only $300,000.

**Presentation: A Toolkit for Effective and Supportive Transitions for Children, Families, and Educators in Fall 2021 and Beyond (Laura Bornfreund).** Laura and Danielle shared the new toolkit written in partnership with EducationCounsel on how to build systems for effective transitions from child care spaces to school settings. Access the toolkit [here](#).

- The first section of the toolkit outlines how important this year’s transitions are and includes immediate steps to help children in this time of crisis.
  - Research shows that the pandemic caused significant declines in Kindergarten and Pre-K enrollment, most sharply in children from low-income households.
  - The industry predicts a “kindergarten bubble” in the coming year as a surge of children who weren’t previously enrolled enter classrooms. This will also affect first graders who did not have a complete Kindergarten experience, whether it was as a result of disruptions in the school year or an entirely virtual Kindergarten year.
- The toolkit also presents information for longer-term planning around transition years. It can be used as a framework for not just discrete activities but also systems programming and what bigger picture ideas can be connected and aligned (learning environments, family supports, curricula, etc.).
• When building effective funding streams, leaders should especially consider strategies to help the increased number of children experiencing trauma, as well as the number of adults in classrooms without early education expertise.

The toolkit details six steps to strengthen transitions:
1. Assess current transition policies and practices
2. Determine who should help design policy
3. Create a plan for improvement
4. Decide on strategies to adopt and funding streams to support them
5. Develop a timeline for implementation
6. Evaluate success and make changes as needed

As leaders begin the school year this fall, New America and EducationCounsel are seeking SEAs and LEAs to participate in TA work that develops transitions using the strategies in the toolkit. This will consist of a 6-8 month community of practice to delve into problems of practice in transition and plan systems-level changes.

Closing Comments: as the budget reconciliation process continues:
• Make sure your Representatives are hearing about community-level experiences and challenges.
• As we make the drumbeat as loud as possible, focusing on the need for significant investments in birth to five.
• The timeline on forming and solidifying language is not clear yet, which is why we need to stay vocal in our advocacy.
• This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we’re almost at the finish line!
• Remember to use the #SolveChildCare Action Toolkit, which is regularly updated: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1opUv6iXg7Hukhzpu1wvPKhjOAeOX3qv5LL1NGRlvOG4/edit


Remember, Wednesday Days of Action are pivotal to continuing our drumbeat! 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, October 5, 2021, 4:00pm ET.