



**Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call
July 11, 2023**

Our next call is scheduled for Tuesday, August 1 at 4:00 Eastern (NOTE: New time).

Zoom link: <https://earlysuccess.zoom.us/j/83668806146>

Next office hours: July 18, 4:00 Eastern. Join us for a federally facing “ask me anything” informal discussion.

Welcome

- **Why we’re here** - To connect state advocates with each other and engage with partners at the federal level. We are also focused on creating community among state advocates on federal issues.
 - **What’s on today’s agenda** –This month’s agenda included: an announcement about our new co-hosting format, a follow up to a previous request from Child Care Aware of America, an “Inside-Out” conversation about state advocate visits to Congressional offices, an update on Medicaid unwinding, a federal overview, and an administrative overview including information about the publication of new CCDBG proposed regulations.
 - **July 18 office hours** – 30-minute drop in discussion. No agenda, just come with any questions or intel you have!
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Announcement: New Format for StateFedConnect Monthly Calls

After discussions with the StateFedConnect Advisory group, we decided to change the facilitation of the monthly calls to include a state co-host in order to raise the voices of state partners and create shared leadership. Our plan is to include a new state facilitator each quarter. The first volunteer for this role is Mindy Binderman from GEEARS (GA).

We are looking for ideas for topics, as well as volunteers for the next few quarters. Please email Mandy (mableidinger@earlysuccess.org) or Danielle (Danielle.t.ewen@gmail.com) if you have questions or suggestions about the monthly calls.

We also took a straw poll that led us to shift the monthly calls to 4 pm ET/3 pm CT/2 pm MT/1 pm PT. You should have received an update to the series of calendar invitations.

Follow up: Help Child Care Aware of America Collect Video Stories

Child Care Aware of America is continuing their [provider testimonial project](#) to share with policymakers the impact of federal relief funds on the sector. In these videos, providers are asked to share in 90-second video testimonials how they have used stabilization grants and what it will mean for their program when the funding runs out. We shared an example from Juanita in Newport News, VA: <https://youtu.be/KQKg1qsJc58>.

Child Care Aware has heard a consistent response so far: *that this funding has been a critical lifeline to strengthen their businesses and support staff in a way the sector hasn't experienced before, but there are deep concerns about retaining staff and remaining open when these grants end.*

Gathering this information from providers in each state can help us in our collective advocacy efforts with federal policymakers to share why child care funding should be protected and prioritized. CCAoA has heard from 26 states so far and are continuing to gather more voices to elevate this narrative.

Do you have space to share out this request [and the link to record](#) with your provider community that received stabilization grants? Recordings can be completed on a cell phone, tablet, or laptop. CCAoA is specifically looking for videos from:

- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Vermont
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

[If you have questions or want to connect with CCAoA, please reach out to Diane Girouard \[diane.girouard@usa.childcareaware.org\]\(mailto:diane.girouard@usa.childcareaware.org\).](#)

[Inside-Out Conversation: Share out of Hill experiences and follow up in states](#)

In June, a number of state grantees came to Washington DC to meet with their Congressional delegations. In the discussion, the participants talked about the positive reception they received, the importance of building relationships with staff members, and the need to continue advocating for early learning and child care programs in the appropriations

process. We discussed their experiences, as well as some state activities after they returned home.

Discussion:

- New Jersey: Advocates shared their experiences of visiting congressional offices in DC, discussing the importance of building relationships and sharing specific data on infant and toddler care in their districts. They also talked about the importance of visiting offices and leaving materials even if no formal visit has been scheduled. They followed up by reaching out to the offices, thanking them for the meetings, and setting up visits to child care centers.
- Georgia: Advocates discussed Medicaid unwinding with several offices and encouraged members to sign on to legislation. They have been working with other advocates in the state to align messages and coordinate with federal offices.
- Massachusetts: One participant noted that she scheduled a zoom meeting with a member she was unable to meet with in DC.
- Illinois: Another noted that there were a number of new members to meet with, and they appreciated the information and connections.
- Maryland: Finally, it was noted that the messages about the need for child care were well received, and that the importance of relationships was paramount in her meetings, as she met with staff who have changed offices, or changed roles.

Several folks iterated the value of the training on building relationships with Rae Ringel and encouraged everyone to watch it. If you have not yet seen the training, you can watch it here: https://earlysuccess.zoom.us/rec/share/8spYNrJkI-BYnICoafaXlJtYFBmCJYPBPHoAXb4I7XBdwFRQB2S8d4UupAkiENXu.4HmkdPmK_fGYIMDw?startTime=1685556147000 Passcode: *kZGPP

We're looking forward to welcoming another group of you to DC on the 19th!

Federal Overview (Sarah Rubinfield, FFYF)

House and Senate committees are meeting to develop proposals for FY24 appropriations. We expect to see those proposals sometime before the end of July, although that timing is still up in the air. While the debt ceiling agreement largely adopted level funding at FY23 amounts, some Republicans have signaled that they want much lower FY22 funding levels to be adopted. At this time, it is unclear what will happen, as the House and Senate will have to come to some agreements.

If they are unable to agree before the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2023, under the terms of the debt relief agreement, a Continuing Resolution will be put in place that includes a one percent cut across the board for all programs.

At this point, it is critical to make sure that members hear the message to preserve and protect investments in young children.

**Update as of July 14: The House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations has released the proposed FY 24 funding levels. They include significant cuts to programs that support children and their families. While CCDBG is held at FY 23 levels, cuts are made to Head Start, Title I, and CCAMPIS, and the Preschool Development Grants are eliminated.*

If you are interested in more information about how the debt relief agreement will impact FY24 negotiations and what the appropriations process could mean for programs serving young children, please join this upcoming national field webinar:

ECE Field Advocacy Huddle: Federal Funding and Recess Actions

Thursday, July 20 from 4:00 – 5:00 pm ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)

What Advocates Can Do

- Reach out immediately to members of the House and Senate with messages about the need to protect and prioritize child care and early learning, as well other investments in young children.
- Share stories and data about the impact of child care investments in your state, and the gaps that existed before the Covid pandemic and remain today.
- Gather video stories that can be shared in a variety of settings and with policymakers at all levels.

Hot Topic: Medicaid Unwinding

(Maggie Clark, Georgetown Center on Children and Families)

As the Covid emergency officially ends, states must restart Medicaid redetermination, , which was frozen as of March 18, 2020. States have three years of backlogs to work through, and during those years we saw significant increases in Medicaid enrollments, especially for children. As the data emerges from the unwinding, we are seeing many children and their families disenrolled for reasons that have nothing to do with eligibility. Most are due to paperwork issues, including address changes, incomplete forms, and unclear enrollment requirements and processes.

Some states, like Michigan, are prioritizing keeping people covered and facilitating re-enrollment, while others, like Arkansas, are actively disenrolling people and emphasizing procedural barriers. One concern is that families will ignore the notices, as they were told during the pandemic that re-enrollment was not needed. Therefore, it is important for advocates and policymakers to find ways to communicate with families around the need for re-

enrollment, and what to expect. For example, GEEARS is working with child care providers and other community partners to help them help families successfully navigate the process. In Illinois, the Medicaid agency has broadly shared pictures of the envelope that families will receive, so that community partners can help families identify the materials they need for re-enrollment.

In situations where children may lose coverage, advocates can work with families to either get them re-enrolled, as children are eligible at higher incomes than adults, or to get them enrolled in CHIP.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) at HHS has put out [guidance](#) for states, encouraging them to take the full 12 months available to finalize Medicaid unwinding. CMS is also asking for advocates to share information on policies and practices that are making it harder or easier for families to stay enrolled and will give feedback to states. If you have any notices or trends you would like to share on unwinding, send to the Georgetown CCF team (Tricia Brooks: Tricia.brooks@georgetown.edu, Allie Gardner: akg72@georgetown.edu, and Elisabeth Burak: Elisabeth.burak@georgetown.edu).

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What Advocates Can Do

- Gather information about policies and practices that create barriers to enrollment and share with Georgetown CCF.
- Provide information to community partners, including child care providers, that clearly explains the need for Medicaid re-enrollment and the steps families will need to take.
- Work with state agencies to create and disseminate clear and easy to follow instructions on re-enrollment.
- Ensure families understand their responsibilities, opportunities for appeal, and the availability of CHIP and other supports for children.

Resources

The Georgetown Center has several resources to help:

- Information about each state's unwinding: <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2023/04/01/state-unwinding-tracker/>
- Data on unwinding: <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/unwinding-enrollment-data/>

Administrative Overview – New Proposed CCDBG Regulation

On July 11, Vice President Harris announced a proposed new regulation for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The regulation, [which will be published in the Federal Register on July 13](#), will focus on access, affordability, and stability in the child care system. It includes:

- Cap child care copayments for working families at no more than 7% of a family's income and encourage states to waive copayments for families at or below 150% of the federal poverty level;
- Improve financial stability for child care providers and incentivize their participation in the CCDBG program by ensuring they are paid on-time and based on program enrollment instead of attendance; and,
- Make it easier for families to access CCDBG by encouraging states to accept online applications for CCDBG enrollment and to make siblings of children who already receive the subsidy presumptively eligible for benefits.

Comments will be due 45 days after the publication of the notice.

[And Finally...State Share!](#)

Kudos to Laura Weeldreyer at Maryland Family Network for her participation in a briefing by the Democratic Women's Caucus on "The State of Child Care in America: Addressing the Looming Funding Cliffs for Women and Families." See video [here](#) of her amazing testimony!