



*Every Child. Every State.*

# Advancing Agendas and Routing Relief

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*The Alliance for Early Success  
50-State Progress Report on  
Early Childhood Policy*



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Frontera Strategy supports advocacy efforts by providing qualitative and quantitative research services, including literature reviews, needs assessments and environmental scans, program and policy evaluation, statistical analyses, and survey research for associations, foundations, and nonprofit service organizations active in state capitols.

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***Dear early childhood policy partners and champions,***

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The past year was another challenging landscape for early childhood policy advocacy. While the chaos of 2020's pandemic outbreak had subsided somewhat, advocates once again found themselves on constantly shifting ground. The American Rescue Plan delivered much-needed economic relief to families, but the vast and complex legislation required persistent effort from advocates to ensure state policymakers and agencies understood the programs fully and deployed them to maximum effect for children and families. Session schedules continued to change, and day-to-day practices at the legislature also made advocacy challenging.

But this 2021 report tells the story of a national community of state advocates who leaned on their networks and each other to effectively pursue two goals at once: shepherding relief funds intended for young children and their families while, at the same time, working aggressively on their strategic agendas. You only need to look as far as the successful "Blueprint for Maryland's Future" or the passage of universal paid leave in New Jersey to see the culmination of long-term advocacy efforts.

And there's a third thing. New connections. More and more states are seeing that partnerships, coalitions, and connections to lived experience are central to building both equity and capacity. When we issued our RFP for Child Care NEXT child care transformation grants, a stunning 36 states came to the table with vibrant and diverse coalitions of advocates, organizers, providers, and community members.

We're seeing more authentic dialogue between organizations, and more states are coming to us for tools and technical assistance on building their coalition muscles. We're changing the way we think about advocacy as well, with a new focus on power equity—and a strengthened commitment to the belief that how we work is as important as the outcome. We've already launched our new Operationalizing Equity intensive, kicked off a new Emerging Policy Professionals of Color community, built out more grassroots and coalition-building technical assistance, and begun a strategic process to plan how we'll help state advocates center power equity.

As we look back on 2021, I want to thank our staff, board, and investors for their commitment. And I especially want to thank our allies — the advocates who proved relentless yet again in their work for young children and families.

But I most of all want to look ahead. Significant obstacles to our work remain. As I write this, the U.S. Congress is finalizing what will likely be a once-in-a-generation federal investment in early childhood. More and more states are finding early childhood policy to be a bipartisan common ground in an increasingly polarized political environment. And there's a tangible, growing movement for equity in advocacy.

***It's an exciting time to be our Alliance.***

Stay tuned,



Helene Stebbins,  
Executive Director

# About the Alliance for Early Success

**In its 15-year history, the Alliance for Early Success has become the trusted, 50-state resource on early childhood advocacy and policy expertise for state-level advocates.**

Across the country, investors who are focused on thriving children and families are increasingly looking for high-potential “big bets”—the strategic investments that not only make a difference for families, but also unlock the sustained state investment and added advocacy capacity necessary to make big, lasting change.

The Alliance for Early Success was created to do just that. And today we operate a powerful community of early childhood policy allies that accelerates and amplifies their effectiveness — so they, in return, win state actions that ensure each and every young child in their state will thrive. We know that when investors invest in state-level policy priorities for early childhood, they leverage limited available funds to deliver exponential impact.

Founded in 2005 to ensure impact-focused collaboration in the early childhood policy world, the Alliance for Early Success has since grown into a crucial, 50-state resource for the in-state advocates fighting for structural, lasting change in early childhood impact and outcomes. We leverage funds from investors and direct a pooled fund that we deploy to unlock the potential of as many kids as possible.

- **The Alliance connects state policy advocates with their counterparts in other states, so they can share strategies, exchange resources, learn from each other’s wins and losses, and avoid reinventing the wheel.**
- **The Alliance collaborates with these state policy advocates to center lived experience and racial equity in their work and ensure their early childhood policy agenda addresses structural racism and racial disparity.**
- **The Alliance connects them with national experts for research and technical assistance—and we commission new research and resources when what our state advocates need doesn’t exist.**
- **The Alliance makes highly flexible and responsive grants that help our state allies build capacity and expand their networks.**
- **The Alliance convenes communities of practice on specific topics or strategies in order to push the leading edge on state policy advocacy in areas such as home visiting and the early learning workforce.**

Our model has proven extraordinarily effective, and it continues to leverage philanthropic investment for exponential returns for children from birth through age 8.



# The Twofold Challenge for State Advocates in 2021:

The pandemic slowed but did not stop progress on comprehensive state-level policies for young children in states across the country. Early childhood advocates in most states work from carefully developed policy objectives and strategic plans, and they continued to pursue those objectives and plans in 2021's unpredictable legislative environment. Unplanned special sessions were called. Testimony was limited, made virtual, and often both.

Yet, in 2021, state allies reported an impressive 472 distinct state-level legislative or administrative policy wins. (Figure 3). These wins included bills passed into law (68 percent), achievements related to federal relief funding (15 percent), key defensive plays (11 percent), executive orders and administrative changes (6 percent), and a successful referendum.

State advocates also continued the growing national emphasis on child care and infant and child health. Among the 323 legislative wins, child care and infant and child health were the most cited issue areas. Among the 27 enacted executive orders and administrative changes, child care, child care workforce, and infant and child health were the most cited issues (Figures 4 and 5). Wins related to child care included access increases, improved quality, and bolstered infrastructure. Many achievements related to the child care workforce permanently codified policies ranging from workforce training to compensation. Several wins related to infant and child health will improve mental health and increase access to health care. Multiple states expanded postpartum Medicaid coverage. Efforts to improve the equity of systems serving young children gained momentum in 2021. Some states, such as Louisiana and Mississippi, succeeded in getting new state revenue for comprehensive programs for young children.

## Continue to Pursue Strategic Policy Objectives while Addressing the State's Pandemic Response

At the same time, advocates worked relentlessly to influence the spending and direction of federal relief funds. The massive American Rescue Plan—coming on the heels of previous large and complex packages—had the potential to overwhelm policymakers and agencies. Advocates in 38 states reported that they influenced how federal relief funds for child care were used in their states. Advocates in 27 states said they influenced how federal relief funds unrelated to child care were used (Figure 6).

State early childhood policy advocates in 2021 also played crucial defense to stop or significantly weaken bad legislation that deprioritized the well-being of children and families. Advocates across the states defeated or weakened 52 bills or initiatives they determined were bad policy. Child care, financing, preschool and pre-k, and infant and child health were the issues most addressed among bad bills and initiatives (Figure 7). Advocates in some states defeated proposals that would have impacted the human rights of children, cut funding for services for young children, funded a move to online preschool, and weakened immunization policy.

In addition to the wins, advocates made considerable progress on some policies that did not make it over the finish line. Recognizing that it can take several sessions to pass a policy, this report highlights ongoing advocacy campaigns at the state level. Advocates will continue to work on these campaigns in 2022 and 2023.

## Abbreviations used in tables

**ARPA:** American Rescue Plan Act  
**CCDBG:** Child Care and Development Block Grant  
**CCDF:** Child Care and Development Fund  
**CCAP:** Child Care Assistance Program  
**CRF:** Coronavirus Relief Fund  
**DOE:** Department of Education  
**ECE:** Early Care and Education  
**EC:** Early Childhood  
**EITC:** Earned Income Tax Credit  
**FFN:** Family, Friend, and Neighbor  
(a type of child care setting)  
**FF:** Federal funds

**FPL:** Federal Poverty Level  
**FY:** Fiscal Year  
**GF:** General Fund  
**IECMH:** Infant Early Childhood Mental Health  
**NCSL:** National Conference of State Legislatures  
**POC:** People of Color  
**PDG B-5:** Preschool Development Grant  
Birth through Five  
**PFML:** Paid Family Medical Leave  
**QRIS:** Quality Rating and Improvement System  
**SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
**TANF:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

## Legislative and Administrative Wins

A collective look across all state policy actions illuminates both the priorities and successes of state early childhood advocates. **Figure 1** shows the number and percentage of bills passed and executive orders and administrative changes enacted by issues across the U.S. in descending order of total wins. Some 323

bills passed into law, and 27 executive orders and administrative changes were enacted in 2021. Child care (28 percent) and infant and child health (25 percent) were the issues most addressed by these policies. Several of the new laws, orders, and administrative changes covered more than one issue.

**1. Number and Percentage of State-Level Legislative, Executive, and Administrative Wins by Issue among 50 States and D.C., 2021**

	Legislative		Executive or Administrative		Total	
Child care*	88	27%	11	41%	98	28%
Infant and child health	80	25%	7	26%	87	25%
Financing	62	19%	2	7%	64	18%
Child care workforce*	50	15%	9	33%	59	17%
Maternal health	54	17%	5	19%	59	17%
Racial equity	55	17%	3	11%	58	17%
Preschool and pre-k	55	17%	0	-	54	15%
Early childhood governance	45	14%	2	7%	47	13%
Kindergarten through third grade	43	13%	0	-	43	12%
Early intervention	37	11%	4	15%	41	12%
Child welfare	31	10%	0	-	31	9%
Home visiting	26	8%	4	15%	30	9%
Family economic security	20	6%	2	7%	22	6%
Paid family and medical leave	7	2%	0	-	7	2%
<b>Total**</b>	<b>323</b>	-	<b>27</b>	-	<b>350</b>	-

\* Excludes wins primarily associated with federal relief funds

\*\* Sum of percentages does not equal 100% because some wins covered more than one issue area.

- Less than .5%

**Figure 2** shows the wins and achievements of 2021. Allies and partnering advocates can celebrate the passage of 323 bills, 69 wins related to the spending of federal relief funds, 27 executive orders and administrative changes, and 1 successful referendum in Rhode Island. Advocates also played crucial defense on stopping or significantly altering 52 bad bills or initiatives.

The numbers in the table underestimate efforts and results. For example, one budget bill can have multiple impacts. In New York, the final 2021-22 State Budget, considered one bill in this report, contains extraordinary investments in children and families: Among the headlines: a commitment to fully fund the state’s public schools to correct longstanding inequities in the state funding formula, which led to sharply unequal funding for low-income schools; creation of the strongest-in-the-nation Excluded Workers Fund; \$2.3B in new (mostly federal) funds for child care; \$105M in new funds for pre-k; a first-in-the-nation guarantee of affordable broadband; and elimination of co-pays for vision care and dental care for hundreds of thousands of low- to moderate- income families who get coverage through New York’s health care exchange.

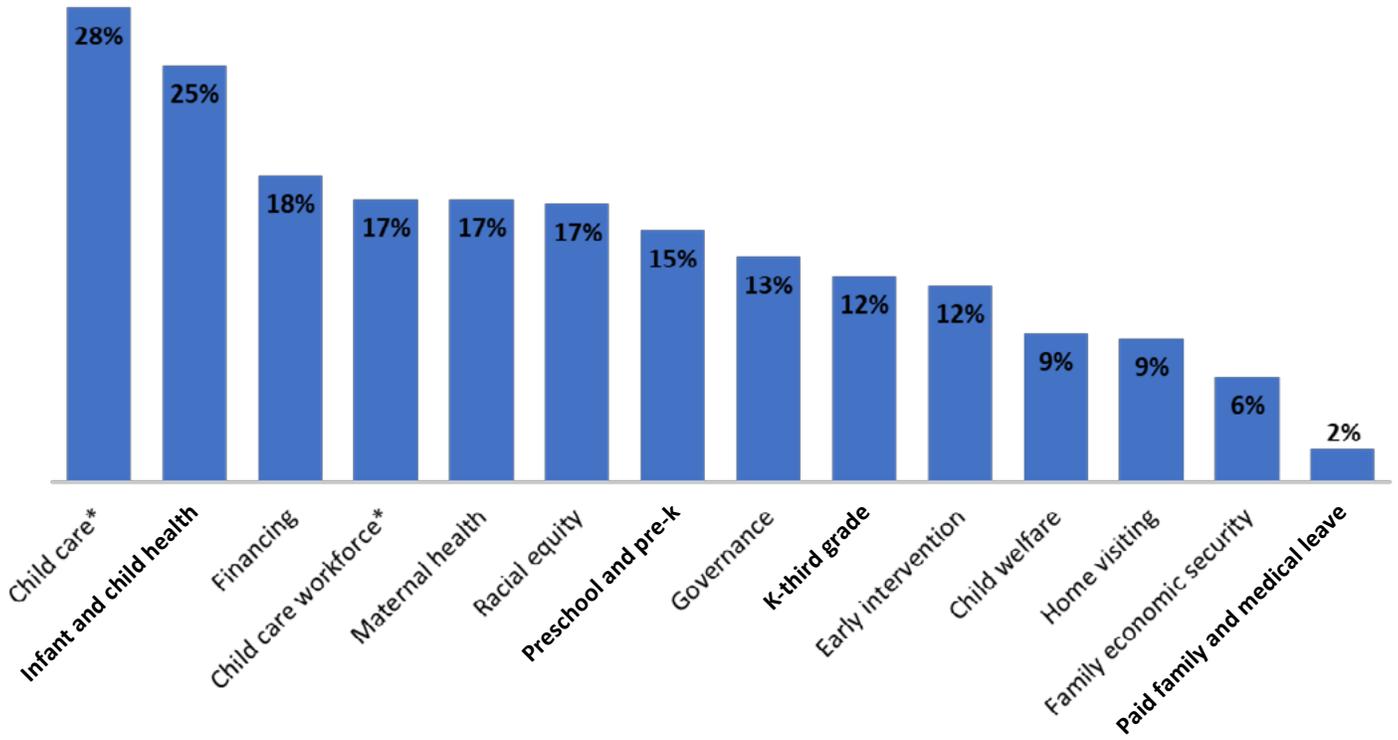
2. Number and Percentage of Wins among 50 States and D.C., 2021		
Win	n	%
Bills passed	323	68%
Achievements related to federal relief funding (new laws, orders, and administrative changes)	69	15%
Key defensive plays	52	11%
Executive orders and administrative changes enacted	27	6%
Ballot initiatives and referendum	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>- Less than .5%</i>		

State advocates know their states: What’s happening. What’s necessary. What’s *possible*.



The graph in **Figure 3** illustrates the table in **Figure 2**.

### 3. Percentage of State-Level Legislative Wins, Executive Orders, and Administrative Changes by Issue among 50 States and D.C., 2021



# Key Highlights from the State Advocacy Reports

## Alabama

“The Education Trust Fund budget (**SB 189**), which included a \$24.4M increase for Alabama’s First Class Pre-K program, offers sufficient space for 44 percent of Alabama’s 4-year-olds and added nearly 200 new pre-k classrooms. Some 3,600 additional 4-year-olds can enroll in First Class Pre-K. In the Department of Early Childhood Education, the First Teacher home visiting program for infants and toddlers saw a \$1.8 million increase, dramatically expanding those crucial programs for young families. The Governor’s Strong Start, Strong Finish program, which includes the Pre-K to 3rd Grade Integrated Approach pilot program, received a \$1.5 million increase. The Dept. of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention received a \$2 million increase, a nearly 35% increase from the 2021 budget. Mental Health received a \$750,000 increase for school-based mental health collaborations. The Department of Rehabilitation received a \$1.5 million increase for Early Intervention. The Department of Education received an overall \$59.8 million increase, spread across a wide variety of initiatives. This included \$3 million for bullying prevention programs, a \$6.7 million increase to local school districts for school nurses, and a more than \$16 million increase for special education services. There was an additional \$12 million earmarked for special education preschool.” (Early Intervention, Infant and Child Health, K-3, Preschool and Pre-K, Home Visiting, Child Welfare)

## California

“**SB 682** establishes The End Racial Inequities in Children’s Health Initiative, or EnRICH CA, and calls on the California Health and Human Services Agency to work with relevant departments to develop and implement a plan to reduce by at least half racial disparities in childhood chronic diseases by 2030, including asthma, diabetes, depression, dental caries, and vaping-related diseases. Though the bill was vetoed, the **governor expressed support** for addressing racial disparities in health care, especially for children. Chronic childhood diseases affect one in four children statewide, or more than 2 million children. In California, approximately 74 percent are children of color.” (Early Intervention, Infant & Child Health, Maternal Health, Racial Equity)

## Louisiana

“Legislators passed **SB 142** and dedicated 25 percent of sports betting revenues, up to \$20 million, to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund, which offers local entities a dollar-for-dollar match on local investments to expand early childhood education.” (Child Care, Finance)

## Maine

“Historic investments were made in children and families during the Maine Legislature’s 130th legislative session. A new law (**LD 1712**) will bring the Help Me Grow model to Maine and an innovative child care model developed by Educare Central Maine, which integrates comprehensive resources and services into traditional child care to improve outcomes for children, families, and educators.” (Early Intervention, Infant & Child Health, Child Care, Child Care Workforce, Preschool & Pre-K, Home Visiting, Governance)

## Maryland

“The **Blueprint for Maryland’s Future** is a landmark in early childhood education and the state’s history. The Blueprint vastly expands public pre-k, the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, professional development, and the networks of Judy Centers and Family Support Centers. When fully implemented, this legislation will likely benefit the entire birth-12th grade population of Maryland, the state’s pre-k to 12th grade teachers, and many child care providers.” (Early Intervention, Infant and Child Health, Maternal Health, Child Care, Child Care Workforce, Preschool and Pre-K, Racial Equity)

## Mississippi

“There were historic successes for pre-k in Mississippi. The Mississippi Legislature doubled its investment in state-funded pre-k to \$16 million, which will serve 16% of Mississippi four-year-olds (roughly 6,080 children). New lottery funds enabled this expansion with an additional \$8,210,526. The General Fund will cover \$7,789,474, which remains the same as last year. The legislature also supported

pre-k teachers by committing \$1.5 million for pre-k coaches. This will help the Mississippi Department of Education continue to provide high-quality professional experiences to pre-k teachers in collaboratives without 100% dependence on philanthropy. The legislature also continues to improve the state pre-k law by aligning it to the newest NIEER standards.” (Preschool & Pre-K)

## Missouri

“On the last day of their legislative session, Missouri lawmakers passed an important tax bill that includes two major wins for Missouri Budget Project. First, it enacts the Missouri Working Families Tax Credit, or the state’s EITC, which will benefit over 250,000 Missourians. While the Missouri Budget Project has been researching and advocating for a state EITC for over two decades, they successfully gained enough support for the credit this year by highlighting how it can drastically improve child well-being and move the state toward an equitable economic recovery.” (Family Economic Security)

## Tennessee

“More than \$730 million of the state’s federal TANF block grant was unused as of 2020. Advocates fought for a Strategic Reset of Tennessee’s TANF Program ([HB142/SB751](#)). The bill 1) Establishes a reserve not to exceed the state’s annual TANF block grant (\$191 million), 2) Ensures future funds other than reserve are fully allocated and that funds are deployed in counties proportionally to their share of children in poverty, and 3) Invests \$182 million of surplus funds in the planning, implementation, and rigorous evaluation of seven evidence-based pilot initiatives, all with the goal of strengthening family self-sufficiency and interrupting the cycle of poverty and government dependence. Other provisions included an optional alternative set of incentives and supports for people pursuing education and an increase to the monthly cash assistance grant. Negotiations resulted in adoption of the provisions of the Tennessee Opportunity Act into the governor’s legislation in what was arguably a model for collaboration among the legislative and executive branches of government and the nonprofit community, producing one of the most consequential pieces of legislation this session.” (Family Economic Security)



# Influencing and Directing Federal Relief Funding

Since the CARES Act was enacted in April 2020, Congress has passed two additional federal relief packages that include significant increases in emergency funding for child care: the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. These funds began to flow to states during spring 2021 to provide relief to providers and families.

Under CRRSA, nearly \$10 billion in supplemental Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funding was made available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. The ARP Act allocated \$39 billion in dedicated child care relief funding to states. This funding is broken down into two distinct streams. Nearly \$24 billion must be spent in the form of stabilization grants to help existing programs remain open or reopen. The remaining \$15 billion is provided through CCDF discretionary funding to support allowable CCDF activities that help make child care more affordable and accessible for families. Outside

of the \$39 billion, there was also a separate \$3.55 billion permanent increase to the mandatory child care entitlement to states (Girouard, 2021).

Advocates reported that they and their partners spent much effort to ensure federal relief funds ultimately benefitted children, families, and state economies. In 75 percent of states, advocates influenced how federal relief funds related to child care were directed and spent (**Figure 4**). In 47 percent of states, advocates helped to enact an executive order or administrative change that directed the spending of the federal dollars. In 35 percent of states, advocates helped to pass a bill directing these funds. In more than half of states (53 percent), advocates influenced how federal relief funds unrelated to child care were directed and spent.

In the survey, advocates described some of their important work related to federal relief funding and child care:

## 4. Number and Percentage of States Where Advocates Influenced or Helped to Direct Spending of Federal Relief Funds, among 50 States and D.C., 2021

	n	%
<b>Federal Relief Funds for Child Care</b>		
Influenced how funds were used	38	75%
Helped to enact executive order/administrative change directing funds	24	47%
Helped to pass bill directing funds	18	35%
<b>Federal Relief Funds Unrelated to Child Care</b>		
Influenced how funds were used	27	53%
Helped to enact executive order/administrative change directing funds	17	33%
Helped to pass bill directing funds	11	22%

## Idaho

“Child care providers have been struggling to keep their doors open and retain staff through the pandemic. Many have survived only because of grants provided through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) that were funded with the first two federal stimulus packages. IDHW planned to continue the grants to child care providers through the end of the year and offer monthly workforce bonuses to staff to help to maintain staffing levels. The funding for this was coming from ARPA funds and needed to be approved by the Idaho Legislature, but toward the end of session, it was looking like the legislature was ready to adjourn without passing legislation to approve this funding. Several local providers organized a day of action at the state capitol with the support of Idaho Voices for Children and Idaho AEYC. Both groups worked together to engage our larger coalition to help spread awareness and provide opportunities to take action. The legislature did pass three bills to use federal COVID relief dollars to support the child care industry.”

## Kansas

Kansas Action for Children “publicly commented on ARPA funds through an op-ed piece in the [Kansas Reflector](#). The column targeted to lawmakers highlighted child care, health, and tax policies included in ARPA, including extra financial incentives to expand Medicaid, which Kansas legislative leadership continues to block. Kansas Action for Children (KAC) highlighted the federal Medicaid incentives in a targeted ask to constituents of three senators and three representatives, asking them to contact their lawmaker about Medicaid expansion. They also highlighted these incentives through social media messaging. KAC staff monitored budget discussions and spoke to lawmakers about the benefit to kids and families from increased federal relief funding. A key strategy was to raise the alarm with lawmakers about the effects of tax cuts and receiving federal relief funds. The work of KAC and other advocates informed budget and tax committee discussions, resulting in a less onerous tax bill passing compared to the one that was previously proposed.”

**In the survey, advocates also described some of their efforts to direct the spending of federal relief funding that was not directly related to child care:**

## California

“Children Now worked with partners across the areas of K-12 education, health care, child welfare and human services to inform and influence use of federal relief funds from CARES, ARP and CRRSA packages. Advocates shaped how the state distributed the state portion of the federal dollars for schools, and advocates supported the adoption of the Medicaid 12-month postpartum coverage extension allowed under ARPA, enhancement for SNAP, funding to stabilize pediatric medical practices, extension of eligibility for Extended Foster Care, and direct cash assistance to current and former foster youth.”

## Montana

Zero to Five Montana and other advocates blocked the dedication of \$800,000 of ARPA funding to an online preschool line item.

## Delaware

The Rodel Foundation “surveyed hundreds of parents and K-12 educators to illustrate community needs. It made connections and served as a thought partner for state and county policymakers and community partners seeking to distribute and receive funds. Through this support, state or county funding, e.g. ESSER, State Recovery Funds, or County Recovery Funds, supported a nonprofit providing evidence-based reading instruction for early grades, a school district implementing a civil rights-focused reading enrichment program, a grassroots parent organization providing developmental screenings and other services, and the offsetting of public school teachers’ new expenses. The Rodel Foundation also served as a [source of information](#) for Delawareans about the process and funding availability.”

## Defeating Potentially Damaging Legislation

In addition to achieving legislative successes, gains in appropriations, and executive orders and administrative changes, many states also played strategic defense. Respondents to the survey were asked to describe up to three instances in which bad policy was defeated. As of September 22, 2021, 20 advocates had reported one key defensive win, and 13 advocates had reported two or three successful defensive efforts.

These successful defeats often involved significant community engagement efforts. In Ohio, for example, when child care quality ratings were threatened, Groundwork Ohio mobilized stakeholders, early childhood education programs and educators, and families to take action. In total, this mobilization resulted in nearly 40 testimonies provided to committees, more than 100 meetings with policymakers, over 41 stakeholder events and presentations with nearly 5,000 participants, more

than 18,000 messages sent to state policymakers, more than 45 press articles (including nine op-eds from Groundwork and stakeholders and seven editorials), production of nearly 50 resources, and more than 1.9 million social media impressions with over 400 new followers.

This kind of effort is increasingly necessary, and a national scan of the “bad bills” that advocates stopped or significantly altered this year reveals disturbing trends. Advocates nationwide can keep their eyes open for similar bills in their own states, as bad bills are often the result of coordinated interstate efforts. **Figure 5** shows the 52 key defensive plays by issue: child care (38 percent), financing (31 percent), and preschool and pre-k (25 percent) were the top issue areas for key defensive plays. Alliance partners in multiple states stopped or significantly altered bad bills related to child care quality and access, funding and finance, immunizations, and emerging attacks on the human rights of young children.

5. Number and Percentage of Key Defensive Plays by Issue Among 50 States and D.C., 2021		
	N	%
Child care*	20	38%
Financing	16	31%
Preschool and pre-k	13	25%
Infant and child health	11	21%
Child care workforce*	10	19%
Early intervention	8	15%
Kindergarten through third grade	7	13%
Child welfare	7	13%
Racial equity	5	10%
Early childhood governance	4	8%
Maternal health	4	8%
Family economic security	4	8%
Home visiting	3	6%
Paid family and medical leave	2	4%
<b>Total**</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>-</b>
** Sum of percentages does not equal 100% because some defensive plays covered more than one issue area.		
- Less than .5%		

# Several examples of bad bills show how they address multiple and intersecting issues.

- **Efforts to Erode Child Care Quality**

Protection and improvement of child care ratios remained an issue demanding the vigilance of Alliance partners and their allies. Advocates in multiple states stopped efforts to erode ratios in child care, particularly in family and residential-based providers. In states as diverse as Maryland, Illinois, and Wyoming, advocates stopped bills to reduce training and education requirements for the child care workforce. Advocates in Colorado and elsewhere had to work to stop attacks on even the most basic health and safety standards for child care.

- **Proposed State Funding Cuts**

Legislators in states across the country floated proposals to cut funding for services for young children or proposed massive changes in finance structure that would negatively impact young children. In state after state, advocates successfully worked to stop proposed cuts and tax reforms. In West Virginia, advocates worked with a broader coalition to defeat proposed elimination of the state's income tax. In Kentucky, advocates defeated proposed cuts to both child care and preschool. In Nebraska, advocates engaged state legislators to ensure there were no budget cuts to early childhood programs in the state's biennial budget. In Vermont, advocates defeated proposed cuts to the state's Reach Up cash assistance program. Multiple states also saw successful efforts to defeat proposals to redirect funding from public schools to school voucher programs. Texas advocates defeated efforts to cut state funding for early intervention services. Advocates in Arkansas defeated the elimination of the soda pop tax that helps fund the state's Medicaid trust fund. Numerous states proposed but did not pass legislation to expand online preschool programs, vouchers, and private school tax credits.

- **Anti-immunization Policy**

Alliance partners in multiple states, including Kansas, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas, helped stop harmful immunization legislation from becoming law. Specifically, advocates were successful in stopping legislation to expand immunizations exemptions and ease the process for accessing nonmedical exemptions.

- **Emerging Human Rights Issues**

In state after state, advocates in 2021 had to contend with polarizing cultural issues. Advocates found themselves defending the interests of transexual children, including children aged 8 and under. In addition, advocates in some states joined coalitions created to fight legislation targeting content about historical and systemic racism in public education. These bills affected children aged 8 and under who attend public schools.



# Sustained Advocacy Campaigns

6. Number and Percentage of Sustained Advocacy Campaigns by Issue among 50 States and D.C., 2021		
	n	%
Child care*	17	34%
Child care workforce*	11	22%
Racial equity	11	22%
Infant and child health	10	20%
Financing	9	18%
Paid family and medical leave	9	18%
Preschool and pre-k	8	16%
Kindergarten through third grade	5	10%
Maternal health	5	10%
Early childhood governance	4	8%
Early intervention	4	8%
Home visiting	3	6%
Child welfare	2	4%
Family economic security	2	4%
<b>Total**</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>-</b>

Sustained advocacy campaigns are considered longer-term advocacy efforts that began before or during 2021 that did not result in the desired policy change in 2021 but hold promise and will likely gain traction in 2022. The survey asked advocates to describe up to two other policy outcomes, which could include progress on a policy that did not make it over the finish line but got a lot farther down the field. Recognizing that it can take several sessions to pass a policy, the Alliance for Early Success wanted to hear about progress.

Many advocates chose to describe ongoing advocacy campaigns that they plan to revisit in future years. **Figure 6** shows the 50 sustained advocacy campaigns described by advocates. This is likely an underestimate of all sustained advocacy campaigns promoted by early childhood advocates across all 50 states and the District of Columbia because not all survey respondents chose to describe ongoing efforts. It offers a snapshot of emerging issues and things to come in 2022 and 2023. Child Care (34%) again tops the list of issues.





**Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) garnered only 2 percent among new laws and enacted orders and administrative changes. However, 18 percent of advocates said that their organization made progress on this issue and will continue to work toward passing PFML bills soon. Examples of ongoing campaigns include:**

### **Delaware**

“Delaware established \$10 million start-up funding for a new PFML insurance program. An aligned bill creates a 12-week PFML insurance program. Driven by the Delaware Cares Coalition, this policy will ensure all workers have access to PFML through their employer, building on the previously established state employee benefit. The legislature will revisit the bill when they reconvene in 2022.”

### **Maryland**

“Advocates in Maryland introduced, for a third consecutive year, the Time to Care Act and made notable progress. The act establishes an insurance fund to provide partial wage replacement for workers taking time away from jobs to care for new babies, loved ones with serious health conditions or disabilities, or themselves.”

### **Minnesota**

“PFML passed the House and was included in the governor’s budget in 2021. This policy was a key priority in negotiations until the very end. The state’s divided legislature impacted advocates’ ability to pass this popular legislation. However, important new allies in the early childhood and racial equity fields have joined the fight.”

### **North Dakota**

“The proposed Paid Family Leave bill passed out of the House as a study bill but failed in the Senate. However, there was more support for a Paid Family Leave program than in prior sessions.”

### **Virginia**

“Paid Family Leave continues to gain momentum. Two coalitions, Paid Sick Days for All and Campaign for a Family-Friendly Economy Virginia, seek to provide workers with access to paid leave, and the early childhood community supports these coalitions. The Commission to Examine Racial Equity recognized paid leave and child care access as vehicles for improving economic opportunity for families of color.”

### **West Virginia**

Team for West Virginia “continued to build support for enactment of Paid Family Medical Leave during the past year. Although the legislation did not advance out of committee, lawmakers agreed to have a follow-up interim study on enactment of the policy. In addition, all legislative members of the Democratic Caucus signed a letter to U.S. Senator Joe Manchin urging him to support PFML at the federal level. Having the unity of the Democratic Caucus, along with GOP support for bills providing Paid Leave to public employees, increases the likelihood to enact PFML in West Virginia.”

**Figure 7** shows the issue areas that emerged from the analysis and the definitions used in the study. All issues were defined in the online survey, except “family economic security.” Several respondents labeled their achievements with this issue in the “other” category.

<b>7. Issue Areas Included in Analysis, 2021</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Description</b>
Child care	Improving access to high-quality center- and noncustodial home-based child care for children birth to five
Child care workforce	Training, compensation, and other supports for educators in child care settings
Child welfare	Adoption, foster care, abuse and neglect, health and mental/behavioral health of children involved in the child welfare system, infant abandonment and safe surrender, kinship care, administration and interagency collaboration, prevention of child abuse and neglect, reporting of child abuse and neglect
Early childhood governance	Policies relating to improving the coordination and delivery of early childhood supports and services
Early intervention (ages 0-3)	Services and supports for infants and young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. May include speech therapy, physical therapy, and other types of services based on the needs of the child and family
Family economic security	Policies designed to reduce poverty among individual families, employment benefits, state Child Tax Credit, monthly basic income for low-income families, moratorium on evictions, baby bonds
Financing	Policies relating to changing or increasing revenue for early childhood programs or family economic security, e.g., Medicaid waivers, new taxes, or other new funding mechanisms
Home visiting	Parent support programs inside the home, when possible
Infant and child health	Breastfeeding, immunizations, newborn screening, infant mortality, neonatal abstinence syndrome, children’s mental and behavioral health services (IECMH), children’s oral health, health care eligibility coverage, health screening, nutrition, childhood obesity, gun safety
K-Third grade	Policies related primarily to publicly funded kindergarten through third grade
Maternal health	Maternal morbidity and mortality, health coverage, and mental and physical health among pregnant and postpartum women, postpartum LARC insertion
Paid family and medical leave	Paid time off work for child birth, to care for infant or ill family member, or to provide self-care of own serious illness or disability
Preschool and pre-k	Publicly funded education for 3- and 4-year-olds, including state-funded head Start and Early Head Start
Racial equity	Policies explicitly designed to reduce racial disparities

This report counts and emphasizes wins. **Figure 8** defines the types of achievements secured by state-level advocates. Wins include key defensive plays.

Frontera Strategy qualitatively organized, coded, and analyzed each state’s policy wins and key defensive plays by issue area. Using SPSS and descriptive data analytical techniques, Frontera examined these data across all states and D.C. with win and state as the units of analysis.

### Limitations and Caveats

Data included in this report offer a snapshot of a point in time for states and may not reflect all policies and budgets adjustments during 2021. First, the timing of legislative sessions affects the findings. In 2021, legislative sessions occurred in all states.

However, 2021 legislative sessions in Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin end in December 2021 or later in 2022, so some data for these states may be incomplete. Additionally, special sessions occurred in some states, and in other states, advocates were awaiting the governor’s signature on early childhood-related legislation at the time of publication. Second, this report largely relies on survey data and the reporting of wins by advocates. It is possible that some achievements were overlooked or omitted. This report’s state pages, available online, will be updated as current information becomes available. Third, the survey limited responses for key defensive plays to three and sustained advocacy campaigns to two. Respondents from some states may have prioritized and omitted defensive plays or longer-term advocacy efforts.

8. Description of Wins and Achievements Used in Analysis	
Achievements	Description
Bill passed into law	Legislative action that became law, including budget bills and appropriations
Executive order or administrative change	Action taken by state agencies or at the direction of the executive office
Key defensive plays	Killing of bad bills, prevention of harmful executive order or administrative change, or protection of existing funding
Ballot initiative or referendum	The initiative process allows citizens to propose a new statute or constitutional amendment. The referendum process allows citizens to refer a law that passed the legislature to the ballot for voters to decide whether to uphold or repeal the law. A referendum is a general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision.
Influencing of federal relief funds	For purposes of this survey, federal relief funds include the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) enacted in March 2020, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act enacted in December 2020. <i>Influencing</i> is considered making a difference in how these federal child care relief funds were used or distributed.

# A thank-you to our investors.

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**The responsiveness, flexibility, and effectiveness of the Alliance for Early Success is made possible by our investors, who believe in policy advocacy as a lever for scale and permanency when it comes to supports for young children and their families.**

Our investors know that all the direct services funding in all the nation's foundations together would not be enough to ensure the best outcomes for every child in every state—and that investing in policy advocacy is the key to scale and permanency. And because state-level policymakers make so many of the decisions about the scale and scope of early childhood support in their states, these leading early childhood funders invest in our leadership in state-level policy advocacy.

Each year, as the Alliance's allies win millions and millions in new public commitments for early childhood in their states, we are proud that more and more national foundations and philanthropists commit even more resources to this high-return investment.

**Today, our investors include:**



# The State of Birth Through Eight:

## *The Early Childhood Policy Landscape, State by State*

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The advocacy landscape in every state is nuanced and unique, and a hallmark of the Alliance for Early Success approach to supporting state policy advocacy is the knowledge that every state is different. There are different political landscapes. There are different coalitions. Some have momentum and some are pushing against strong headwinds. But in every state, dedicated early childhood policy advocacy allies are working to

make their states places where young children and their families can reach their full potential.

The following pages offer a snapshot of the 2021 early childhood landscape in each state. In addition to outlining the key policy progress in a state for the year, each overview also shows a glimpse of the playing field on which those policy achievements happened.

# Alabama



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$9.89B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)



#### ONE 2021 SESSION

2021 Regular Session (2/2-5/17)

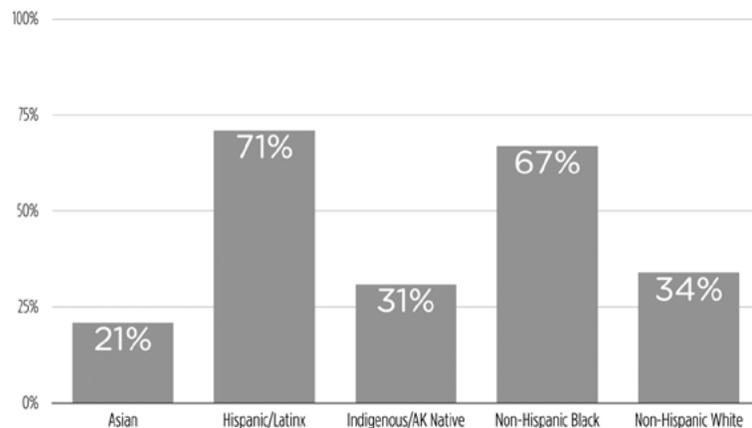


#### 48% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

250,454 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead allies in Alabama are [Alabama Partnership for Children](#) and VOICES for [Alabama's Children](#). The Partnership for Children and VOICES are two of the four organizations that make up the Alabama School Readiness Alliance.

Together, our Alabama allies promote research-based policy solutions to improve overall child well-being.

The 2021 Alabama Legislative Session was a record-setting session for the state's young children. State lawmakers approved funding increases in home visiting, prevention of child abuse and neglect, early intervention, preschool special education, and education.

These budget wins were punctuated by one of the largest-ever increases for Alabama's top-quality First Class Pre-K program (\$24.4 million), bringing the program's level of funding to \$151 million and access to 42% of the state's 4-year-olds. That means 2,000 additional 4-year-olds can enroll in First Class Pre-K, and millions of students and families will benefit from high-quality early education.

### Early childhood policy highlights from the session include:

- **SB 189.** The Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget, which included a \$24.4M increase for Alabama's First Class Pre-K program, offers sufficient space for 42% of Alabama's 4-year-olds and added nearly 200 new pre-k classrooms. Also in the Dept. of Early Childhood Education, the First Teacher home visiting program for infants and toddlers saw a \$1.8M increase, dramatically expanding those crucial programs for young families. The governor's Strong Start, Strong Finish program, which includes the Pre-K to 3rd Grade Integrated Approach pilot program, received a \$1.5M increase. The Dept. of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention received a \$2M increase, a nearly 35% increase from the 2021 budget. Mental Health received a \$750K increase for school-based mental health collaborations. Dept. of Rehabilitation received a \$1.5M increase for Early Intervention. The Dept. of Education received an overall \$59.8M increase, spread across a wide variety of initiatives. This included \$3M for bullying prevention programs, a \$6.7M increase to local school districts for school nurses, and a more than \$16M increase for special

education services. There was an additional \$12M earmarked for special education preschool.

- **HJR 176.** The resolution creates the Joint Legislative Study Commission on Expanding Access to Quality Pre-Kindergarten Early Education Programs.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 331.** The legislation makes an appropriation of a specified amount from the Children First Trust Fund, requires written notification of anticipated agency allocations by the State Director of Finance, relates to condition allocations on receipt of tobacco revenues, provides for the transfer to the State GF during FY22 that portion of Children First Trust Fund receipts currently allocated for the State Board of Education.<sup>1</sup>



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

In partnership with the Department of Human Resources, allies' advocacy efforts successfully distributed flexible grants to child care providers (Temporary Assistance for Sustaining Child Care Rounds 1 and 2). Allies also successfully worked with DHR to use ARP funding to redesign the state's Quality Stars QRIS program.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

In 2021, advocates also came close to (and will continue to work toward) winning approval of the first-ever state budget line item for child care: \$22 million to support larger incentives for providers participating in Alabama's Quality Stars child care quality rating and improvement program. The Alabama Senate and House Education Trust Fund Budget Chairs and members of key committees indicated their support for including the line item in the FY 2023 budget legislation next year.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Alabama for 2022

- Continue the development of a statewide broad coalition of advocates focused on the zero to 5 child care system, advocating for funding and policies that support the system, the workforce, and the families that depend on child care.
- Advocate for expansion of Alabama's First Class Pre-K program through collaboration with Alabama DECE and the State Legislature.
- Host a series of listening sessions across the state to build political will for a significant investment in the child care system at the state level, partnering with chambers of commerce, economic development commissions, and diverse business interests.

» [For more information on what's happening in Alabama, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

» [Contents](#)

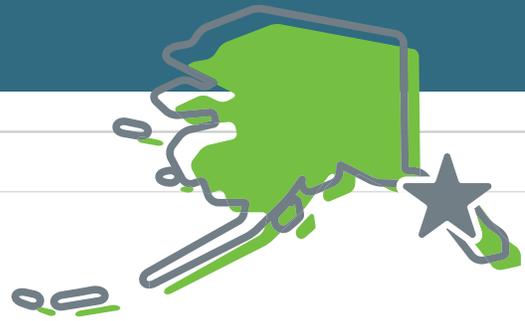


# Alaska

## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$4.63B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: TWO



32nd Legislature (1/19-5/19)  
Special Session (10/4)

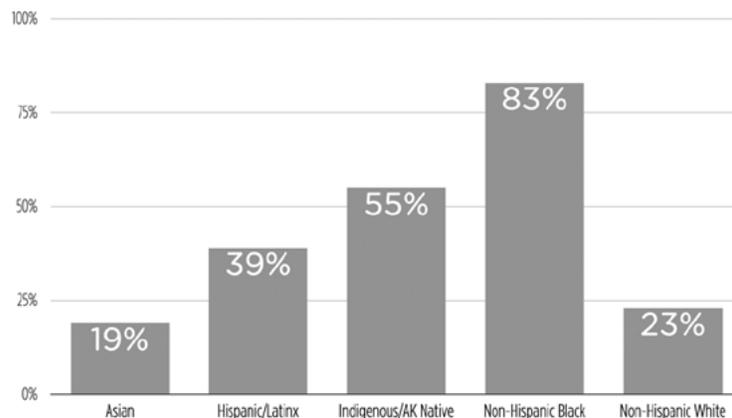
#### 31% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



29,397 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Alaska is [Alaska Children's Trust](#) (ACT), an advocacy organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. They are an advocate, convener, and catalyst for building a state that ensures children grow up in safe, stable and nurturing environments. ACT influences public policy and, as the home to Kids Count Alaska, produces reliable data, makes policy recommendations, and provides tools needed to advance sound policies that benefit Alaska's children and families.

The State of Alaska faces a \$1.5 billion deficit, which it has experienced for the past 10 years. Savings have dropped from \$22 billion to a few hundred million, and services have been pared accordingly. Key to the deficit has been a decline in oil revenue — oil revenue paid for nearly 90% of Alaska's budget until 10 years ago. Declines in oil values and production levels with no broad-based tax in place to ensure a steady stream of revenue, have led to challenging budgets.

The 2021 legislative session, like many of the past sessions, was focused on the budget and Alaska's annual Permanent Dividend Check (PFD). The PFD has been reduced to help cover the cost of government, and Alaskans — who in the past received \$3,000 per person — now receive \$1,100. The budget and PFD debates have left little room for other important discussions, including those on the needs of Alaska's children and families.

### In spite of the challenging 2021 legislative environment, Alaska allies made progress in several areas:

- Ensured continuation of current investments of early childhood as Alaska made further cuts to the budget due to the \$1.5B deficit.
- Prevented any budget cuts to the education budget, which protected K-third grade.
- Prevented a split of the state's Department of Health & Social Services into two divisions. The governor made the proposal in an executive order, which the legislature must approve, deny, or simply allow to stand without action. (Changing the legislation is prohibited.) Alaska Children's Trust, in partnership with DHSS, hosted community forums across Alaska to hear organizations' concerns. This led to the legislation being pulled.



## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates in Alaska helped to ensure federal relief funds were utilized to meet the needs and demands of the child care field. This included ensuring providers and others received funding to keep their doors open, purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies, increase salaries, offer training, and build capacity to assist providers in moving up in the QRIS process.



## Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Advocates will continue to try to pass a key priority, the Pre-K Program and Reading Act, in 2022. They are working with the house majority to move the act and have the two bills (SB 111 and HB 164) meet in conference and become approved in 2022.

Advocates also continue to build momentum in legislature to include mental health in the overall health curriculum for K-12.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Alaska for 2022

- Decrease the annual Alaskan amount contributed to child care (17-20%) by increasing child care subsidies to lower the contribution level closer to 7%.
- Continue to build partners' capacity, knowledge, skills, and resources to be actively engaged in advocacy.
- Establish an early childhood education coalition in each of Alaska's four major communities (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Mat-Su Valley) to explore launching a local initiative to pay for ECE services.
- Build a robust grassroots parent-focused advocacy group.
- Ensure passage of state legislation to establish the first ever investment in pre-k services.

» [For more information on what's happening in Alaska, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Arizona



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$11.56B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

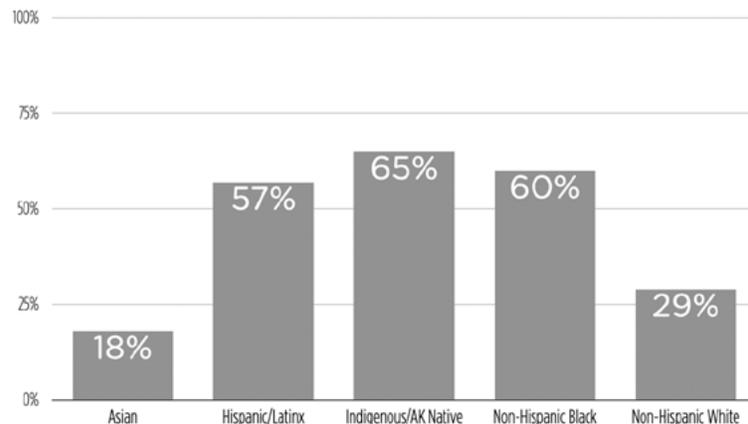
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
55th Legislature (1/11-6/30)

 **31% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
348,347 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Arizona, [Children's Action Alliance](#) (CAA), seeks to influence policies and decisions affecting the lives of Arizona children and their families. Their research, publications, media campaigns, and advocacy are aimed at a future where all children have health insurance, a place to call home, and enter school ready to learn and succeed, and no child is raised in poverty, hungry, or abused or neglected.

While the 2021 legislative session in Arizona was broadly characterized by voting legislation and attempts to pass both tax cuts and a regressive flat tax (largely in response to The Invest in Education Act passed in 2020), the legislature did advance and pass numerous policies that benefit young children and their families.

### Working with legislators and their staffs, advocates in Arizona made significant strides for young children:

- **HB 2016**. Waives the 20-hour work requirement for some parents who are full-time students so that they may be eligible for child-care assistance.
- **HB 2020**. Codifies that school districts that provide child care can offer reduced fees to teachers and staff.
- **HB 2123**. Restricts school districts and charter schools from suspending or expelling pupils younger than 7 years old and limits pupil suspensions and expulsions to outlined conditions, including aggravating circumstances.
- **HB 2406/SB 1462**. Gives the Arizona Dept. of Economic Security the expenditure authority to use CARES Act funding.
- **HB 2015** (Budget bill). Appropriation from State General Fund to the Department of Education to distribute Preschool Development Grants to eligible providers. Ultimately, the funding is being provided to the Arizona Department of Economic Security from the federal COVID relief funding: FY21-22 (\$7.5M), FY22-23 (\$15M), FY23-24 (\$22.5M).
- **SB 1572**. Designates a dyslexia specialist to assist students with dyslexia, relates to teachers receiving training related to dyslexia, provides requirements for teachers.<sup>1</sup>
- Advocates again prevented state general funds from being used to pay for online preschool programs.



## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

The final state budget included the appropriation authority for the Department of Economic Security for the \$1.2 billion in funding Arizona received from the last two federal COVID-19 relief packages. The Arizona Early Childhood Alliance developed and submitted recommendations for each relief bill to the Department, governor, and key legislators. As a result, the governor's plan included 19 strategies based on these recommendations: 1) Stabilization Grants for child care providers, 2) Increasing provider reimbursement rates, 3) Expanding access to quality improvement within the state QRIS as well as through national accreditation, 4) Covering some provider administrative costs, 5) Including a workforce recruitment and retention grant program, 6) Re-funding PDG slots that were lost, and 7) Expanding eligibility to some full-time college students.



## Sustained Advocacy Campaign

A coalition of c3s and c4s, Invest in Arizona, collected more than 115,000 signatures in 90 days to stop \$1.5 billion in annual tax cuts passed by the legislature in 2021 from going into effect. The tax cuts, which overwhelmingly benefit the richest Arizonans, will now be referred to Arizona voters in November 2022 to decide whether the tax cuts will go into effect. These tax cuts are an attempt to circumvent The Invest in Education Act, which won nearly 52% of the vote in November 2020 as Proposition 208, and adds a 3.5% surcharge on all income greater than \$250,000 for individuals or \$500,000 for joint filers.

Advocates in Arizona also continue to champion an eligibility expansion, which is the lowest in the country, for the state's S-CHIP program, an expansion of oral health care for pregnant women, an extension of benefits for postpartum mothers, a State General Fund investment in Healthy Families home visitation, changes to the English Language Education law, and an appropriation for dyslexia screening. In 2021, most of these were caught up in difficult bipartisan and intraparty disagreements on nonrelated issues.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Arizona for 2022

- Work with the Department of Economic Security to develop a package of supports and implementation plans intended to keep existing child care programs operational and reduce barriers for families to access care using Arizona's allocation of federal child care COVID relief funds.
- Strengthen our communications and messaging capacity.
- Secure funding and approval to increase Arizona's child care reimbursement rates to the federal benchmark of the 75th percentile of the most recent Market Rate Survey.
- Expand our bandwidth in order to develop a new coalition around home visitation.
- Fight attempts to divert state investments in preschool to online preschool programs.
- Establish a coalition of statewide partners to explore options for the state Medicaid program (AHCCCS) to reimburse providers for evidence-based home visitation services.

» **For more information on what's happening in Arizona, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**

» [Contents](#)



# Arkansas



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$5.69B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)



#### TWO 2021 SESSION(S)

93rd General Assembly (1/11-4/28)  
93rd General Assembly 1st Special

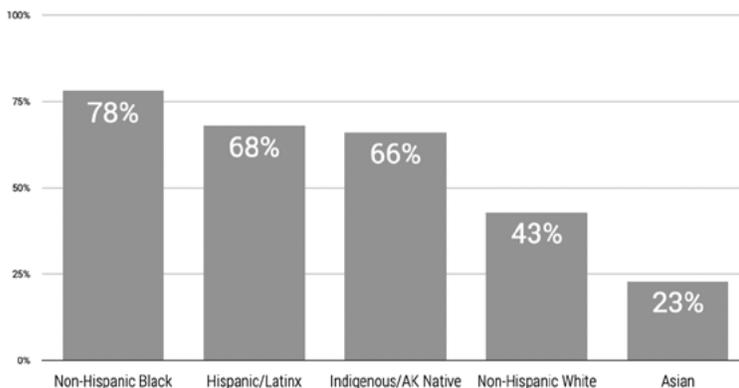


#### 52% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

173,765 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key ally in Arkansas is [Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families](#), an organization that provides leadership, research, and advocacy to promote wide-ranging reforms that improves the lives of Arkansas children and their families. Their work includes advancing children's health, early education, and family economic security.

COVID-19 and social issues were front and center in the 2021 legislative season. Meeting restrictions imposed at the capitol during legislative sessions limited interaction with legislators, further hindering the ability of advocates to influence the legislative process, and reduced the public transparency of legislative actions. (Legislative leadership, for example, did not allow virtual testimony on proposed legislation before committees).

### In spite of the challenging 2021 environment, early childhood advocates across the state made progress in some key areas:

- Defeated a major private school voucher bill that would have reduced funding for public education.
- Worked to defeat the elimination of the soda tax that helps fund the state's Medicaid trust fund.
- Worked to defeat an effort to cut unemployment benefits.
- **SB 56**. Child Care and Early Childhood Education Appropriations: Makes an appropriation for personal services and operating expenses for Dept. of Human Services – Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for the fiscal year ending on a specified date.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 409**. Department of Education Save the Children Appropriation: Regarding Dept. of Education – Save the Children appropriation, provides grant for statewide in-school, summer, and after school literacy, nutrition, home visiting, and early childhood programs.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1098**. Requires notice to certain persons when a sex offender is on the premises of a child care facility, concerns the presence of a sex offender on the premises of a child care facility.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1728**. Amends the law related to campaign finance, allows campaign funds to pay child care expenses, amends portions of Initiated Act 1 of 1990 and Initiated Act 1 of 1996.<sup>1</sup>

## GOING FORWARD

- Inform plans and influence allocations of federal funds distributed to Arkansas that target early care and education.
- Advocate for better and more equitable compensation for early childhood educators in Arkansas.
- Promote supports for family child care.
- Engage and advise members of the early care and education sector to advocate on their own behalf.



» [For more information on what's happening in Arkansas, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

» [Contents](#)

# California



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$5.69B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

#### TWO 2021 SESSION(S)



93rd General Assembly (1/11-4/28)  
93rd General Assembly 1st Special

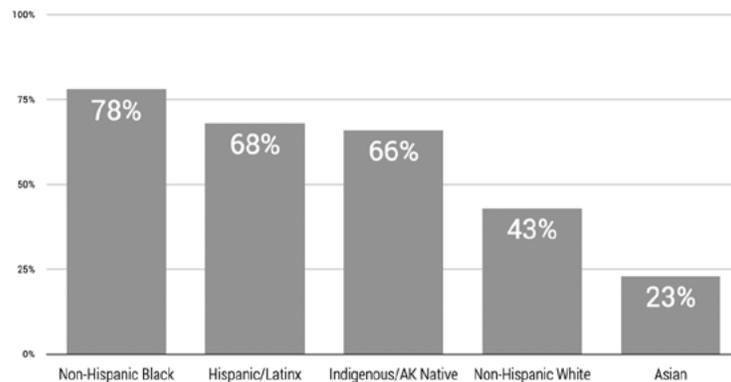
#### 52% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



173,765 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key allies in California are [Advancement Project](#) and [Children Now](#). Advancement Project works alongside community partners to transform public systems and shift investments to achieve racial equity. Children Now serves as a hub for supporting and connecting thousands of groups in California to create an unprecedented power base for young children birth through age 26, employing research, policy, communications, and advocacy strategies to advance a range of children's issues: early childhood, education reform, children's health, foster care and juvenile justice.

The 2021 legislative session represented a historic infusion of funding from state and federal sources, during a once-in-a-generation pandemic. Following on the heels of an uncertain presidential and congressional election, this session required a pivot from a proposed lean budget to identifying multiple, multi-billion-dollar opportunities to fund one-time investments that could move the ECE field forward. Ultimately, the state budget included a commitment to expand TK for all 4-year-olds within the public education system, a move that will dramatically change the landscape of early learning and child care in California and require thoughtful advocacy and continued investments to ensure the entire early childhood/ECE workforce is brought along and that ultimately, outcomes for young children and their families improve as a result.

The 2021 legislative session highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong, long-term vision.

In California, the biggest forum for early childhood policy and investment is the annual state budget process. As such, the vast majority of Children Now's advocacy — and related successes — this year occurred within the context of the 2021-22 California state budget, signed by Governor Newsom on July 23, 2021.

### It was an important year of wins for young children and their families:

- [AB 1363](#). Creates a standardized process that identifies and supports K-12 dual language learners at an early age.
- [SB 682](#). Establishes The End Racial Inequities in Children's Health Initiative, or EnRICH CA, and calls on the California Health and Human Services Agency to work with relevant departments to develop and implement a plan to reduce by at least half racial disparities in childhood chronic diseases by 2030, including asthma, diabetes, depression, dental caries, and vaping-related diseases. Chronic childhood diseases affect one in four children statewide, or more than 2 million children. Approximately 74% are children of color.

- **SB 428.** Requires commercial health plans to provide coverage for adverse childhood experiences screenings beginning 2022.
- **AB 1363.** Creates a standardized process that identifies and supports K-12 dual language learners at an early age.
- State budget. Key highlights of priority issues, including over \$5B in early childhood programs and services, include:
  1. Historic creation of a new, universal transitional kindergarten program for 4-year-olds.
  2. Ratifies first-ever collective bargaining agreement with Child Care Providers United, the new labor union representing family child care home and license-exempt care providers including rate increases, licensing incentives, provider stipends and supplemental payments, paid non-operative days, pandemic flexibilities, a hold-harmless for child attendance in all early care and learning programs, mental health supports, and provider recruitment.
  3. Commits to 200,000 new child care slots across the mixed-delivery system.
  4. \$10 million to expand dual language immersion programs.
  5. \$300 million to increase the number of state preschool or TK programs and provide additional pre-k teacher training.
  6. \$490 million to support the building and renovating of state preschool, TK, and kindergarten facilities.
  7. Family fees for subsidy-funded child care are waived until June 30, 2022.
  8. Takes long overdue steps to increase and reform rates, which are critical to ensuring that providers, who are mostly women of color, earn a living wage for the critical care they provide.
  9. Funds \$250M in a combination of one-time federal funds and the General Fund to the Early Learning and Care Infrastructure Block Grant.
  10. Finalizes the consolidation of child care programs under a new Child Care and Development Division within the Department of Social Services.
  11. The budget provides \$10 million to expand dual language immersion programs.
  12. \$300 million to increase the number of state preschool or TK programs and provide additional pre-k teacher training.
  13. It invests \$490 million to support the building and renovating of state preschool, TK, and kindergarten facilities.
  14. Approves funding of \$30M General Fund/TANF in 2022-23 and ongoing in order to restore a reduction made in the 2020 Budget for the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program.
  15. Extends sunset date for an enhanced paid family leave wage replacement rate by one additional year.
  16. Invests \$4.7M toward development of an Integrated Early Childhood Development Data system.
  17. Invests an historic \$4.4B over five years to create a new, modern, and innovative behavioral health system for children and youth ages 0 to 25, including \$205M for the Mental Health Student Services Act to fund school and county mental health partnerships to support the mental health and emotional needs of children and youth as they return to schools and everyday life.
  18. Shores up public health system and infrastructure to address preventable death and disease, reduce health disparities, and support an agile public health workforce. Some funding will help begin to implement the EnRICH CA Initiative, a strategy for the state to eliminate racial disparities in chronic childhood health conditions.
  19. Provides new reimbursement for community health workers, doula services, access to telehealth, and dyadic care benefits to serve Medi-Cal members.
  20. Extends Medi-Cal coverage from 60 days to 12 months for postpartum individuals.
  21. Supports implementation of several pieces of the CalAIM reform proposal, including authorizing funding for the Population Health Management Service and the In Lieu Of Services benefit for Asthma Remediation.
  22. Continues Prop 56 Medi-Cal provider payments that support children's health services and screenings.
  23. Improves health care affordability for families, including subsidies that would make Covered California premiums as low as one dollar.
  24. Restores \$4.6M to the State Office of Oral Health and includes provisional language to specify that other state resources will backfill reductions in Proposition 56 tobacco tax revenue to ensure a \$30M annual allocation.
  25. \$222.4M for county prevention services and activities to be implemented under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Counties may elect to provide prevention services under FFPSA. During first year of implementation, bill would allow counties to use the state funding allocated by providing a written notice to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) while the county continues to develop a comprehensive written plan that includes a continuum of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention and intervention strategies and services to support the ability of parents and families to provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments for their children, in accordance with instructions

issued by CDSS.

26. \$92.5M for the Bringing Families Home program, for use through June 30, 2024, which provides housing-related supports to eligible families in the child welfare system who are experiencing homelessness. Bill will also modify the definition of “homeless” and expand the definition of “eligible family” to include a family that is at risk of homelessness or in a living situation that cannot accommodate the child or multiple children in the home.
  27. Allows an expectant foster youth to receive the infant supplement three months before birth to meet specialized needs of the expectant foster youth and prepare for the infant’s needs.
  28. \$25M to provide additional support for unaccompanied undocumented minors by providing legal and immigration services and connection to other critical services
- CA S 93. Requires an employer to offer its laid-off employees specified information about job positions that become available for which the employees are qualified, and to offer positions to those employees based on a preference system. Requires an employer to keep certain records. Requires an employer that declines to recall such employee for certain reasons to provide the employee with certain written notice. Prohibits an employer from taking adverse action against a person for seeking to enforce their rights.<sup>1</sup>
  - Elimination of Prop 56 Supplemental Provider Payment Suspension: Prop 56 Medi-Cal payments have supported access to children’s health services, like well-child visits, developmental screenings, pediatric specialty care, and trauma screenings. The 2019 and 2020 Budget Acts included language to suspend expenditures for this important program. In 2021, the language was again proposed. However, thanks to advocacy by Children Now and partners, the legislature proposed eliminating the suspension altogether, a change which was ultimately included in the 2021-22 final budget.
  - Extension of Increased Wage Replacement Level in Paid Family Leave: Currently, California’s PFL program provides a cash benefit set at 60% of “base period” wages for up to 6 weeks for those above FPL and 70% for those below FPL. Due to extensive advocacy from Children Now, other partners, and leadership from the legislature, the 2021-22 state budget, which originally had no action from the administration to address the significant drop in wage replacement levels that families would experience, extended the enhanced wage replacement rate until January 1, 2023.



### **Influencing of Federal Relief Funds**

Children Now, in collaboration with state partners, successfully advocated for use of California’s federal relief funding for emergency child care vouchers for essential workers and at-risk families, provider stipends, paying child care providers based on enrollment not attendance and waiver of family fees for the duration of the state of emergency and beyond. During the state budget process, advocates raised questions regarding the lack of transparency regarding California’s ARPA funding and the significant funding that remained unallocated, urging for prompt release of those funds to struggling providers and families.



### **Sustained Advocacy Campaign**

Children Now worked with partners across the areas of K-12 education, health care, child welfare and human services to inform and influence use of federal relief funds from CARES, ARPA and CRRSAA packages. Advocates shaped how the state distributed the state portion of the federal dollars for schools, and advocates supported the adoption of the Medicaid 12-month postpartum coverage extension allowed under ARPA, enhancement for SNAP, funding to stabilize pediatric medical practices, extension of eligibility for Extended Foster Care, and direct cash assistance to current and former foster youth.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in California for 2022

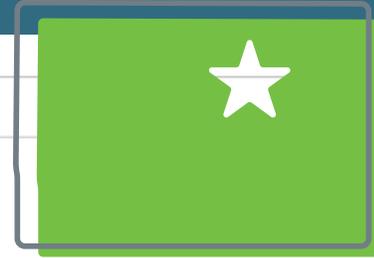
- Advocate for the inclusion of regional community data indicators that expose systemic inequities as part of California's new early learning and care dashboard. (Advancement Project)
- Improve our ability to identify strategies for potential funding streams that can fund a more equitable early learning system. (Advancement Project)  
Ensure California invests in the ECE workforce to promote stability, build aligned professional standards linked to higher compensation, promote a state-level infrastructure, and address pandemic-related challenges. (Children Now)
- Educate and inform the California Department of Finance and state legislature stakeholders about facilities funding and wellness hubs, evidence-based centers with wraparound family services. (Advancement Project)
- Build our capacity to write policy recommendations with an equity focus that ensures we keep community voice centered in program implementation. (Advancement Project)
- Continue to deepen our partnerships with grassroots parent leaders and providers to ensure our policy recommendations reflect the reality of families and the workforce. (Children Now)
- Ensure equity is included in early learning and care policy proposals by expanding and diversifying the organizations advocating within our Whole Child Equity Coalition. (Advancement Project)
- Ensure California uses an equity focused approach to investing federal funding for ECE, aligned to support the comprehensive needs of the most marginalized children first. (Children Now)
- Building on our extensive policy expertise, ensure our ECE communications work centers racial equity, economic justice, and gender justice. (Children Now)



» [For more information on what's happening in California, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

# Colorado

## Policy Landscape and Progress:



## \$12.91B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)



### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

2021 Regular Session  
(1/13 - 6/8)

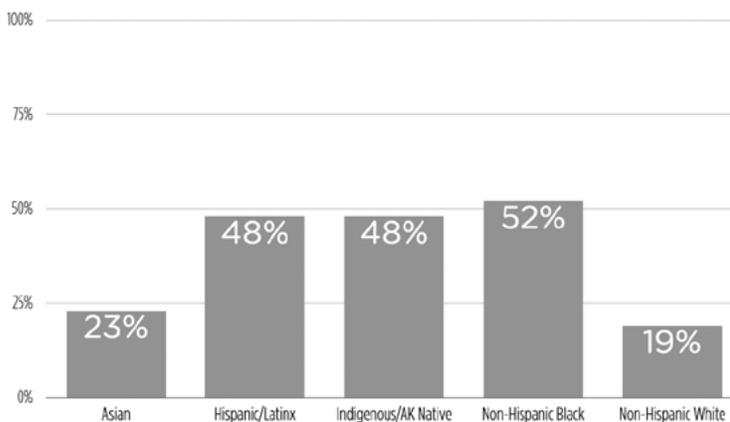


### 30% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

180,453 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead allies in Colorado are [Clayton Early Learning](#) and the [Colorado Children's Campaign](#). Clayton prepares young children for school through family-centered classrooms and home-based practices, research/program evaluation, and professional development. The Colorado Children's Campaign is a policy, advocacy and research organization that partners with an extensive statewide network of child advocates, and serves as the leading voice for kids at the state capitol. The two organizations partner closely with a wide array of advocates to advance well-being for children throughout the state.

Colorado took significant steps in early childhood and family well-being in the 2021 legislative session. Between elevating early childhood to a cabinet-level department, advancing family child care, removing barriers to opportunity for families who lack proper documentation, expanding early childhood mental health systems and access, and making historic investments, Colorado is restructuring its early-childhood landscape.

## Going beyond incremental change, Colorado advocates and policymakers again took major steps on a path to fundamentally transform the state's early-childhood system.

- **HB 1304.** Creates Department of Early Childhood to expand access to EC opportunities, coordinate services, support a mixed delivery system of early childhood, prioritize interests and input of children, parents, providers, and community, and unify administration of early-childhood programs and services. Creates a Transition Working Group and Transition Advisory Group to develop a transition plan for new department and make recommendations for implementation of universal preschool, with specific requirements for both. \$1.06M (GF) in 2021-22, \$672K (GF) in 2022-23
- **HB 1222.** Requires that family child care homes (FCCH) be classified as residences for purposes of licensure and local regulations, including zoning, land use development, fire and life safety, and building codes. Bill adds a provision stating that when Department of Human Services reviews and rewrites its rules concerning child-care agencies or facilities, it shall seek advice from Department of Public Safety when such rules relate to specific types of child care agencies or facilities. HB 1222 will positively impact 1,432 FCCH providers who are currently caring for approximately 12,300 children, while also improving

the process for new FCCH providers to gain a license and increase the number of children being served in high-quality FCCHs.

- **SB 236.** Creates four new early childhood care and education grant programs and modifies two existing grant programs: 1) Employer-based child care facility grant program (\$8.8M GF, repeals 7/1/24), 2) Early Care and Education Recruitment and Retention Grant and Scholarship Program (\$7.1M Child Care, DBG FF), 3) Child Care Teacher Salary Grant Program (\$3M Child Care, DBG FF), 4) CIRCLE grant program (\$16.8M Child Care, DBG FF through FY22-23); Allocates federal funds for child care sustainability (\$293M Child Care, DBG FF), CCCAP (\$23.8M Child Care, DBG FF), child care quality and availability grants (\$43.5M Child Care DBG FF), EC mental health consultation (\$2.2M Child Care, DBG FF), and administration (\$172K Child Care DBG FF); modifies the Child Care Sustainability Grant Program (\$34.8M GF) by extending grant deadline and range of awards and allowed uses for the Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant Program (\$8.7M GF).
- **SB 199.** Eliminates current requirement of verification of lawful presence in the U.S. to receive benefits pursuant to federal stimulus or, effective July 1, 2022, for eligibility for eligible state and local public benefits and public contracting or grant requirements. This includes child care licenses and eligibility for relevant grants. FN: \$131K GF, \$131K FF.
- **SB 193.** Makes changes to statute concerning care for pregnant persons, which addresses medical malpractice insurance coverage, policies for health facilities that provide labor and delivery services, and treatment of pregnant persons in correctional facilities. FN: \$241K GF
- **SB 194.** Requires reimbursement from insurance for healthcare services related to labor and delivery to be delivered in a manner that promotes high-quality, cost-effective care and prevents risk in subsequent pregnancies and must not discriminate based on type of provider or facility. Requires licensed labor and delivery service providers to accept transfers from a home or birthing center, allows a person who was eligible during pregnancy under Medicaid and CHP+ to remain continuously eligible postpartum for 12 months, and expands the scope and work of Colorado's Maternal Mortality Review Committee. FN: 2021-22 — \$160K GF, \$481K FF; 2022-23: \$8.1M GF, \$10.2M FF
- **HB 1311** and **HB 1312.** Make substantial reforms to Colorado's income-tax deductions and credit provisions. Most relevant to the early-childhood sector will be the increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit to 25% of the federal credit, the funding of a state Child Tax Credit, and an increase in the Business Personal Property deduction available to small businesses. FN: HB 21-1311 – EITC, \$24M in 2021-22 to \$98M in 2023-24; CTC, \$53M in 21-22 to \$108M in 23-24 / HB 21-1312
- **SB 137.** Makes numerous changes and investments in behavioral health priorities, including expanded screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders for the parent of each child enrolled in Medicaid whether or not the parent is enrolled in Medicaid and implementing early childhood and mental health evaluation, gap analysis, and financing strategy. FN: 21-22 – \$190K GF to \$376K GF in 22-23 for ECMH infrastructure and \$500K for the ECMHC program; FY 21-22 – \$156K GF for PMAD screening expansion.
- **SB 025.** Requires Dept. of Health Care Policy and Financing to seek federal authorization through an amendment to the State Medical Assistance Plan to provide family planning services to individuals who are not pregnant and whose income does not exceed state's current effective income level for pregnant women under Children's Basic Health Plan.
- **SB 027.** Requires CDHS to contract with diaper distribution center to administer a diaper and diapering essentials distribution program. FN: \$2M GF
- **SB 101.** Improves access to direct entry midwives and advances equitable access to birthing preferences of families.
- **SB 16.** Preventive Health Care Coverage: Concerns services related to preventive health care, requires coverage for certain preventive measures, screenings, and treatments that are administered, dispensed, or prescribed by health care providers and facilities.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 116.** Prohibits use of American Indian mascots by public schools, including charter and institute charter schools, and public institutions of higher education. The bill imposes a fine of \$25,000 per month for each month that a public school continues to use a mascot after such date, payable to the state education fund. FN: No appropriation required.
- **SB 275.** Transfers responsibility for Part C of IDEA Child Find from CDE to CDHS on July 1, 2022, including the referral intake process and Part C evaluations. Requires an interagency operating agreement for coordination of transitions from Part C to Part B services under IDEA. FN: \$8.3M GF
- **CO 44.** Concerns a supplemental appropriation to the Department of Human Services.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 217.** Market Rate Study for Child Care Assistance Program: Concerns adjusting the contract for a market rate study of provider rates for the State Child Care Assistance Program from annually to every three years, and, in connection therewith, reducing an appropriation.<sup>1</sup>

- **SB 269.** Licensing of Respite Child Care Centers: Concerns licensing respite child care centers, defines respite child care centers and includes them in the overall definition of child care center for licensing purposes, makes an appropriation.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1313.** Child Protection Ombudsman and Immigrant Children: Concerns permitting the office of the child protection ombudsman to initiate investigations on behalf of unaccompanied immigrant children who are housed in state-licensed residential child care facilities, makes an appropriation.<sup>1</sup>
- Reauthorization of executive order directing state agencies to make changes to child care subsidy program
- Reauthorization of moratorium on evictions during the public health crisis.
- SB 21-167. Would have eliminated key protections for children's health and safety in child care. The campaign led conversations to amend the SB 167 bill to make it more acceptable to ECE stakeholders, so that the final bill was more narrowly tailored to address specific duplicative oversight issues.
- SB 21-201. Would have had unintended consequences for infant and toddler and FFN care as introduced. Clayton worked with stakeholders to make it more acceptable to the FFN community before passage.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Allies in Colorado successfully advocated for housing relief allocation, including increased funding for eviction legal defense, behavioral health investments, and federal education funding to be targeted to historically underserved communities.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

In 2022, allies in Colorado are supporting statewide Initiative 25 (Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress -LEAP) to support extended learning opportunities, opposing statewide Initiative 19 to cut property taxes, and supporting a local ballot measure in Larimer County to fund birth-through-5 services.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Colorado for 2022

- Create a more child- and family-centered early childhood system and enhance equitable service provision through the implementation of a new, cabinet-level early childhood department that can more effectively blend and braid funds, build a user-centered system, and bring alignment to fragmented standards and programs
- Provide support, technical assistance, and policy expertise as needed to support implementation of the new early childhood department and implementation of universal preschool.
- Improve the diverse recruitment, retention, and compensation of early childhood educators in all settings and support the professional development needs of the sector through policy change.
- Enhance equitable opportunities for engagement in policy and advocacy by offering language translation services, holding meetings in the evenings/weekends, and expanding our statewide reach.
- Collaborate with partners across sectors to improve the health, mental health, and financial wellbeing of young children, their families, and caregivers.
- Increase the early childhood advocacy and leadership capacity of parents, families, educators, community members, and providers to build public will and advance policy efforts in 2022 through trainings, advocacy opportunities, and partnerships with grassroots organizations.

» **For more information on what's happening in Colorado, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**

# Connecticut

## Policy Landscape and Progress:



## \$19.64B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

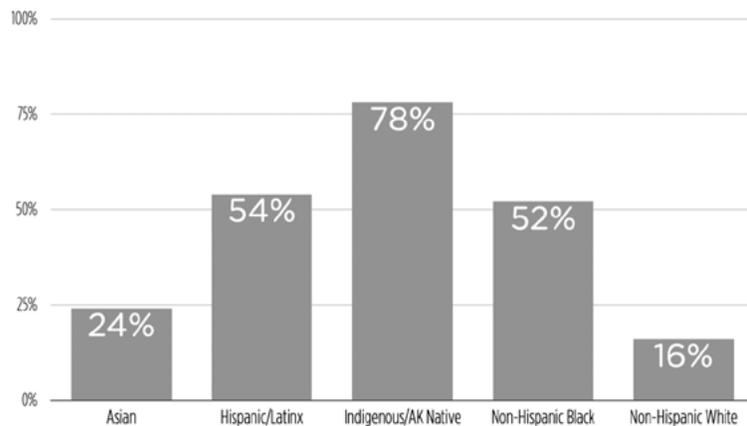
2021 Regular Session  
(1/6 - 6/9)

### 32% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

107,151 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead allies in Connecticut are the [Connecticut Association for Human Services](#) (CAHS) and the [Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance](#). CAHS works to reduce poverty, promote equity, and build family economic success through outreach, education, and policy. Along with Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, they inform service providers and others to advocate for policy and practice changes that move low to moderate-income families toward prosperity including: reducing child poverty, increasing access to quality early care and education, and supporting two-generation strategies.

Highlights of the productive 2021 legislative session include \$50 million to cover the costs of expanding child care subsidy eligibility to include parents in education and training, passage of the first-in-the-nation Baby Bonds law (for the next 12 years, 12,577 babies per year will be eligible for a bond worth ~\$11,000 when they turn 18), extending postpartum coverage for mothers from 60 days to 12 months, providing coverage for undocumented children through age 8, and increasing the state EITC from 23% to 30.5% of the federal credit.

**Even though the capitol was closed to the public throughout the 2021 session, advocates and policymakers were able to work together to deliver positive change on many fronts.**

- **HB 6558.** Enables state to extend child care subsidies to parents in education or training while there are federal funds to pay for it. \$50M has been designated for this purpose for -two years. This is estimated to provide care for 5,250 children, giving 3,500 parents an opportunity to further their education. Bill allows for creation of a pilot for Family Child Care to open in “Business Incubators,” fixes a technical problem in Family Child Care regulations allowing home providers to hire regular substitutes in the event of an emergency or health-related issue, and establishes a taskforce to examine child care workforce training and compensation issues.
- **HB 6559.** Makes fixes to laws governing EC: 1) adds facilitating racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of children, families, and staff to list of goals for network of school readiness programs, 2) expands type of entities that may receive school readiness financial assistance beyond towns with a priority school district

and eliminates current way these grant amounts are determined, 3) requires parents of program-eligible children comprise at least 25% of local School Readiness Council members and changes how the council chairperson is selected, 4) adds group and family child care homes to definition of “early care and education and childhood development programs” in law requiring OEC to conduct program evaluations and pilot innovative service delivery, and 6) expands eligibility for state contracts for grants-in-aid to develop child care facilities to include group and family child care homes.

- **SB 1202.** Suicide Prevention Training Program: Concerns provisions related to revenue and other items to implement state budget for the biennium ending June 2023. Included: HUSKY postpartum coverage expansion from 60 days to 12 months and created a program to establish no-cost enrollment in Access Health CT, which gives access to HUSKY dental, and transportation services, for adults in households earning under 175% FPL. Removes the child cap from TANF (cash assistance), Includes the COLA be paid to TANF recipients, using lapsing funding. Care4Kids parent fees paid by the state through Nov. 2021 (\$5.3M). This could affect up to approximately 12,000. families. Parents fees for 3-4-year-olds at state-funded child care centers paid through August 2021 (\$3.5M). Universal Home Visiting \$8M, pilot program in Bridgeport and surrounding towns. Establishment of a Baby Bond program. Increasing the EITC from 23% up to 30.5%.
- **HB 6687.** Provides health coverage to undocumented children under age 9 with household incomes up to 323% FPL and postpartum coverage of a year for undocumented mothers. An estimated 1,900 undocumented children will benefit, and 1,400 undocumented mothers will benefit.
- **SB 2.** Concerns social equity and health, safety and education of children, establishes a youth suicide prevention training program, requires certain licensed health care professionals to complete mental health and suicide screening and prevention training, permits minors to receive more than six outpatient mental health treatment sessions without the consent of a parent or guardian, requires certain boards of education to integrate social-emotional learning practices into professional development programs.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 6423.** Concerns immunizations, protects the public health by ensuring adequate and appropriate immunizations of children, provides religious exemptions, provides that if the parents or guardian of any child are unable to pay for any required immunization, the expense of such immunization shall, on certain recommendation, be paid by the town, provides that certain immunization data may not contain personal information.<sup>1</sup>
- Educators and child care providers to have dedicated clinics in March 2021. Advocates and early educators lobbied with the OEC and governor’s office to be considered essential employees and receive expedited access to the vaccination.
- **EO10.** Excludes individual stimulus payments received during the declared public health and civil preparedness emergencies from benefit calculations to determine a recipient’s eligibility for benefits or assistance under any program funded in whole or in part with federal and state funds.
- Advocates worked to restore a \$476,876 cut from the state Head Start line item on the governor’s OEC budget proposal.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Alliance partners and a network of advocates had significant input in and influence over the distribution of each phase of federal COVID-19 relief funding. Advocates successfully influenced the distribution of funds to include grants to providers, pandemic supplies, and infrastructure to help with health and safety concerns. For example, the distribution of ARPA Stabilization Grants was modified so that providers in highly impacted communities received additional bonus funds in the final distribution formula and the application process was simplified. As of July 2021, 85% of providers had applied for the assistance, and \$78 million had been distributed to providers.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

A strong effort at progressive tax reform and a proposal to create a state child tax credit died under a veto threat. Advocates will revisit these issues in the future.

## CRRSSA and ARP CCDF funds allowed:

- \$50 million for the cost of extending child care subsidy eligibility to parents in education or training
- \$26 million to provide a 20% child care subsidy rate bonus to accredited programs
- \$6 million to support programs to become accredited
- \$3.5 million to pay for parent fees for children on subsidy through December 2021, free summer pre-k programs through Family Resource Centers, waived parent fees for children in the state-funded school readiness programs and the Child Development Centers Business, support for child care providers through the Women's Business Development Center, Birth to 3 parent fees waived, and a pilot universal home visiting program beginning in Bridgeport.
- \$5M of workforce development early childhood ARP funding to give income-eligible parents the opportunity to attend adult education classes, secondary education, or training opportunities. This was extended during the 2021 legislative session through the advocates' early child care bill, which included language for education and training to remain eligible activities. \$50M of federal ARP funding was allocated to support the extension.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Connecticut for 2022

- Pass legislation setting a date for the establishment of a system of high-quality affordable child care for all.
- Work with the 26 local early childhood councils to identify 50 parent leaders to advocate for expansion of child care subsidies
- Raise compensation for early educators by passing legislation that a) requires that early educators in state-funded early-childhood programs be paid wages based on a compensation scale and b) creates a wage supplement for ECE teachers outside of the state subsidized system.
- Develop and implement a communications plan to galvanize public support around universal access to high quality care and the need to adequately compensate early educators.
- Create an earned-income disregard for families on TANF cash assistance in order to establish savings for transition off the program.
- Develop a cohort of at least 15 state legislators committed to the goal of making transformational change on early childhood issues.



» [For more information on what's happening in Connecticut, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

# Delaware



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$4.65B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE



2021 Regular Session  
(1/12 - 6/30)

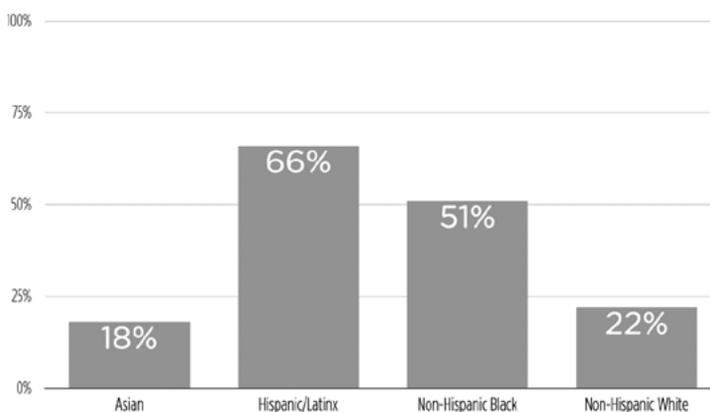
#### 37% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



35,497 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Delaware, [Rodel](#), works with innovators to transform public education in the state. They work side by side with educators and community leaders to form diverse collaboratives. Rodel's goal is to help Delaware become a global leader in educating each of its students to contribute and thrive. Thanks to Rodel, strong legislative champions, a growing and more engaged grassroots coalition, and the Alliance Technical Assistance partners, Delaware made significant investments in early care and education, such as strengthening the profession of education and aligning services for children and families. At the same time, the state invested millions of federal dollars to keep the child care industry open during the pandemic, and advocates and legislators began to lay the groundwork for sustainable state funding for early care and education.

### Delaware's advocates and policymakers came together to invest in pre-k and child care subsidies, and they laid the groundwork for future, much-needed expansions to quality and access.

- **HB 250.** FY22 budget bill increased state subsidy rates for child care by about 8%, within existing state allocations, by raising reimbursement to 70% of the 75th percentile of the 2021 market rate study. State is required to pursue a cost-of-care alternative methodology for rate setting by 2022.
- **HB 265.** After years of providing limited access, at least 200 additional children and their families will soon have access to state-supported pre-k, thanks to Delaware's first-ever increase in that area. The \$2.3M increase in the state budget bill marks a 37% increase in funding and a 25% increase in children served.
- **SB136.** Further streamlines governance by moving early intervention services (IDEA Part C) to the Dept. of Education and requiring common regulations across child care settings.
- **HB202.** Requires all licensed child care facilities to provide developmental screenings.
- **SB169.** Extends health and safety measures to child care regardless of setting by expanding licensing requirements.
- **SB133.** Requires science of reading to be adopted by preparation programs that instruct elementary, ECE, and special education teachers and reading specialists.
- **SCR 36.** 1) Strengthens profession of education by committing state to a child care workforce compensation scale and professional pathway, 2) Directs DOE and Early Childhood Council to create a state target compensation scale and professional career pathway for early child care educators who teach ages birth-5.

- **SCR 50.** Increases transparency and awareness of home visiting programs. New reporting requirements on current practices, challenges, and program recommendations will set the stage for more families to eventually benefit from home visiting.
- **SB 82.** DE became one of first states to implement an online school registration system. Bill creates a common registration system statewide to simplify the process for families and students, enabling schools to plan for the school year and integrate data systems.
- **HB 222.** Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention: Provides definitions, relates to physicians and health-care facilities to screen children, relates to screening before child care or school enrollment.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 251.** Appropriates to provide one-time funded projects through the Office of Management and Budget.<sup>1</sup>
- **SR 21.** Directs the Dept. of Health and Social Services to provide data on the Purchase of Care program.<sup>1</sup>
- **SCR 55.** Directs DOE to establish consistent regulations across state's early child care providers and programs, directs DOE to engage stakeholders in this process, make recommendations to the General Assembly, and propose necessary code revisions by specified date.<sup>1</sup>



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates in Delaware helped to develop recommendations on how to spend relief funds to directly benefit parents, the child care workforce, and providers. Many were implemented or committed at the state level, including direct grants for eligible early child care and education programs through the Delaware Early Education and Child Care Stabilization Fund.

Thanks to advocates' efforts, state and county funding (ESSER, State Recovery Funds, County Recovery Funds) supported a nonprofit's evidence-based reading instruction for early grades, a civil rights-focused reading enrichment program in one school district, and provision of developmental screenings and other services by a grassroots parent organization. Funding from these sources also offset public school teachers' new expenses.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Delaware established start-up funding for a new paid family and medical leave (PFML) insurance program aligned with an introduced bill, **On a Path for Paid Family Medical Leave**. This bill creates a 12-week PFML insurance program. Driven by the Delaware Cares Coalition, this policy will ensure all workers have access to PFML through their employer, building on the previously established state employee benefit. The legislature set aside \$10 million in the bond bill for the program's start-up costs, and the legislature will revisit the bill when it reconvenes in 2022.

**HB144** was introduced but not passed to increase funding for preschool children with disabilities.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Delaware for 2022

- Increase state investments in pre-k and child care subsidy, including strong cost of care and rate-setting methodology, and support expansion of equitable access and quality.
- Lay the groundwork for increased compensation for the early childhood workforce; develop statewide target wage scale, increase state funding, and influence American Rescue Plan spending.
- Consolidate early childhood governance, through legislation and policy, to move additional services into the Department of Education, reducing fragmentation and inefficiencies for providers and families.
- Leverage new tools to improve the efficiency, reach, and effectiveness of our grassroots engagement such as texting, a data tracking system, and customizable training materials. Add Advocacy Capacity
- Establish, through legislation and subsequent implementation, a required common statewide kindergarten registration and enrollment policy reducing barriers for families and strengthening transitions for students.
- Build capacity of partner organizations to support educators, providers, parents, and community members to advocate, engage policymakers, and ensure their voices are represented in policymaking



**» For more information on what's happening in Delaware, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Florida



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$37.14B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

2021 Regular Session  
(3/2 - 4/30)

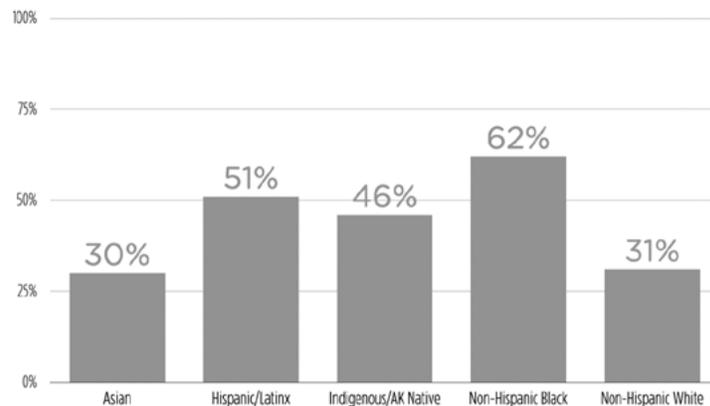


#### 44% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

885,829 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The [Children's Movement of Florida](#), our lead ally in the state, is a nonpartisan movement of Floridians advocating for high-quality early learning opportunities, access to children's health care, and parent support programs in Florida. The Children's Movement of Florida is chairing the state's Early Learning Consortium, which is working to establish clear early learning standards of quality and measures of accountability in alignment with K-3 standards.

**While no funding items in Florida received significant increases in the 2021 session, advocates and policymakers passed HB 419, which restructures governance for early learning in the state and opens the gates for ongoing policy improvement and expanded access.**

- **HB 419.** Early Learning and Early Grade Success: Establishes Division of Early Learning within DOE, revises approved child care or early education settings for placement of certain children, revises requirements of Gold Seal Quality Care program, requires students enrolled in Voluntary Pre-K Education Program to participate in a specified screening and progress monitoring program, revises early learning coalition responsibilities and duties, and authorizes certain students who enrolled in Voluntary Pre-K Education Program to receive intensive reading interventions using specified funds
- **HB 1349.** Requires early learning coalition to prioritize certain children for participation in school readiness program, requires Office of Early Learning to coordinate with University of Florida's Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies to analyze certain assistance programs, requires DCF to provide certain assistance, requires study of the benefits cliff
- **HB 7011.** Enhances early literacy supports in several ways: 1) aligns teacher preparation programs and professional development with evidence-based reading instruction, 2) implements a progress monitoring system for students pre-k through grade eight to identify students who require literacy supports, 3) establishes a statewide system of literacy teams to work with schools to improve student performance in reading.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 2518.** \$240M to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage to 12 months, from federal and state funds
- **HB 1381.** Relates to maternal health outcomes, revises Dept. of Health duties under Closing the Gap grant program, revises requirements for Closing the Gap grant proposals, requires department to

establish telehealth minority maternity care pilot programs in specified counties by specified date, provides for funding of pilot programs.<sup>1</sup>

- **SB 80.** Relates to child welfare, requires the case record of every child under the supervision or in the custody of Dept. of Children and Families, the department's agents, or providers contracting with department to include a case record face sheet, revises criteria for the court to consider when determining whether a legal change of custody is in the best interests of the child, provides for priority placements for a child who must be placed in out of home care.<sup>1</sup>
- **Budget bill.** \$1.8M allocated to continue the Help Me Grow Florida network from general state funds.
- **Budget bill.** \$22M increase to the statewide Healthy Start program from general state funds.

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funding

Advocates helped to secure:

- Child care for first responders via conversations with executive branch.
- \$2,000 bonuses for early learning and child care and teachers with support from federal relief dollars.
- \$50 million to increase provider reimbursement rates in the School Readiness program with support from federal relief dollars.
- \$12 million increase to the School Readiness program to serve an additional 2,000 students currently on the waitlist allocated from federal child care relief funds.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Florida for 2022

- Support implementation of transformational early learning legislation and pandemic stimulus spending that supports a long-term, equitable plan for early learning and early grade success.
- Foster research, policy and practice connection on resilience, including infant mental health and supports for mothers and fathers.
- Build effective policy feedback loops from parent, teacher, and community voices.
- Build capacity and connection among parent and teacher networks to provide feedback loops for our early learning system.
- Promote the expansion of family-friendly business practices and policies that support parents and community-level prosperity.
- Quickly incorporate research on early childhood into our communications so that we bring our followers cutting-edge data and reduce the theory-practice gap in early education.
- Develop recommendations to support a strong pipeline and career pathways for the early learning workforce, particularly as the state phases in a \$15 minimum wage.
- Design equitable incentives/compensation for participation of parents and teachers in supporting advocacy, including compensation for using their stories (if applicable).

» **For more information on what's happening in Florida, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**

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# Georgia



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$25.10B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

 House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: TWO

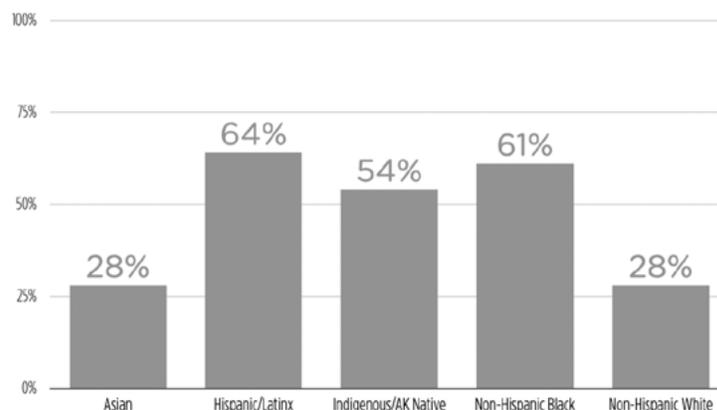
 2021-22 Biennium (1/11 - 3/31)  
Special Session (11/3)

#### 45% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

 533,157 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key ally in Georgia, the **Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students** (GEEARS), is a statewide advocacy organization that focuses on bridging the gap between Georgia's families, business community, and policy leaders as it promotes school readiness for young children. GEEARS works closely with state agencies including the Department of Public Health and Department of Early Learning to implement policy change; advocate for early learning in the Georgia General Assembly and engage civic leaders.

In 2021, the legislature included a \$3.5 million increase to Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program, in contrast to only \$500,000 increases in the past two years.

**It's a testament to strong relationships in the legislature, budget offices, and state agencies that were years in the making by GEEARS and its allies.**

GEEARS continues to build momentum on paid leave in Georgia, passing a bill that will provide three weeks of paid parental leave for eligible state employees. Convened in 2019 with the leadership of GEEARS, the Infant-Toddler Social-Emotional Health Study Committee recommendations continue to serve families in Georgia, including the formation of an IECMH taskforce of state leaders and increased commitment for birth to 4 from Georgia's Medicaid, public health, and behavioral health state agencies.

- **HB 146.** Provides three weeks of paid parental leave to close to 250,000 state employees.
- **HB 163.** Allows state to submit a state plan amendment to implement Express Lane Eligibility (ELE). ELE would allow state to use SNAP application data to enroll eligible children in Medicaid, potentially insuring 60-70,000 currently uninsured children.
- **HR 52.** Creates a House study committee on childhood lead exposure.
- **HB 81.** Budget for State FY21-22 provided a \$3.5M increase addition to budget for CAPS, Georgia's child care subsidy program and a \$1.7M addition for classroom operations for pre-k. The funding increase to CAPS is expected to fund an additional 650 or more subsidies annually. Approximately 80,000 4-year-olds participate in Georgia's pre-k. Among pre-k students, 72% are Black, and 62% are Latinos.
- New task force on IECMH. In 2021, the IECMH director began to convene a task force of state agency leaders and advocacy leaders in order to create a plan for covering IECMH services and building an

integrated system of care for children under 4. An Interagency Directors Team, which has a broader coalition of state agency partners and includes Care Management Organizations, informs the task force.

- Child Care Vaccine Parity. In 2021 the governor recognized the importance of the child care industry and parity between K-12 and birth-5 and announced that all child care program teachers and staff (Department of Early Care and Learning [DECAL]-licensed and license-exempt) are eligible to receive a vaccine at the same time as K-12 teachers and staff.
- Child Care Quality Rating Process Accommodations. Before the pandemic, all eligible child care programs accepting CAPS were required to become Quality Rated by end of 2020. DECAL had implemented a cohort model and an incentive structure to support programs and professionals going through this process. Due to the pandemic, DECAL extended the deadline to the end of 2021. To support providers in becoming rated or re-rating and improving their quality, DECAL created and piloted Temporary Alternate Rating Options.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funding

GEEARS continues to work closely with DECAL on the use of new federal relief funds. GEEARS encouraged the agency to increase access to CAPS, provide financial relief to families, and support the workforce. In the first phase of using the December relief funds, DECAL plans to: provide \$1,000 supplemental payments to most child care providers and staff across the state, continue the STABLE grant program, provide direct assistance

to child care programs, and eliminate family costs related to CAPS.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Advocates are building momentum on paid leave in Georgia. In addition to passing HB 146, advocates introduced several other bills related to more comprehensive paid leave for the first time. GEEARS has framed paid leave as a workforce issue popular among women and swing voters. GEEARS is working with the Metro Atlanta Chamber and other organizations to emphasize the roles public and private sectors can play in increasing access to paid leave.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Georgia for 2022

- Advocate to use new federal investments to increase access for BIPOC families and children with disabilities, and target funding to build capacity of under-resourced communities.
- Increase funding for IECMH training for clinicians.
- Expand our statewide footprint, particularly in rural areas, in order to have a larger and more diverse network
- to activate in support of our goals.
- Seek additional pre-k appropriations in order to reduce class size to 20, thereby improving quality benchmarks.
- Develop deeper policy expertise in Head Start and Early Head Start as well as to define our policy priorities for workforce.
- Advocate for additional
- funding and improved access for early intervention services and home visiting.
- Develop shared messaging and communication plans with coalition partners in order to more effectively advocate for use of resources in ways that

» [For more information on what's happening in Georgia, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

» [Contents](#)





## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$8.28B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

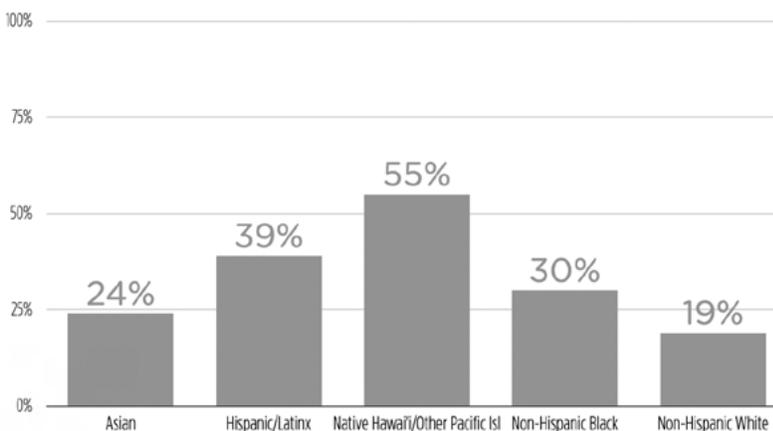
2021 Regular Session  
(1/20 - 4/29)

#### 28% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

43,273 Young Children (0-8)  
are Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key ally in in Hawai'i, [Hawai'i Children's Action Network](#), is the leading children's advocacy organization in the state. The organization builds policy-driven coalitions and mobilizes family advocates around important issues such as child care/preschool access, paid family leave, and children's oral health. This year was the first year of Hawai'i's biennium budget process. Advocates focused on promoting tax fairness to create a more equitable tax system and preventing cuts from programs and services that serve children and families.

With hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid, many but not all early childhood programs were saved. Funding for domestic violence programs, housing programs, teaching positions in public schools, and early intervention services was restored. There may be fewer children attending early learning classes because of cuts to the Preschool Open Doors program and charter school early learning programs.

**While the legislature fell short of advocates' vision for a people-centered budget in 2021, policymakers passed several significant steps forward for Hawai'i's children and their families.**

- **HB 1362.** Creates an early educator stipend program, which allows those seeking degrees or certifications in EC to receive a stipend to use toward costs associated with education if they remain employed in EC in Hawaii for two consecutive years.
- **HB 1322.** Establishes a trauma-informed care task force within Dept. of Health to make recommendations of trauma-informed care. Bill pushes major departments working with families and individuals within the state to become trauma informed.
- **Funding protection.** Due to economic fallout of the pandemic and impacts on the state budget, key programs that serve children and families were at risk of being cut or fiscally decimated. Advocates restored funding for family violence intervention programs in the Judiciary budget, Early Intervention Services (\$1.3M), Family Planning Services (\$10M), positions in the Dept. of Human Services in child welfare and child care, and positions in charter schools' early learning program.



## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates worked with the Department of Health and state MIECHV administrator to use their ARPA funds to increase partnerships between home visiting programs and diaper banks. Advocates also worked with the Department of Human Services on using the pandemic TANF funds to begin a collaboration with diaper banks.



## Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Advocates coordinated a tax fairness coalition, which focused on raising progressive revenues from profitable corporations and wealthy individuals to help Hawai'i avoid budget cuts, strengthen its recovery, and reduce inequality. The legislature did adopt some tax fairness options but left most on the table. One bill that passed increases taxes on sales of properties worth at least \$4 million and suspends some industry exemptions to the General Excise Tax. Another bill requires real estate investment trusts, which are exempt from corporate income taxes, to start reporting their assets and revenues. Advocates will continue to educate the legislature and the media about tax fairness.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Hawai'i for 2022

- Improve the child care advisory board composition, role, and responsibilities by amending the enacting language.
- Create contracted child care programs pilot to ensure spaces for certain groups, like infants and toddlers
- Engage cross-sector representation across early care and learning to increase participation in the legislative process to strengthen legislative outcomes.
- Pass paid sick days.
- Assist in coordination of federal funding across early care and learning, including the CCDBG stabilization funds and general CCDF funding, TANF and MIECHV funds.
- Build the capacity for parent/family engagement and advocacy through the Parent Leadership Training Institute and grassroots organizing to ensure parent/family voice is included in policy process.
- Strengthen the early care and learning workforce pipeline and compensation.
- Continue to educate lawmakers through issue briefings, policy papers, community meetings, and one on one meetings.



» **For more information on what's happening in Hawai'i, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Idaho



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$4.05B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)



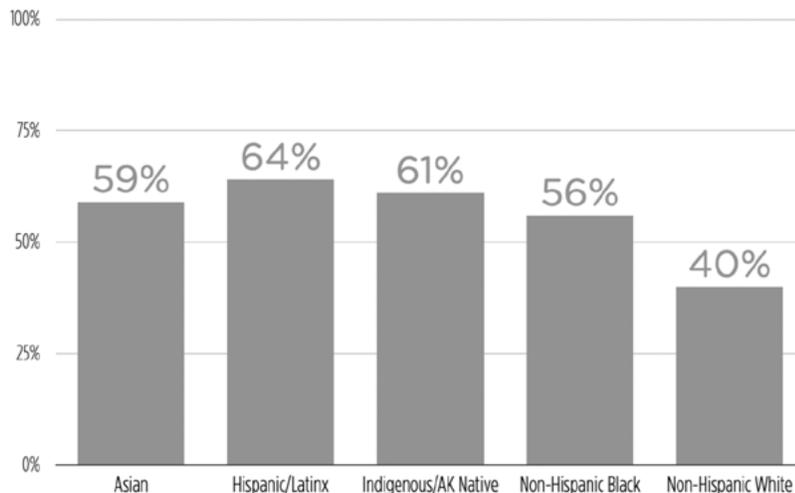
**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/11-5/12)



**45% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
97,894 Young Children (0-8)  
are Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Much of the focus of the 2021 legislative session was on education, COVID-19 relief, and the power dynamics between the legislative and executive branches. Idaho early childhood policy made national headlines in 2021. In an unusual turn of events, Idaho AEYC in partnership with the Idaho State Board of Education had received the state's year-two renewal grant for PDG. The spending authority had to be approved by the legislature and, in a vote highly politicized around cultural issues, the bill to approve spending authority was actually defeated by one vote. A new bill to authorize spending authority passed the Senate. The bill was left on the House calendar without being heard. Idaho AEYC is currently working to identify options for getting these funds released.

**While early learning and K-12 suffered significant setbacks in 2021, advocates and policymakers did come together for some positive legislative outcomes for the child care industry and school districts.**

- **HB 369.** Continues stabilizations grants to licensed child care providers through 2021.
- **HB 395.** Provides stabilizations grants to licensed child care providers beyond 2021 and funds workforce bonuses to child care professionals to maintain current staffing levels.
- **HB 400.** Appropriations bill for block grants to support programs for kids from ages 5-13 such as the Boys and Girls Club and 4-H.
- **SB 1075.** Establishes provisions regarding a Kindergarten Jump-Start Program.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 1202.** Appropriates money to Office of State Board of Education for FY22, limits number of authorized full-time equivalent positions, provides requirements regarding annual reporting of payments to State Building Authority, provides reporting requirements regarding career ladder, provides reporting requirements regarding literacy intervention programs.<sup>1</sup>



## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates and local providers spread awareness, provided education, and provided opportunities to take action. The legislature passed three bills to use federal COVID-19 relief dollars to support the child care industry. Advocates also worked with the governor’s office and state agencies to improve accessibility to Child Care Operations Grants funded through federal relief dollars. These grants continue to be a lifeline for our child care industry.

## Continuing to Improve Access at the Local Level

Since 2019, Idaho AEYC has been working with communities across Idaho to build a connective system of high-quality, early learning opportunities for Idaho’s youngest learners. Using a local collaborative model, leaders and stakeholders are coming together to improve access and affordability to quality care and early education to ensure our children are school ready. Idaho’s network of Early Learning Collaboratives is continuing to grow and provide opportunities for Idaho’s children and families, despite the inaction of the legislature.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Idaho for 2022

- Engage families of color and other Idahoans impacted by program inequities and access barriers to inform the coalition’s policy agenda.
- Remove barriers and expand access to children’s Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), food assistance, and housing assistance.
- Connect parents and local leaders with early education resources and identify opportunities to support and grow existing early learning infrastructure in underserved areas.
- Explore and implement safe and strategic approaches to confront the aggressive attacks on education, equity, and social justice spreading in Idaho politics.
- Grow the reach and impact of home visiting programs in Idaho by promoting Medicaid billing, continued state investments, and leveraging all available federal relief.
- Develop a parent council to better engage families who have lived experiences in our coalition’s strategic planning, policy agenda setting, and policy making conversations.
- Expand access to early learning and child care, especially for children of color, by leveraging federal COVID-19 relief and community engagement.
- Continue to expand our coalition to include more representation from Idaho’s Latinx, Native, and refugee communities through community outreach and digital engagement.



» [For more information on what’s happening in Idaho, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$42.69B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

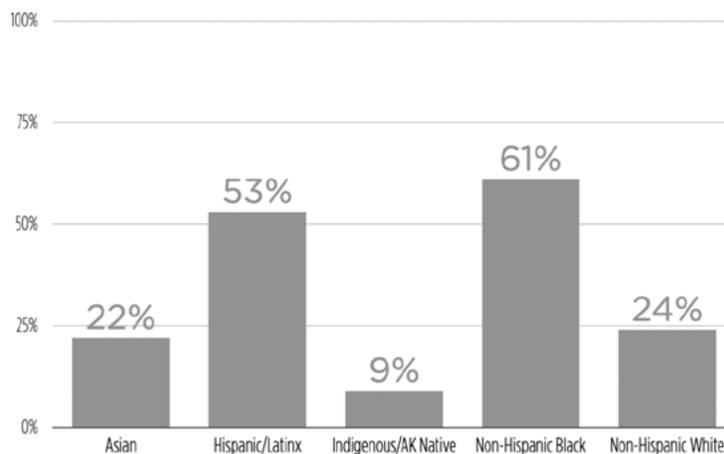
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
102nd General Assembly  
(1/13 - 12/31)

 **37% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
496,760 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The lead convening advocacy groups in Illinois are **Start Early** (formerly the Ounce of Prevention Fund) and **Illinois Action for Children**. Start Early advances quality early learning for families with children, before birth through their earliest years, to help close the opportunity gap. Illinois Action for Children organizes and supports families and communities where children matter most. IAFC and Start Early work in partnership and coalition with many organizations, including the Quality Alliance, a decades-old coalition of more than 40 early childhood organizations, the recently-formed We, The Village coalition of over 90 organizations which recently launched the **Right To Care** campaign, and **Raising Illinois**, a coalition of more than one hundred organizations focus on investment and policy change in the prenatal and first three years of life.

### In spite of mixed budget results, advocates and policymakers came together for a significant number of important early childhood legislative and administrative actions:

- PA 102-147 (**HB 2878**). Creates the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity, designed to increase educational and degree attainment within the early childhood workforce. The new law helps diversify all levels of early childhood workforce. The consortium will include public universities, community colleges, and private institutions that choose to participate. Consortium efforts will prioritize the incumbent workforce, which includes working adults who require programs of study offering flexibility in times courses are offered, location, and format.
- PA 102-4 (**HB 158**). Known as the Health Care and Human Services Reform Act, this new law, among other provisions, expands the state's Medicaid program to cover home visiting and doula services.
- PA 102-88 (**SB 267**). An estimated 14% of Illinois college students are parents of dependent children, yet little is known about this population. PA 102-88 requires institutions of higher education to collect and report on data about student parents.
- PA 102-401 (**HB 3620**). The current income eligibility threshold for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) – 200% FPL – is established via administrative rule. PA 102-401 codifies existing practice in law, thus ensuring eligibility cannot be lowered without legislative action.
- PA 102-104 (**HB 3308**). The new law preserves the use of telehealth within the state's health care system

beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it authorizes full payment parity for services covered by private insurance, including those offered in Early Intervention (EI) program.

- Beginning in July 2021, Child Care Assistance Program copayments were reduced to \$1 for families below 100% FPL. From there, copayments rise slowly, but are capped at 7% of a family's income. This change will reduce copayments for nearly all of the 54,000 families on CCAP. In the aggregate, families below 100% FPL will save \$1 million per month.
- The state increased its CCAP "phase out" income eligibility from 225% FPL to 250% FPL. This allows families to accept more hours of work and wage increases without fear of losing the child care benefit. This affects all families currently eligible for CCAP and particularly the nearly 6,000 families that currently use CCAP and earn more than 180% FPL.
- Beginning in the fall of 2021, the state expanded CCAP eligibility to include three months of free coverage for unemployed parents who meet the CCAP eligibility requirements.
- The state is also providing bonuses of up to \$1,000 for eligible child care workers.
- Through the Illinois Department of Human Services, the governor's office has funded Child Care Restoration Grants to stabilize care in Illinois throughout the pandemic. Since July of 2020 the State has spent \$661 million in these grants alone, with more expected this year and an additional with \$300 million to be made available in 2022.
- Advocates helped develop a referral tracking data system for home visiting referrals in Coordinated Intake communities.
- Influenced the state's substance abuse action plan recommendations to better reflect a maternal well-being and cross-systems frame and guidance for the MIECHV program regarding substance use referrals and home visitors' access to Naloxone.
- Supported Illinois' successful waiver to the federal CMS for extension of Medicaid coverage up to 12 months postpartum. An estimated 2,500 families per year will receive additional benefits under this change.

- Advocates worked to stop the movement of legislation that would reduce lead teachers' qualifications in a child care setting to one year experience and no college coursework remove all licensing requirements for full-day centers serving two-year-olds.



### **Influencing of Federal Relief Funds**

As mentioned above, advocates worked with the Pritzker administration and the Illinois General Assembly to secure child care copayment reductions, several months of extended eligibility, stabilization grants to providers (Child Care Restoration Grants), and \$110 million to increase access to higher education among providers looking to upgrade their degree or credentials, among other program improvements.

Data show that the 2020 restoration grants were highly successful in preventing the mass closure of child care facilities across the state. Per the governor's office, 98% of the licensed child care centers who received one of the 2020 grants are still open and serving children. In fact, Illinois saw 30% fewer child care center closures over the last year compared to the average numbers of closures between 2016 and 2018.

Advocates also made recommendations related to uses for ARP funds for system building, home visiting, infant/early childhood mental health consultation, and mental health supports for families and the workforce, and IDEA Part B and C. Advocates expect Illinois' ARP plans to align with their coalition recommendations.

Advocates provided recommendations to the state for uses of State and Local Funds to support early childhood, based on the Treasury guidance, and shared this guidance with local early childhood leaders for use with mayors and county executives. Some \$12 million in State Coronavirus funds were allocated in the SFY 2022 budget to home visiting over the next 3 years.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Illinois for 2022

- Increase compensation for the early childhood workforce broadly, focusing on disparities between setting and ages served through budget advocacy and administrative changes.
- Pass Paid Family Medical Leave legislation, bringing early childhood education advocate expertise and support to the larger coalition effort.
- Leverage longstanding advocacy partnerships, along with newer larger coalition efforts, including the Funding Coalition and PN3 coalition, for action.
- Strengthen pipeline for incumbent workforce through budget, legislative and administrative advocacy to implement expansion of intrusive counseling, targeted supports and innovative higher education practices.
- Advance implementation of Black Caucus education pillar items on Early Intervention, such as EI after the 3rd birthday and specialized teams.
- Growth in grassroots organizing strategies with providers/parents through the Funding Coalition (added messaging/organizing capacity) and PN3 Coalition (messaging/engagement from other sectors).
- Advance Funding Commission recommendations through policy and content expertise and external will building/pressure, including organizing providers and parents in advocacy.
- Ensure Illinois advocate organizations hold strong relationships with providers, lawmakers, administration and state agency partners, and deep policy expertise among the core partners, including differentiated expertise.



» [For more information on what's happening in Illinois, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

» [Contents](#)

# Indiana



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$16.99B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

2021 Regular Session  
(1/4 - 10/01)

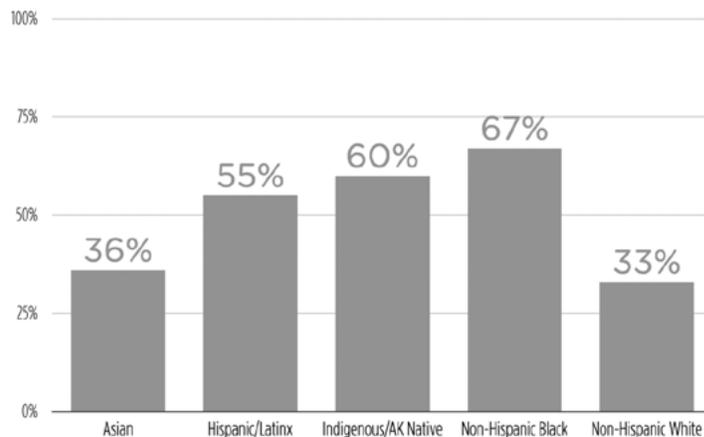


#### 40% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

301,575 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Since 2009, our lead ally in Indiana—[United Way of Central Indiana](#)—has convened a statewide coalition of early childhood educators, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations aimed at improving the quality of Indiana’s early childhood education system and increasing access to programs. Early Learning Indiana has been a key partner in these efforts. With advocacy aimed at both the governor’s office and the Indiana General Assembly, the coalition successfully turned a five-county pilot into a statewide program for pre-k.

Due to state budget issues and pandemic-related immediate needs, advocates asked for a modest increase in state-funded pre-k with the goal of maintaining funding as pre-k enrollment had not previously maximized use of state dollars in the previous budget.

### In the face of a difficult budget climate, Indiana advocates focused on protecting and expanding funding for early learning.

**HB 1549.** Additional flexibility in how the state provides pre-k funding to families between 127% and 185% FPL. These limited-eligibility families do not have access to CCDF, and before this bill, the state could only award 20% of grants to these families, which resulted in limited-eligibility families being placed on a wait list until enough standard grants were awarded. HB 1549 changed the language to 20% of total funding awarded, so the state can immediately award grants to limited eligibility families until funding is exhausted. Bill also allows state to increase the percentage of pre-k funding to limited-eligibility families to 40% when there is an abundance of federal funding (as exists due to the Cares Acts and ARP). In the 2020-2021 school year, approximately 350 limited-eligibility grants were awarded. With the change to 20% of funds, the state expects to provide 650 limited-eligibility awards.

- **HB 1001.** The biennial state budget includes state funding for On My Way Pre-K and continues investment of \$21M annually for state’s pre-k program. An additional \$1M is dedicated to a virtual pre-k program.
- **HB 1101.** Relates to daycare licensure exemption in declared emergency, exempts from day care licensure requirements a child care program operated by a public or private organization under a contract with a public or private school, serves children who are enrolled in a public or private school in grades K-12, or in a preschool program offered by the public or private school and that serves children.<sup>1</sup>

- **HB 1247.** Allows Division of Family Resources to send certain notices to applicants for licensure or registration to do so by electronic mail instead of by certified mail.<sup>1</sup>



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates worked for adjustments to Indiana’s work requirement related to Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) to allow job-seeking and training activities to fulfill this requirement. As part of the second Cares Act, Indiana now allows job-seeking and training activities to fulfill the state’s work requirement. Advocates continue to advocate for this to be permanent.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Legislators with the strongest voices on financial issues are not convinced there is increased demand for pre-k, so post-session advocacy will focus on demonstrating the extent of community interest.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Indiana for 2022

- Maximize Indiana’s investments from the American Rescue Plan toward long term stability for the ECE sector by advocating for the prioritization of quality growth.
- Leverage federal relief dollars by convening stakeholders to reimagine Indiana’s pre-k program to encourage growth of quality care, particularly in child care deserts.
- Update Indiana’s quality rating and improvement system, Paths to Quality, by linking quality to outcomes-driven standards and aligning with Indiana-defined standards.
- Research public policy proposals that aim to increase private investment in ECE and identify most feasible options in Indiana to include in future policy priorities.
- Improve Indiana’s regulatory environment for early childhood education by convening providers, reviewing regulation, and providing the state regulatory agency with recommended changes.
- Ground our ECE policy proposals and advocacy in equity by using available data to effectively communicate to varying audiences and work toward equitable policy outcomes.



» **For more information on what’s happening in Indiana, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$7.77B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

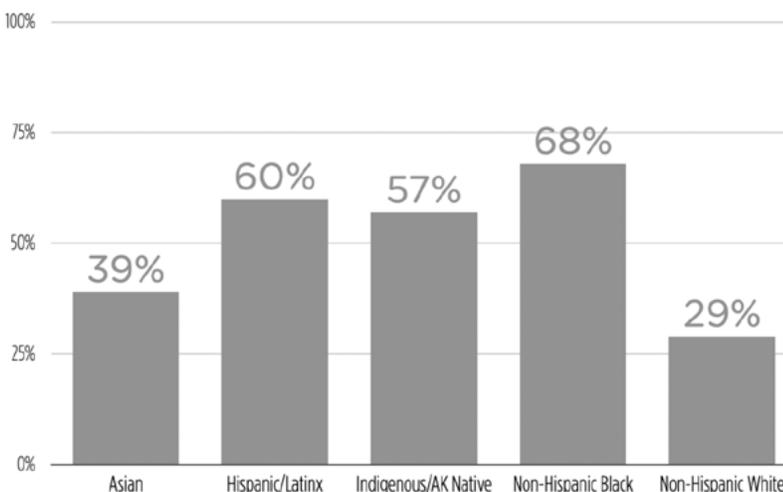
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: TWO**  
89th General Assembly  
(1/11-5/19)  
Special Session  
(10/5)

**35% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
126,195 Young Children (0-8)  
are Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Iowa, **Common Good Iowa**, is a research and advocacy organization that links research and policy on issues vital to children and families. The organization evaluates health and child and family systems, conducts research to advance programs and policies, and provides technical assistance in policy development, research, and analysis.

### In spite of a challenging legislative environment in 2021, early childhood advocates and policymakers came together to deliver several important wins for Iowa children and their families:

- **HF 302.** Increases Child Care Plus eligibility from 225% to 250% FPL. This is the cliff-effect program and will allow families to take a raise and continue to work and receive child care assistance. This will affect an estimated additional 120 families.
- **HF 893.** Omnibus tax bill doubles income eligibility for the child care tax credit from families making \$45K to \$90K, adding 24,000 families.
- **HF 847.** Education budget bill increases funding for Early Childhood Iowa by \$544K. EC local boards will receive additional funding to meet needs set forth in community assessments (child care, preschool, home visiting, mental health).
- **HF 891.** HHS budget bill added funding to reduce waiting list for the Children's Mental Health Waiver. The waiver provides family and community support service, respite, environmental modifications and adaptive devices, and in-home family therapy for children with serious emotional challenges. Additional funding will help children who qualify for the waiver access services sooner and shorten or eliminate current wait list. Increases provider rates for child care assistance to 50th percentile of current market rate (2021).
- **HF 871.** Economic Development Budget Bill provides additional money to fund child care from the Employer Innovation Fund. Provides grants to child care providers to build, renovate, buy equipment, or expand the current building to provide quality child care. Iowa Workforce Development Office provides these grants. Hundreds of children and their families will benefit.

- **HF 260.** Relates to number of children receiving child care at any one time in a child care home (NCSL).
- **HF 315.** \$275K allocated to assist school districts and child development programs in meeting the early education needs of at-risk children.<sup>1</sup>
- **HF 388.** New clarity relating to duties of the child development coordinating council.<sup>1</sup>
- **EO8.** New Child Care Taskforce to develop strategies to address child care shortage and barriers to work.
- Blocked extreme eligibility verification requirements that would have made it harder to secure and maintain coverage in critical safety-net programs like Medicaid and SNAP. For the fourth year, legislation was introduced and defeated. Common Good Iowa worked with numerous partners to help legislators understand the devastating impact of this proposal on their constituents.



### Influencing Federal Relief Funds

Advocates provided recommendations to DHS on the CARES dollars and served as a member of the expanding eligibility and workforce workgroups of the Governor’s Task Force on Child Care. The CARES dollars are currently being used in several ways, and advocates recommended stipends, paying for enrollment and not attendance, and waving copays. Advocates can take some credit for the governor’s allocation of \$7 million in CARES dollars to expand the WAGE\$ program statewide.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Advocates wanted the legislature and governor to prioritize racial justice issues and include passing a minority impact statement analysis of bills passed in both chambers. Advocates will continue to work on Minority Impact Statements (HF 478) in coming years.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Iowa for 2022

- Protect equity-focused early childhood initiatives, including Early Childhood Iowa’s equity advisory group, in the face of state legislation limiting discussion of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Expand access to high-quality preschool, especially for children of color and other marginalized groups, by better funding and coordinating enrollment across state PK programs.
- Expand our policy expertise around strategies to expand pre-k, including getting examples of more cohesive and robust pre-k structures in other states.
- Increase the state’s Child Care Assistance family entrance eligibility level from 145 percent to 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Expand our grassroots strategies to better inform our agenda and educate lawmakers on issues facing young children in their districts.
- Increase child care provider pay to rates that reflect the actual costs of quality care by continuing to raise CCA reimbursement to the federal standard.
- Continue to center equity in our outreach and policy recommendations by adding new strategies to expand our partnerships to amplify voices of Iowans of color and refugees and immigrants.

» [For more information on what’s happening in Iowa, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Kansas

## Policy Landscape and Progress:



## \$7.59B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

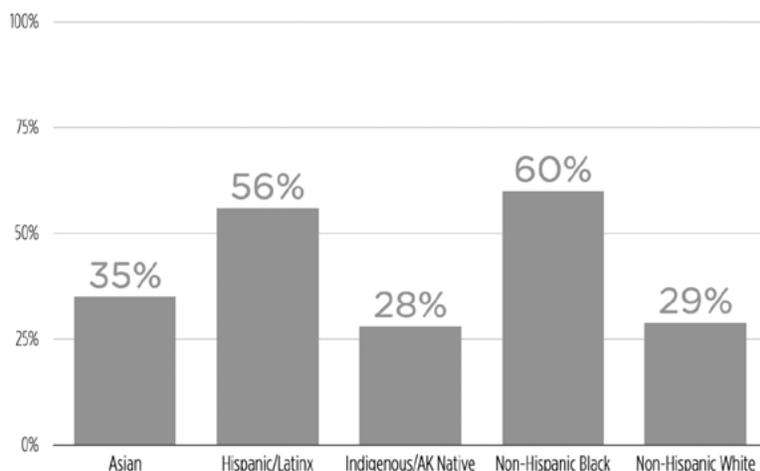
 **UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/11 - 5/26)

 **36% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
122,713 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Kansas, [Kansas Action for Children](#) (KAC), shapes health, education and economic policy on behalf of all children in the state. The organization's advocacy strategy includes research and analysis, communications and outreach, and public policy advancement. KAC prioritizes opportunities that contribute to mitigating, preventing, or reducing childhood poverty for children from birth through age eight.

## In spite of a legislative environment polarized over pandemic response, early childhood advocates continued their work and made gains.

KAC educated lawmakers about the benefits of early learning and advocated for federal relief in the child care sector. They testified in favor of budget increases for local health departments and spoke against tax legislation that would have led to a long-term decrease in revenue.

- **HB 2007.** This bill increased aid to local health departments through their funding formula. (Amounts haven't increased since 1992.) The legislature also increased their funding by \$1M. The improved formula makes a big difference to local health departments, which provide vaccinations, WIC services, child care licensing surveyors, and public health resources, etc. Passing this increase was a significant success in this legislative session.
- **HB 2250.** Advocates supported the Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment's ask for a permanent increase to the newborn screening program's budget cap. The maximum amount allowed for the newborn screening program was increased from \$2.5M to \$5M. The increased funding cap was essential to respond to additions to the newborn screening panel. Advocates have been working to increase the funding cap for several years. Advocates were disappointed this cap increase was not made permanent through a bill change, which is on the agenda for 2022.
- Two COVID-19 vaccine bills that would limit institutions' ability to protect children's health (SB 212 and SB 213) received hearings. Thanks in part to advocates' efforts, a harmful attempt to include the provisions in a floor amendment failed 17-18. KAC staff's legislative knowledge and monitoring was critical to coordinate other pro-vaccine advocates to know how, when, and where to weigh in on the bills and communicate with key lawmakers.

- For the fourth session in a row, KAC worked against tax bills that threatened to set back revenue progress made since tax reform passed in 2017. This session, SB 22 ballooned from a \$175M-package in the first year when it was passed out of committee to \$500M. KAC and its allies were vocal, and ultimately, a slimmed down version passed. On the revenue-positive side, the final bill (SB 50) also included a provision to require online marketplace facilitators (e.g. Etsy, Amazon) to collect and remit relevant sales taxes. The measure also adds provisions to increase the standard deduction, which would impact a larger portion of taxpayers.
- Defeat of a K-12 voucher bill. The original bill would have reduced funding to the public education system through school-choice vouchers and scholarships and likely put the state back into court on school finance litigation. Advocates were concerned because of the potential effect on preschool programs and the Children’s Initiatives Fund, which is the primary early education funding source. KAC and its allies were vocal about the risk to early childhood funding, and the damaging proposals were removed.

## Sustained Advocacy Campaigns



Important bills that would expand access to family support programs and expand the child care tax credit for businesses still await action, along with Medicaid expansion and a more robust analysis of maternal mortality.

KAC and other advocates continue to try to change several provisions in the harmful HOPE Act legislation passed several years ago. HB 2371 would have removed a requirement that parents seek child support enforcement before they can access child care assistance or food assistance. It also would eliminate the work requirement for parents enrolled in an educational program. The fact that the bill passed out of committee was significant.

Another proactive policy item KAC initiated was to amend the existing Child Daycare Tax Credit. HB 2414 would expand eligibility for the state’s existing employer child care tax credit without increasing the burden on the state budget. It supports employers who want to help their employees with child care. Unfortunately, it wasn’t taken up by either chamber before the session ended. Legislators said it would be a priority in 2022.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Kansas for 2022

- Catalyze DCF, through our coalition and providers, to use federal child care relief dollars on grants to providers for sustainability, workforce development, and quality enhancement.
- Defend against anti-vaccine proposals by strengthening the Immunize Kansas Coalition and related networks by building advocacy capacity and knowledge of the legislative process.
- Define and plan a Kansas-centered approach for KAC
- team members’ learning, communication, and commitment to race equity, creating an intentional path of knowledge-building and external activities.
- Increase the newborn screening funding cap to \$5 million permanently, through a bill in the Kansas Legislature to improve the program’s sustainability.
- Create and implement a marketing and communications plan, focusing KAC’s outreach to target audiences through
- an intentional approach and evaluating results through partner feedback and engagement.
- Tie child care assistance reimbursements to enrollment rather than attendance, minimizing administrative burdens for parents and providers.
- Rebuild the Partnership for Early Success, a network of early learning partners, in preparation for policy and advocacy action in 2022.

» **For more information on what’s happening in Kansas, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Kentucky

## Policy Landscape and Progress:



## \$11.90B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

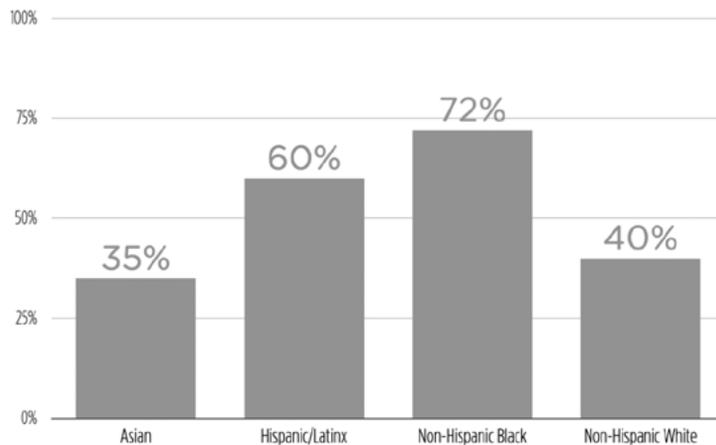
**UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session (1/5-3/30)

**45% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
212,642 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Kentucky, the **Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence**, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1983 to harness citizen voices to advocate for vastly improved schools across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Today, they focus on informing the public and policymakers, studying priority issues, and engaging business leaders, families, students, and other citizens to demand educational excellence and equity from the earliest years through postsecondary education.

The passage of the revised state budget in Kentucky was the key focus this session. It reflects a spending plan still impacted by the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state's financial resources, as well as what the ultimate effect will be of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan recently passed by Congress. Despite fears of possible budget reductions due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, lawmakers held current spending levels intact and made strategic investments in critical areas including child care assistance, full-day kindergarten, broadband, and postsecondary education. These represent important down payments on future success and indicate a recognition of human capital as the key to the state's health, resilience, and overall quality of life.

- **HB 405.** A supplemental appropriations bill made a down payment on building a better child care infrastructure by investing \$12M in State General Funds to support a \$2 per child/per day increase in child care assistance (CCAP) for working families.
- **SB 148.** Made changes to state law easing barriers faced by family child care providers related to local zoning ordinances.
- **HB 382.** A supplemental appropriations bill included \$140M in State General Funds for full-day kindergarten. This investment reflects significant progress on advocates' Big Bold Ask for K-12 education. As most school districts already fund full-day kindergarten with local dollars, advocates hope this additional investment is used strategically by school leaders to advance critical priorities such as increasing reading proficiency by third grade.
- **HB 320.** Makes a substantial investment in Kentucky's broadband infrastructure, appropriating \$250M in federal funds for the broadband deployment fund. Ensuring adequate internet for all is a precursor to the Big Bold Future.

- Advocates worked to prioritize child care workers in vaccine priority, to be included with K-12 educators. In February 2021, the governor issued **new guidance** moving child care workers from Phase 1-C to 1-B.
- As usual during a budget cycle, advocates defended Kentucky’s child care assistance and public preschool investments.

## Sustained Advocacy Campaigns



- **HB 271**, which reflected recommendations of Task Force on Teacher Preparation & Professional Learning, did not pass but made progress in advancing ideas and innovations. The bill, with a \$1 million appropriation in the budget, would have created the Kentucky Early Entry Initiative, a partnership with the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and a proven way to strengthen teaching and learning for Kentucky’s young students.
- **SB 115**, the Read to Succeed Act, would have improved upon Kentucky’s long-standing efforts in early literacy, including diagnostic assessments and screening, intervention and student supports, family engagement, and at-home learning strategies. The bill would have strengthened teacher preparation and professional development relative to early literacy, ensuring critical resources get to schools and students most in need of support.

## GOING FORWARD

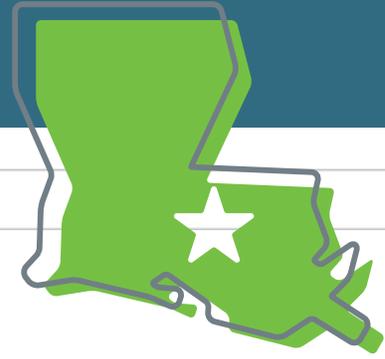
### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Kentucky for 2022

- Unite Kentucky’s early childhood advocates through shared goals to strengthen early care and education for Kentucky children from birth through third grade and increase access to high quality early childhood opportunities.
  - Increase investment in Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Public Pre-K, and HANDS home-visiting in the 2022 Budget Session.
  - Advocate for honest and inclusive conversations that promote culturally responsive policies, practices and imaginative investments to repair longstanding failures to deliver educational excellence for students who have been marginalized.
  - Continue to activate and engage with our early childhood partners through quarterly meetings of our Strong Start KY Coalition.
- This includes the Coalition’s consensus-driven policy agenda supporting investments in HANDS early home visiting, public preschool, and child care assistance.
- Align education, professional development and career pathways for early childhood educators that will increase the quality of the workforce and support wage equity for early childhood educators.
  - Increase participation in high-quality pre-kindergarten/child care particularly for children and families historically underserved.
  - Support high quality professional learning for teachers in grades K-3 to increase third grade literacy/numeracy, such as number of elementary educators certified by NBCT, the statewide literacy coaching model.
- Offer engagement and leadership development opportunities for families, schools and communities as a core strategy for improving student achievement. We will utilize the Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools to achieve this goal.



» **For more information on what’s happening in Kentucky, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**

# Louisiana



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$9.32B State Budget

*Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures*

Our grantee in Louisiana, the [Louisiana Policy Institute for Children](#) (LPIC), is a source of nonpartisan and independent information on issues concerning children birth through four. They provide educational and outreach activities and develop policy proposals to put Louisiana's youngest citizens on the path to success in school and in life.

Overall, advocates in Louisiana are capitalizing on the increased visibility they have brought to early care and education.

### Progress includes:

- **Local ECE Funding.** Louisiana advocates are finding increasing success in promoting—and funding—the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund, which offers local entities a dollar-for-dollar match on investments in early care and education. The strategy is paying off as local governments make new and expanded commitments to ECE.
- **SB 142.** Dedicates 25% of sports betting revenues to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund, which offers local entities a dollar-for-dollar match on local investments in ECE expansion.
- **HB 601.** Dedicates 50% of revenues from an NBA specialty license plate to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund, which offers local entities a dollar-for-dollar match on investments in ECE.
- **HB 304.** Provides for coordinating data to evaluate the early childhood care and education network, prioritizing the provision of related services and funds and creating a program to provide instructional materials for home use.
- **SB 215.** Provides for reasonable accommodations of employees who become temporarily disabled due to certain pregnancy-related medical conditions.
- **HB 190.** Provides requirements relative to maternity services of midwives and doulas.
- **HR 193/SR 208.** Asks the Louisiana Dept. of Health to amend the Medicaid state plan to allow for postpartum Medicaid coverage for 12 months after childbirth for certain pregnant individuals.
- **HB 7.** Provides for a sales and use tax exemption for feminine hygiene products and diapers.
- **SB 10.** Provides for mandatory kindergarten attendance and requires compulsory school attendance beginning at age 5.
- **HB 85.** Creates a literacy program for certain public-school students.
- **HB 1.** State budget increased the board rate for foster families. Money was appropriated in HB1 to support the following organizations that provide critical resources for children and families: 1) LA Parent Education Network, which provides high-quality parenting education and support services throughout the state, (2) Family in Need of Services Assistance Program, which provides families with resources aimed to reduce formal juvenile court involvement, and 3) a re-creation of the Prevent Child Abuse LA Chapter, which develops, implements, and supports child abuse prevention activities.
- **SB 148.** Creates new post-secondary community college grant program for adults and will explore options to provide potential benefits such as child care supplements to support award recipients who have young children.
- **HB 678.** Extends Louisiana's EITC at 5% through 2030. Louisiana's EITC is a lifeline for working families with children who get a refundable credit each year based on their income and number of children.
- State Board of Education increased child care subsidy rates and expanded eligibility in January 2021. Advocates fought for this administrative change. These changes will likely result in more families accessing the child care subsidy in the long-run and the stabilization of the child care sector by providing a subsidy that is closer to the true cost of providing care.
- The state preserved existing state funding for early care and education.

## Federal Advocacy

LPIC met with several members of Congress from Louisiana to urge them to join the bipartisan support for substantial investments in early care and education in the Build Back Better Act and successfully placed two op-eds and other media pieces about the need for increased federal investment in key media outlets. LPIC and its partners in the Ready Louisiana Coalition also sent letters to all members of the Louisiana Congressional delegation, urging their support of early care and education and the expanded child tax credit.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Louisiana Policy Institute produced white papers on how local governments can utilize their federal funding and at least one chose to invest in early care and education. LPIC continues outreach to local governments.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaigns

Advocates are involved in ongoing conversations with the Department of Education (DOE) and other state stakeholders regarding family child care and how it can be better supported and regulated. These policy changes are likely to be achieved on the administrative level, and advocates have successfully persuaded the DOE to forego pursuing legislation that would address them in a counterproductive manner. The network of advocates is also involved with discussions with the Department of Health to offer voluntary home visiting to families of infants.

A new program was created in 2021 to provide tuition and fees for adults who are going back to community college programs or technical schools. As part of the program, a workgroup will examine child care issues that awardees may face and develop solutions.

## Hurricane Recovery

On August 29, 2021, Hurricane Ida made landfall in south Louisiana causing devastating damage in many parts of the state. LPIC launched the Hurricane Ida Recovery Fund in partnership with Agenda for Children, to support child care providers most heavily impacted by the hurricane. As of October 2021, the fund has raised over \$330K and providers have received over \$311K to help them with short-term recovery.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Louisiana for 2022

- Increase access to quality early care and education for infants and toddlers across Louisiana, protecting recent gains in funding, access, and quality
- Leverage the influx of federal funding to advance innovation and a transformative vision and plan for our state's early care and education system that moves us closer to universal access, sustainable child care centers, and appropriate compensation for quality.

Strengthen the engagement of key constituencies in coordinated early care and education advocacy, including providers and families.

» [For more information on what's happening in Louisiana, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Maine



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$3.90B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

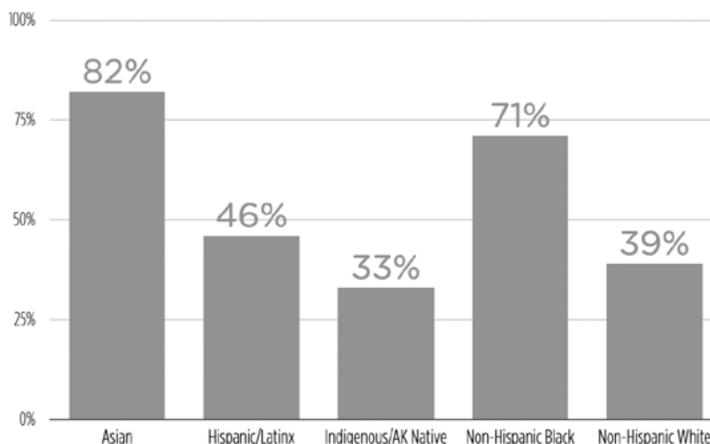
130th Legislature  
(12/2/20 - 6/30/21)

#### 40% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

46,777 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Maine, the [Maine Children's Alliance](#) (MCA), provides nonpartisan leadership by promoting and advocating for public policies that benefit Maine's children. They collaborate with partners and provide policymakers with comprehensive data and information about the status and well-being of Maine's children.

### Maine made historic investments in children and families during the 130th legislative session in 2021.

A new law will bring the Help Me Grow model and more innovative child care to Maine—integrating comprehensive resources and services into traditional child care to improve outcomes for children, families, and educators. An investment of \$157 million from ARP/CRRSA funds has provided unprecedented funding for child care. Maine's decision to waive parent fees until September 2023 will support families as they recover from the pandemic. Extending postpartum care under Medicaid from 60 days to 12 months will provide vital supports to mothers. New funding will allow more 4-year-old children to take advantage of Maine's public preschool program. An investment in infrastructure funding for child care facilities will support expansion of existing or new facilities.

- **LD 78.** Protects children from extreme poverty by preserving children's access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Benefits.
- **LD 93.** Improves the quality rating system for child care services, provides that the Department of Health and Human Services shall pay a differential rate for child care services that meet or make substantial progress toward meeting nationally recognized quality standards, and shall do so from the Child Care Development Fund, provides for a child care quality rating system with a minimum of three steps and must provide for graduated quality differential rates.<sup>1</sup>
- **LD 98.** Makes various changes to laws governing the licensure of child care providers to ensure consistency between provider types, provides clarity on the ability to levy civil penalties against those who violate statutes or licensing rules governing child care facilities, allows for regulation of quality of child care classified as family child care providers, regulates administration of medication by family child care providers.<sup>1</sup>

- **LD 135.** Addresses issues in funding prekindergarten programs. Directs agencies to study centralized billing process for developmental and school-based services covered by MaineCare program and other insurers and report findings.
- **LD 138.** Reading Proficiency Data Analysis: Requires DOE to analyze reading assessment measures, locally established benchmarks for reading proficiency, reading achievement data available between spring of 2021 and fall of 2022 and reading instructional programs and resources being used by school administrative units. Analysis must examine which measures, programs, resources, evidence-based practices, and educator supports yield student growth. Report must include recommendations for improving outcomes in reading.
- **LD 221.** Governor’s State Budget change package provides funding beginning in FY22-23 for full benefits to MaineCare for people under 21 who would be otherwise eligible for federal benefits but for their immigration status and establishes the Children’s Health Insurance Program unborn child option to cover care during pregnancy and a limited postpartum period for pregnant people who would be otherwise eligible for federal benefits but for their immigration status. Budget also provides \$187M to meet the state’s obligation to pay 55% of local education costs for the first time in Maine’s history. In 2004, Maine voters passed a referendum directing state government to pay 55% of local school costs, an obligation that has never been met.
- **LD 255.** Directs DOE to develop a plan for the provision of early intervention services; requires DOE to create and consult with an advisory committee to create a detailed plan that would be delivered through a quasi-independent government agency structure. Advisory group will provide input to DOE on the option of pursuing the federal Extended Part C Option for 3-year-olds.
- **LD 265.** Extends from 60 days to 12 months following delivery of a baby that a woman may be eligible for services under Medicaid/MaineCare.
- **LD 274.** Directs Maine Health Data Organization to determine best methods and definitions to use in collecting data to better understand racial and ethnic disparities in providing health care.
- **LD 386.** Directs DOE to establish the process for transitioning the provision of special education services for children with disabilities from 4 to under 6 years of age from the regional Child Development Services System to school administrative units, provides one-time funds for the staffing, technology, legal and meeting costs associated with the establishment of the process, establishes advisory committee.
- **LD 474.** Prohibits the expulsion of a child in grade five or below. Law limits out-of-school suspensions unless there is imminent danger of serious injury to the student or others and limits them to no more than three days. Withholding of recess is prohibited with the exception that the time may be utilized as part of a restorative intervention.
- **LD 497.** Strengthen supports for families and children through the development and implementation of a prevention and early intervention program.
- **LD 560.** Amends safe haven laws regarding abandoned children by including a safe haven baby box to the list of safe havens that a person may deliver a newborn child to under the Child and Family Services and Child Protection Act and to serve as an affirmative defense to the criminal offense of abandonment of a child.<sup>1</sup>
- **LD 606.** An act to improve communication and coordination of the Child Protection System.
- **LD 759.** Amends the child endangerment laws to include certain unauthorized access to a loaded firearm.
- **LD 1113.** Directs Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations to study and propose solutions to disparities in access to prenatal care. Authorizes commission and Health & Human Services Committee to submit legislation that creates equity in access to prenatal care.
- **LD 1559.** Creates a commission to study and propose comprehensive PFML. Commission will hear from employees, employers, caregivers and experts, and then develop a plan to implement a PFML benefits program by consulting with other states that have established PFML benefits programs. Commission will contract for an actuarial study of the planned program. Recommendations, including proposed legislation, shall be submitted to Legislature by February 2022.
- **LD 1712.** Supports children’s healthy development and school success, consists of two initiatives. Bill establishes the Help Me Grow model in Maine and creates the First 4 ME Early Care and Education Program. Maine will establish as a comprehensive, statewide, coordinated system of early identification, referral and follow-up for all children from prenatal care up to 8 years of age and their families based on the national Help Me Grow model. First 4 ME is a public-private partnership model for early care and education and workforce development. It is a community-based approach to expanding access to high quality early care and education in both child care centers and family child care homes for children

ages 6 weeks to 6 years old. Stakeholders within the communities that the projects serve will sponsor the projects. Early educators will receive coaching and higher pay to support quality and responsive caregiving that meets of children’s the needs.

- **Updated state budget.** Incorporates language into statute that will provide for universal free meals for all after federal waivers end. Budget bill creates a designated fund at DOE, “Meals for Students Fund,” which will help pay the difference between the federal reimbursements the state receives for free meals and the cost of school meals for all.
- Successfully opposed legislation that would have increased from two to three the number of children a family care provider may care for in the provider’s home, not including the provider’s children, before the provider is required to be certified as a family care provider. Bill also specified that the sibling of one of the children under care, not a child of the provider, does not count toward the limit of three.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Maine for 2022

- Advocate that American Rescue Plan Act and state funds be used to expand the First4ME model based on Early Head Start Child Care Partnership that comprehensively supports families and providers.
- Advance child social and emotional development by advocating for expansion of the state’s Early Childhood Consultation Program statewide and to elementary schools.
- Increase the number of children identified and receiving services for early intervention by advocating for reforms of Maine’s Child Development Services system.
- Increase our policy expertise of early intervention services and how Medicaid funding and billing can be improved to serve more children.
- Improve access to services for families by advocating for implementation of regional hubs and a cross-system model such as Help Me Grow.
- Center equity and parent voice in our advocacy by building stronger relationships with parent advocates and immigrant and other community organizations.



**» For more information on what’s happening in Maine, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# Maryland



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$18.95B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

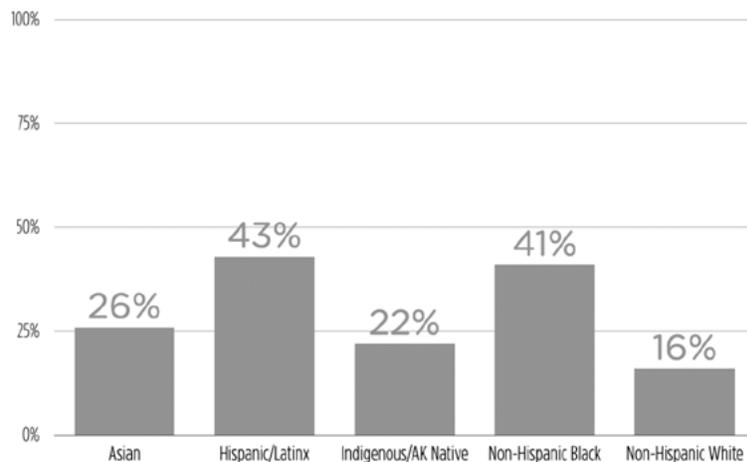
 **UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: TWO**  
2021 Regular Session (1/13-4/12)  
Special Session (12/7)

 **29% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
187,973 Young Children (0-8)  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Maryland, **Maryland Family Network** (MFN), is a voice in Annapolis and Washington, D.C. making sure that the needs of young children and their families are a priority with lawmakers. They administer the state's network of Family Support Centers and Child Care Resource Centers. MFN has been working relentlessly in support of the early childhood agenda contained in the massive Blueprint for Maryland's Future bill (HB 1300) and was elated when the legislation passed with an override of the governor's veto in the 2021 session.

### The newly passed Blueprint for Maryland's Future institutes sweeping reforms in the K-12 education system and will lead to dramatic strides in early care and education.

The bill's key early childhood provisions include a vast expansion of public pre-k in schools and child care programs, enhanced professional development for providers, new funding for the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, and the creation of 135 new Judy Centers and 30 new Family Support Centers over the next 10 years.

MFN is celebrating other big gains this session. The governor's proposed FY 2022 budget increased allocations for early childhood by \$111 million, extending investments in the child care subsidy as well as in pre-k expansion and other programs prioritized by the "Blueprint" legislation. In addition, SB 218 extends Maryland's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to many taxpayers excluded by federal requirements (including immigrants who cannot get a Social Security number) and creates a modest Child Tax Credit for very low-income families raising children with disabilities. These wins are a result of years of effective nonpartisan advocacy and mountains of evidence demonstrating benefits of high-quality early education.

- **HB 1300.** Blueprint for Maryland's Future Implementation: Expands public pre-K, the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, professional development, and networks of Judy Centers and Family Support Centers.
- **HB 588.** Governor's proposed FY22 budget increased allocations for early childhood by \$111M,

extending investments in child care subsidy, pre-k expansion, and other programs prioritized by the Blueprint. Final budget included significant increases.

- **HB 944 /SB 711.** Establishes Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program. Building on a promising effort begun by the Montgomery County Child Care Resource Center, this bill establishes three pilot sites to increase the supply of Family Child Care, particularly in underserved communities. Hallmarks of the multi-lingual program include support for prospective providers as they navigate the regulatory process and work with organizations that support women- and minority-owned businesses to help implement best business practices and achieve financial sustainability.
- **HB 776.** Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Study and Report. Piloted in the early 2000s, the IECMHC Project has had extraordinary results, and its focus on preventing expulsions from child care has taken on even greater importance as pre-k expands. While demand for services has steadily climbed, capacity remains fixed at the level of 15 years ago. HB 776 mandates a program evaluation and a gap analysis. The results, due in late 2021, will likely fuel an advocacy campaign for increased funding.
- **SB 218.** Income Tax-Child Tax Credit and Expansion of the Earned Income Credit: This bill became a vehicle for a substantial tax initiative as part of the General Assembly's effort to provide economic relief for low-income families in the wake of COVID-19. The legislation extends Maryland's EITC and creates a modest Child Tax Credit for very low-income families raising children with disabilities.
- **HB 401/HB 438.** Requires DOE to establish a model policy to support the educational and parenting goals and improve the educational outcomes of pregnant and parenting students.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 597/SB 436.** Child Care Centers – Teacher Qualifications allows for the hiring, on a provisional basis, of child care teachers with bachelors' degrees in an expanded number of subject areas. Hiring is contingent on the new teachers undertaking and completing "pre-service" training within specified time frames.
- **HB 873.** Requires State Board for Certification of Residential Child Care Program Professionals to maintain an electronic roster of all individuals certified by the board, requires that roster be available for electronic verification of certification through the board's website, authorizes certain individuals to contact Board to verify a certificate, repeals a certain requirement that a certain renewal notice sent by the board contain certain information.<sup>1</sup>
- Advocates vehemently opposed and helped to defeat HB 1307, Child Care Centers and Youth Development Organizations and Programs. The bill sought to create sweeping exemptions to critical standards for school-age child care and would have undermined regulations and weakened safeguards designed to protect children in care arrangements outside their homes, potentially putting them at serious risk.
- Advocates helped to defeat HB 392, Family Child Care Homes, Large Family Child Care Homes, and Child Care Centers – Early Childhood Screening and Assistance. This bill ostensibly sought to promote early childhood developmental screenings for children under age 3, which MFN has long supported. But MFN and other stakeholders cited ongoing concerns about the bill as drafted.

### Sustained Advocacy Campaign



Advocates introduced the **Time to Care Act of 2021** for a third consecutive year and made notable progress. The Act establishes an insurance fund to provide partial wage replacement for workers taking time away from jobs to care for new babies, loved ones with serious health conditions or disabilities, or themselves. Maryland would have become the 10th state to establish a PFML policy.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Maryland for 2022

- Expand the campaign for paid family and medical leave and ensure passage of the Time to Care Act.
- Educate lawmakers about the pandemic's impact on child care; protect and expand major investments in child care subsidy rates, scholarship eligibility, and provider stabilization.
- Scrutinize implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, especially expansion of pre-K through diverse delivery and creation of new Family Support Centers.
- Organize parents, early childhood educators (from child care, Head Start, public pre-K), and interested citizens for grassroots advocacy to achieve policy goals.
- Advocate strategic investments of ARPA funds to build child care support infrastructure (e.g. Child Care Centers of Excellence) and pilot universal birth-to-3 care.
- Conduct election-related advocacy to educate the public and statewide candidates and to enlist support for early childhood policy goals before the 2022 elections.

» [For more information on what's happening in Maryland, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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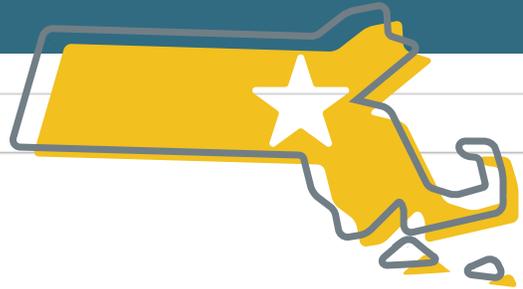


# Massachusetts

## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$33.23B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (R)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

192nd General Court  
(1/6/21 - 1/3/23)

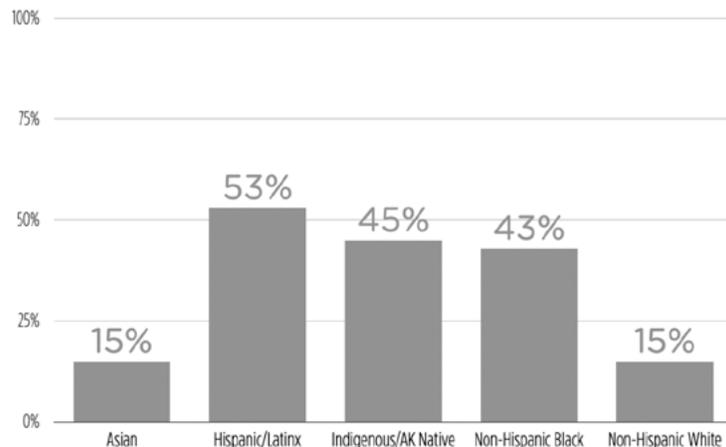


#### 26% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

167,186 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Massachusetts, [Strategies for Children](#), works to ensure that Massachusetts' children have the support they need in the early childhood years to be ready to succeed in school and life. The organization engages in policy advocacy, research, communications, and constituency building at both the local and state levels to ensure all children have access to high-quality early education, enter elementary schools ready to succeed, and are proficient readers by the end of third grade.

Massachusetts has two-year legislative sessions, and the 2021-2022 session is already seeing early education and care bills beginning to move. Meanwhile, the FY21 and FY22 state budgets included a combined \$296 million in state budget increases over FY20 spending levels.

**While the two-year Massachusetts session is not complete, policymakers and advocates are working together to advance early childhood legislation.**

COVID testing and vaccine parity: Early in 2021, SFC advocated for the state to provide rapid COVID testing for the early education and care field in order to match a similar program established for K-12 schools. A regional rapid testing program was established in response. On March 11, all educators (K-12, early care and education, and out-of-school time) became eligible to make vaccine appointments.



#### Influencing of Federal Relief Funding

Strategies for Children (SFC) worked with advocacy partners to raise awareness of the funds coming to Massachusetts and urged state officials to get the funding out to the field as soon as possible. SFC provided feedback to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) on its plans for distributing the funds and supported EEC through technical assistance to the field to maximize the state's ARPA grant opportunity. SFC offered TA sessions in English and Spanish for the field to review grant details, answer frequently asked questions, and ensure maximum amount of applications and thus full access to the funding. To date, most programs have applied for and are receiving ARPA grant funds, and advocates continue to

work on outreach to the remaining programs to encourage them to apply.

## Launch of Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission

Established in the state FY21 budget, the **Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission** launched with its first meeting on April 20, 2021, and will meet monthly through the end of the year. SFC is one member appointed to this commission. A recent **letter to the editor** by the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Education signals the seriousness of the commission and the legislature’s awareness of and commitment to resolve the current child care crisis brought on by the pandemic.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Massachusetts for 2022

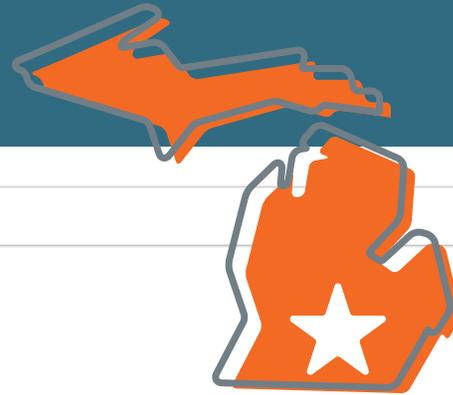
- Ensure maximum state funding for high-quality early education and care in FY23 state budget, by July 1, 2022.
- Improve SFC’s capacity to generate and deploy advocacy templates and tools, and overall communication to increase and systematize state, local and regional advocacy.
- Ensure passage of Common Start bill for comprehensive early education and care reform, by the end of the 2021- 2022 session.
- Strengthen and formalize relationships with local and regional advocacy “leads” and partner organizations.
- Ensure federal funding Massachusetts receives for early education and care is spent effectively and leveraged for permanent system improvements.
- Incorporate Speakers’ Bureau lessons into cohort 2. Ensure advocates are representative of the early education and care field and prepared to speak out and stand up.



» [For more information on what’s happening in Massachusetts, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Michigan



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$11.07B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

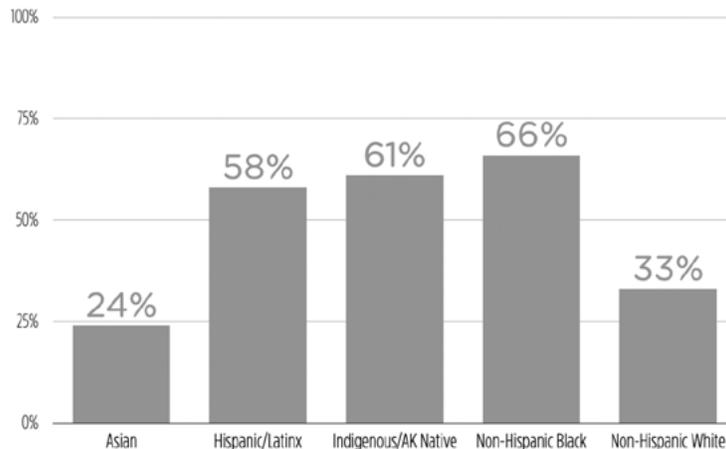
**UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
101st Legislature  
(1/13 - 12/31)

**41% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
423,679 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Michigan is the [Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health](#) (MCMCH). Established in 1983, MCMCH has a diverse membership comprised of large hospital systems, statewide organizations, local public health advocates and individuals with an interest in the advancement of maternal and child health. MCMCH uses a collective voice to advocate for access to care, prevention programs and adequate funding/reimbursement for providers, and educates policymakers on ways to improve maternal and child health outcomes while addressing Michigan's high rates of Black maternal and infant mortality.

State revenues have been strong throughout the pandemic with a record \$3.5 billion state surplus, yet the oxygen in the statehouse is often consumed by political battles between the unaligned branches of the state government.

**The surplus, combined with federal relief funding, has created a tremendous opportunity for policymakers to focus on services and programs to benefit the youngest Michiganders.**

Advocates have already had some success on this front. Two days before FY 2022 started in Michigan, advocates finally had a budget signed that allocates \$1.4 billion in federal funding to address multiple challenges in child care. The budget retains big wins in maternal and infant health with continuation of funding for Medicaid postpartum coverage extension to 12 months and mental health and home visiting supports for expectant and new families, including a new \$7.4 million specifically to focus on families struggling with substance use.

- **HB 4411.** Doubles the state's investment in Early On early intervention (Part C) supporting better services for more young children. Michigan has historically not invested significant state money in Part C, so advocates view the \$14 million as an important start. MCMCH will continue to work with the Early On Michigan Foundation and other partners to grow this commitment, along with accountability and equity in the system of provider.
- **SB 82.** Provides \$7.4M (\$6.3 state GF and \$1.1M from federal FFPSA) to establish 1,000 new home visiting slots for families with history of substance use.

- In June 2021, the final rules to **Michigan's Public Health Code** were promulgated requiring implicit bias training for all licensed health professionals in Michigan. Beginning in June 2022, all new applicants must have completed two hours of training and all licensees seeking renewals must show one hour of training. Per the advocacy that MCMCH and others provided, the training is not one state-approved course or one sponsoring organization but rather a set of criteria that encourages training to be tailored to the profession and/or population served, with the intentional purpose that health professionals should expand their knowledge base and skills over time.



### Influencing Federal Relief Funds

Advocates in Michigan have worked to see significant federal investment of federal dollars in child care with \$105 million allocated in early summer 2021 to temporarily increase rates and \$1.4 billion just appropriated in the FY 2022 budget:

- \$108.1 million to increase income eligibility to 185% FPL through FY23, then 160% ongoing. This makes 105,000 more children eligible for low or no-cost care
- \$13 million to waive parent copays through FY22
- \$700 million for Child Care Stabilization Grants
- \$158 million for a 30% rate increase ongoing
- \$222 million for temporary rate increase
- \$117.4 million to pay on enrollment instead of attendance through FY23
- \$100 million for startup grants for providers, technical assistance, and facility improvements
- \$36.5 million over three years to expand the number of spaces for infants and toddlers
- \$30 million to offer up to \$1,000 bonuses for eligible child care professionals
- \$5 million in scholarships for higher education
- \$1.5 million to provide infant and early childhood mental health consultation
- All of these changes were the result of advocates lifting up the voices of families and providers of all types to the administration and legislature to craft solutions that will result in a better system that meets the needs of both families and providers.

Additionally, the signed FY22 K-12 budget has more funding for the state's pre-K program, the Great Start Readiness Program. The budget calls for \$121 million in federal funding and \$47.5 million from the state's School Aid Fund. The full day per child allocation increased from \$7,250 to \$8,700, and additional funding helps to expand the program. The expansion is the first of a three-year phase-in that seeks to ensure access to 22,000 additional income-eligible children by the fourth year.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Michigan for 2022

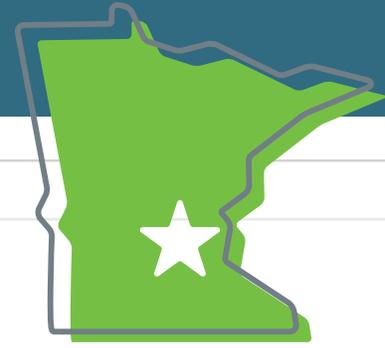
- Advocate for legislation and Medicaid policy to reimburse doulas, innovative models of perinatal care (such as Centering Pregnancy and birthing centers) and integration of behavioral health supports in perinatal care.
- Monitor use of federal COVID relief funding and advocate with legislature to fully appropriate all targeted investments to benefit families along with giving strategic input on use of discretionary funding.
- Better utilize and mobilize our grassroots networks, including the Think Babies Michigan collaborative, the state's perinatal collaboratives and our own maternal and child health listserv.
- Follow implementation of the state's requirement for implicit bias training for health professionals and work with other advocates to leverage rules, policies and directives to require similar training across all professions that engage with families.
- Capitalize on legislative interest in behavioral health to pursue appropriations support for mental health services embedded in and supporting perinatal/pediatric care, child care and early learning settings.
- Explore new ways to reach legislative leaders with key messages and educational materials such as our Birth Equity Education Project knowledge products (funded by WKCF) while also presenting a coordinated goal of healthy, supported families.
- Pursue funding for centralized access for home visiting services as well as a universal postpartum family supports visit; both efforts should build off in-state programs that are working and leveraging Medicaid and Title V funding.
- Challenge our comfort level on framing advocacy on strategies to reduce racial disparities and push further on calling out racism in systems.



**[» For more information on what's happening in Michigan, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)**

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# Minnesota



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$24.01B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)

*Minnesota was the only state in 2021 with a split legislature in which each party controlled one chamber of the legislature.*



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

92nd Legislature  
(1/5 - 5/17)

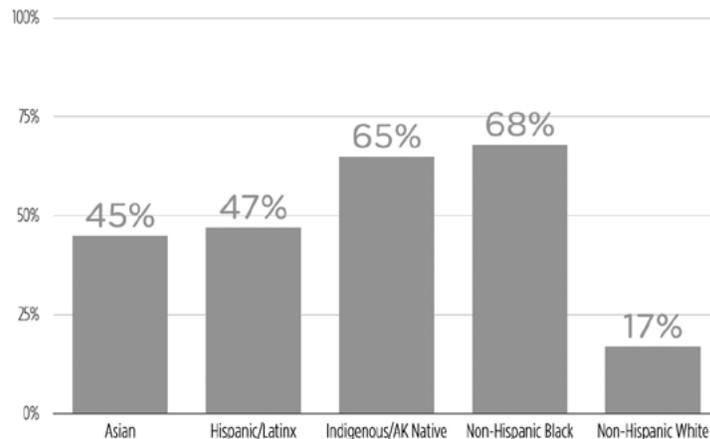


#### 28% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

178,211 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead allies in Minnesota are [Children's Defense Fund Minnesota](#) (CDF-MN) and [West Central Initiative](#). CDF-MN works to ensure every child has a healthy, fair, safe, moral, and head start in life and a successful passage to adulthood. The organization's programs are based in advocacy, research, outreach, and youth development to make a positive difference in the lives of Minnesota's children and families. CDF-MN and the West Central Initiative together chair the Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition, which represents a broad array of local, regional, and statewide early childhood stakeholders and coalitions.

The policy priorities of the Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition and its many partners are reflected in the final state budget that passed in June 2021.

The federal and state flexibilities in policies and funding established during the public health emergency were leveraged with the use of federal emergency funds and advocacy efforts to make long-term changes and positive impacts for families with young children. Advocates expect many of these changes to be permanent, and they are well positioned to advocate for those that are not.

- [HF 2128](#). Increased funding and flexibility for family home visiting services to pregnant women and families with young children allowing up to 25% for promising practice programs and address health inequities.
- [HF 316](#). Family, Friend and Neighbor Care support for training, access to teaching materials and books and educational opportunities
- [SF 1180](#). Additional work protections for pregnant and lactating individuals. Change allows lactating individuals to access paid time to pump breast milk. Additional workers and employers were added under the pregnancy accommodation law.
- [SF 1315/HF 1403](#). Healthy Start Act: Allows pregnant and parenting women (up to 12 months postpartum) who are incarcerated in state prisons to be moved to community alternative settings while serving time to allow them to give birth or bond with their children (up to 12 months) and establish critical bonds that will lead to long-term health for the children. This bill currently affects approximately 200 families.
- [SS HF 33](#). 1) Dignity in Pregnancy and Child Birth Act directs funding to create a curriculum for people

working in labor and delivery to learn about the impact of implicit bias on the health and well-being of women, child birth experience and the health of babies. 2) Great Start for All task force will develop recommendations for transforming child care system. 3) Inclusive Child Care Grant program will develop pilots for providers to work with counties to better serve children with complex medical needs or disabilities. 4) Medical assistance postpartum coverage extended from 60 days to 12 months. 5) Permanent CCAP provider rate increase with differential rates for infants and toddlers. 6) Supporting Healthy Development of Babies provides funding to the African American Babies Coalition to improve social determinants of health. 7) Integrated Care for High-Risk Pregnancies Expansion passed. The focus is on creating funded strategies to address maternal and infant health inequities in American-born African-American and Indigenous women.

### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds



Prenatal to Three priorities are reflected in the state’s use of federal child care relief funds. There were a number of priorities included 1) Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care, 2) public health emergency grants to child care providers that began with CARES funding and continued through CRSSA, ARP and Child Care stabilization grants funds, 3) permanent CCAP rate increases with differential for infants and toddlers, 4) funding for a task force to identify dedicated/sustaining funding for child care to address what was broken with the business model, and 5) a long list of other strategies to support ECE.

In areas outside child care, advocates’ priorities were enacted using ARP funding. These include: 1) postpartum coverage extension to 12 months, 2) increased funding for home visiting services to families, and 3) funding for programs addressing inequities in maternal and infant health.

The divided legislature and governor decided to leave \$1.2 billion of ARPA flexible state funding unspent until 2022 decisions are made.

### Sustained Advocacy Campaigns



PFML passed the House and was included in the governor’s budget in 2021. This policy was a key priority in negotiations until the very end of session. Minnesota’s divided legislature impacted advocates’ ability to pass this popular legislation. However, important new allies in the early childhood and racial equity fields have joined the fight.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Minnesota for 2022

- Increase access to early care and education through the creation of a dedicated revenue source to support expansion of CCAP, ELS, and other approaches.
- Increase our federal policy advocacy and state administrative advocacy (related to use of federal and flexible state funds) in support of our policy priorities.
- Increase the number of families that can access paid leave to care for themselves or a family member through a state insurance program and/or other strategies.
- Improve organizational and coalition engagement efforts with parents, families, elders and business groups to build out a multi-generational movement for early childhood policies.
- Increase access to geographically and culturally responsive, trauma-informed health and mental health care prenatally through early childhood to improve health and early learning outcomes.
- Improve coordination, data collection and communication across maternal child health focused advocacy groups to align culturally and geographically focused policy goals among health advocates.

**» For more information on what’s happening in Minnesota, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Mississippi



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$5.59B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

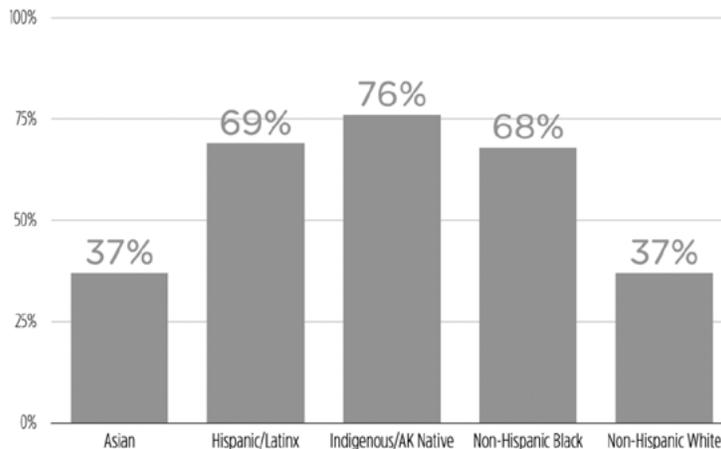
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/5 - 4/1)

**53% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
171,419 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Mississippi, **Mississippi First**, works to champion transformative policy solutions ensuring educational excellence for every child. The organization is the lead advocate for the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013, Mississippi's state-funded pre-k law. They conduct research, and support advocacy and implementation efforts for the state pre-k program, including supporting the Mississippi Department of Education-funded pre-k programs and applicant communities.

### There were historic successes for pre-k in Mississippi's 2021 session.

The Mississippi Legislature doubled its investment in state-funded pre-k to \$16 million, which will serve 16% of Mississippi 4-year-olds (roughly 6,080 children). New lottery funds enabled this expansion with an additional \$8,210,526. The General Fund will cover \$7,789,474, which remains the same as last year. The legislature also supported pre-k teachers by committing \$1.5M for pre-K coaches. This will help the Mississippi Department of Education continue to provide high-quality professional experiences to pre-k teachers in collaboratives without 100% dependence on philanthropy. The legislature also continues to improve the state pre-k law by aligning it to the newest NIEER standards.

- **HB 1123.** Improves original Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013. Bill brought law into alignment with changes made to the NIEER standards since 2013 and provided technical fixes such as clarifying the evidence standards for curriculum.
- **HB 1387.** Additional pre-K funding in state budget: Total appropriation is \$16M for the collaboratives. This is an increase of \$8,210,526 over FY21 levels. New money is coming from lottery funds that boosted the Education Enhancement Fund. The other \$7,789,474 of the total appropriation comes from the General Fund (like last year). Splitting the funding this way ensures that pre-k has a base of recurring general funds. The bill preserves the rate increase via the budget for one more year, meaning collaboratives will continue to receive the extra \$350 they received last year. Advocates secured a line-item of \$1.5M for pre-k coaches, helping the MDE program office to continue to provide high-quality professional experiences to pre-k teachers in collaboratives without being totally reliant on philanthropic funds.

- Proposal to eliminate the state income tax was defeated.

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates helped distribute GEER funds to fill in gaps left by use of child care funds.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Mississippi for 2022

- Make permanent the FY21 and FY22 state-funded pre-k rate increases (to \$5,000 per child) by passing authorizing legislation to lock in the change.
- Support the Department of Human Services in developing long-term goals (over 10 years) for improving child care (0-8) and developing a strategy for achieving those goals that can last through changing political power structures.
- Build policy expertise specific to child care issues to match our expertise on state-funded 4-year-old pre-k.



» [For more information on what's happening in Mississippi, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Missouri



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$37.14B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

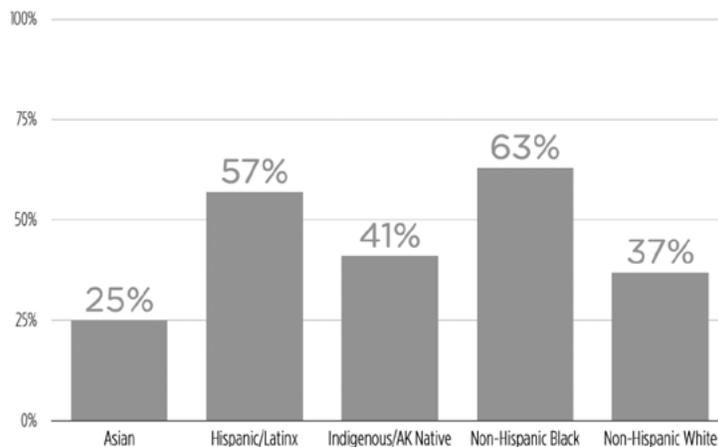
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/6 - 5/30)

 **42% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
279,247 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Missouri, [Kids Win Missouri](#), is a non-partisan, statewide coalition comprised of more than 100 members, representing child well-being, early childhood development, education, health, child safety and family economic security. They work to advance policies that support the well-being of Missouri children through education, collaboration, and advocacy.

**Working together, advocates and policymakers from across the political spectrum passed significant legislation that supports the success of young children and their families.**

The governor issued an executive order in 2021 that created a new Office of Childhood, consolidating child care, home visiting, and early learning programs into one office. Policymakers also passed legislation to protect children and families, with an omnibus child protection bill and approved tax incentives and \$90 million in new funding to support foster, kinship, and adoptive families. It is a critical moment for early learning in Missouri, and there is bipartisan support and momentum for early childhood issues.

- **HB 432.** Omnibus child protection bill: 1) Requires Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to develop a model policy regarding breastfeeding for school staff, teachers, and students. 2) Requires Children's Division of Department of Social Services and State Registrar's Office to compare birth reports with reports of parents who have been convicted of certain crimes or have a termination of parental rights to ensure safety of children. 3) Extends and expands pilot program that allows SNAP recipients to use benefits at farmers' markets. 4) Requires CCDBG lead agency to, subject to appropriations, implement a pilot program by July 2022 that allows CCDBG recipients to access transitional child care subsidies without first being eligible for full child care benefits. 5) Transfers the responsibility for annual health inspections from Department of Health and Senior Services to DESE for child care facilities with >6 children. 6) Requires health coverage plans to cover costs of hearing aids for children. 7) Creates a newborn safety incubator policy that allows parents of children up to 45 days old to voluntarily deliver the child to a safe place without facing prosecution. 8) Prohibits state from creating requirements more strict than federal regulations for Child and Adult Food Program.
- **SB 153.** Enacts a state EITC equal to 10% of the value of the federal EITC. State credit could increase to

20% of the value of the federal EITC if certain revenue triggers are met.

- **HB 2.** State budget for Department of Elementary and Secondary Education includes an additional \$2,060,975 for Parent Education/Developmental Screenings that will help identify children with developmental delays and connect them with other home visiting programs.
- **HB 11.** The state budget for the Dept. of Social Services includes \$90M in new funding to support kinship, foster, and protective families.
- **HB 429.** Boosts tax incentives to support families participating in foster, adoptive, and kinship programs.
- **EO 21-02.** Creates Office of Childhood within DESE. New office will provide coordination, strategic direction, and vision for EC.
- Prevented imposition of work requirements on SNAP recipients.

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds



In fall 2020, Kids Win Missouri worked with the Department of Health and Senior Services to use and distribute \$10 million in non-child care CARES Act funds toward supporting child care providers in offsetting pandemic-related costs.

Advocacy by Kids Win Missouri also helped shape the state's CRRSA funding spend plan. Advocates are currently engaging with the state on developing plans for the ARP child care relief funding.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Missouri for 2022

- Engage stakeholders to ensure CCDF state plan implementation, child care relief funds, and Office of Childhood integration meet the needs of child care stakeholders.
- Engage local communities to develop policy solutions and participate in state advocacy efforts for local early childhood funding options.
- Expand our capacity to cultivate and utilize stories to advance our policy issues.
- Increase access to quality early childhood education by increasing state funding for pre-k.
- Expand health coverage of mothers by securing state support for Postpartum Coverage option made available through American Rescue Plan.
- Conduct field research to better understand the barriers of schools in utilizing available pre-k funds.
- Advance equity through and access to home visiting by facilitating a coalition of stakeholders, collaborating to develop policy priorities, and providing feedback to program administrators.
- Increase our policy expertise to more effectively advocate for and advance equity through home visiting.

» [For more information on what's happening in Missouri, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Montana



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$2.52B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE



67th Legislature  
(1/4 - 4/29)

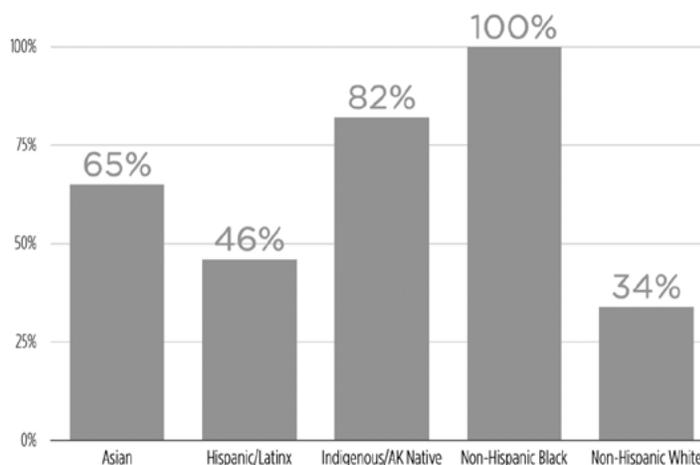
#### 40% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



42,062 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Montana, [Zero to Five](#), works to develop and implement policy change through collaboration, research, advocacy, and community partnerships. The organization focuses on giving families the tools they need to succeed, from pregnancy all the way to their child’s first day of school, and beyond.

### Thanks to the hard work of advocates in Montana, legislators in 2021 introduced more bills than ever to support child care and preschool.

While the session’s focus was managing the influx of ARPA funds, addressing the 2020 legalization of recreational marijuana, and some priority issues for the new administration, the legislature took up numerous early childhood bills and passed bills to reform the child welfare system and rejected attempts to weaken immunization requirements for child care and foster care. On the funding side, [HB 632](#)—the vehicle for allocating federal stimulus funds—included \$112.5 million for child care grants, targeted at one-time facility improvements. An additional \$2 million was allocated to child abuse prevention.

- [HB 221](#). Allows a campaign to use contributions for candidate child care.
- Advocates opposed a bill to modify ratios in child care settings. The bill did pass, but the final ratios were not as drastic as originally proposed.

### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Zero to Five Montana and other advocates were crucial in the successful efforts to:

- Block the dedication of \$800,000 of ARPA funding to an “online preschool” line item.
- Ensure the state kept funding through ARPA for child care. The legislative committee considered accepting \$10 million, but advocates ultimately pressed the state to accept and distribute the full amount (\$112.5 million).



## Sustained Advocacy Campaigns

For the interim, an evaluation of the mental health system for children will be the only prioritized early childhood issue. In 2021, the preschool bill passed committee. Although the bill died on the floor, this is the furthest a preschool bill has made it in the Montana legislature. Bills to establish a business-child care task force and to create nutrition incentives in the SNAP program passed but were vetoed.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Montana for 2022

- Develop a “pathway for preschool” in Montana, inclusive of talking points and a toolkit to aid in locally-designed partnerships.
- Develop a policy agenda with comprehensive ECE priorities leading into the 2023 legislative session.
- Engage with candidates for the Montana’s new House of Representatives seat about early childhood, and work to elect a candidate who prioritizes children and families.
- Increase access to quality child care through a community supply-building strategy, leveraging the Family Forward initiative and tribal child care goals.
- Develop a comprehensive advocacy strategy that organizes and mobilizes a broad spectrum of Montanans to elevate family policies.
- Provide policy makers and stakeholders with data, research and innovative strategies to inform short/ long-term investments in early care and education.
- Develop a coalition of parents and family leaders to advocate for equitable birth through age 5 policies and services.

» [For more information on what’s happening in Montana, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# Nebraska

## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$4.74B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

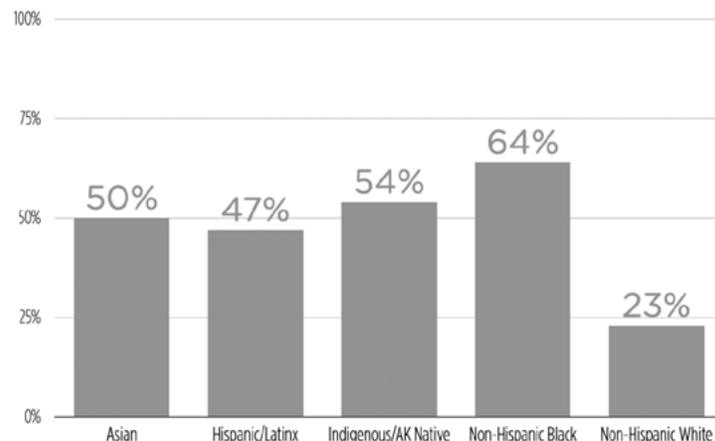
 **ALIGNMENT: N/A**  
Governor (R), Unicameral legislature  
without party affiliations

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
107th Legislature  
(1/6 - 6/10)

 **33% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
77,205 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Nebraska, **First Five Nebraska** (FFN), is working to make sure that all Nebraska children begin kindergarten with the experience they need to become successful students and productive citizens. Working with state partners in the legislature and government agencies, FFN seeks to create effective early childhood policies that promote accountable early childhood investments with impactful outcomes that eliminate the achievement gap for Nebraska's youngest learners.

### In addition to winning key legislation, allies in Nebraska continue to build broad support for early care and learning.

FFN and its allies worked with several early childhood organizations and senators to pass three bills focused on increasing the number of quality child care programs and allowing more families the opportunity to access the Child Care Subsidy. Advocates also increased support for early childhood issues, and a significant majority of senators support early childhood.

- **LB 485.** Expands initial eligibility for Child Care Subsidy to 185% FPL and smooths out cliff effects by raising back expanded eligibility to 200% FPL. This change in eligibility will start in August and will be available for the next 27 months.
- **LB 351.** Allows child care providers who change license type to retain their current rating in NE's QRIS, Step Up to Quality. This change is intended to encourage more child care providers to remain committed to improving the quality of their programs.
- **LB 342.** Appropriates an additional \$5M over two years to the state's Early Childhood Education Endowment Cash Fund. The Fund supports Sixpence, NE's public-private initiative that supports children's healthy, social-emotional, and physical development prenatal through age 3, especially children most at risk. With this additional funding, Sixpence will be able to expand existing programs to meet demand and approve new programs to reach more parents and young children.
- **LB 108.** Reduces SNAP cliff effect that occurs when a small increase in earnings results in a steep loss in benefits.
- **LB 137.** Requires employees of licensed child care professionals to report their educational degrees, professional credentials, relevant training and work history using the Nebraska Early Childhood

Professional Record System.

- **LR 142.** Legislative resolution to determine whether legislation should be enacted to provide for additional supports and further address the issue of maternal depression in Nebraska.
- **LR 162.** Legislative resolution to examine the School Readiness Tax Credit Act.
- **LR 181.** Legislative resolution to study home visitation for Nebraska families.
- **LR 190.** Legislative resolution to look at work participation requirements in the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in Nebraska.
- **LR 221.** Legislative resolution to study maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.
- First Five Nebraska lobbied state senators to ensure there were no budget cuts to EC programs in the biennium budget. There were no cuts, and advocates scored increased funding to Sixpence.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

First Five Nebraska and several other early childhood organizations developed recommendations for the Nebraska Departments of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education on ways to deploy federal COVID relief funds to support the early childhood/child care sector. First Five Nebraska continues to work with these departments to ensure American Rescue Plan Act funding is distributed in ways that will help families and sustain the early childhood field.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaigns

In 2021, First Five Nebraska worked with senators to introduce three bills that are now being carried over into the 2022 legislative session. **LB 531** would create the Nebraska Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Act and enable taxpaying individuals and businesses to claim a nonrefundable income tax credit for qualifying contributions that promote quality child care programs in Nebraska. **LB 137** would require employees of licensed child care professionals to report their educational degrees, professional credentials, relevant training, and work history using the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System. **LB 68** would allow child care providers to bill for children utilizing the child care subsidy based on enrollment rather than attendance.

First Five Nebraska also worked with senators to introduce five legislative resolutions for interim studies. These interim studies will examine the following: Maternal Depression, School Readiness Tax Credit, Maternal and Infant Mortality and Morbidity, Home Visiting, and TANF.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Nebraska for 2022

- Introduce and pass legislation in the 2022 legislative session to reauthorize the School Readiness Tax Credit Program to allow more providers the opportunity to access the tax credit program and receive the financial benefit.
- Pass LB531, the Nebraska Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Act, during the 2022 legislative session which would create a financial mechanism to support and sustain more quality child care availability in Nebraska.
- Increase the number of families with infants and toddlers who participate in TANF by broadening the allowable activities for the work requirements for the program.
- Increase the percentage of children birth to age 8 that get access to Early Development Network (EDN) services and identify current barriers and solutions to this problem.
- Increase parent support for quality early childhood policies and develop a one-pager that specifically focuses on Nebraska parents and their preferences for child care, and how that affects policy.
- Create strategic messaging on the cost of child care so that the public and legislators have a deeper understanding of and how that impacts a family's economic security.

» **For more information on what's happening in Nebraska, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**

# Nevada



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$25.10B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: TWO



2021-22 Biennium (1/11 - 3/31)  
Special Session (11/3)

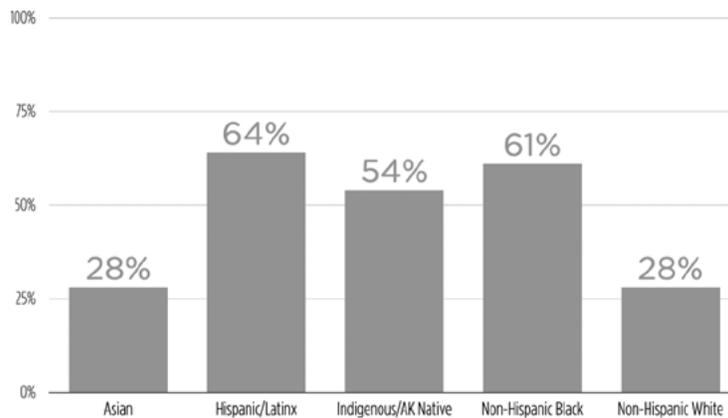
#### 45% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



533,157 Young Children (0-8) are Below  
200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Nevada, [Children's Advocacy Alliance](#) (CAA), serves as the independent voice for Nevada's families and children. The organization brings people together to build consensus and leverage collective strength to achieve public policy in child safety, health and school readiness.

### CAA and other early childhood allies in Nevada supported several bills seeking to improve conditions for children and families, and—working together with policymakers—made several key advances.

CAA supported legislation that promoted changes within the child welfare system and Juvenile Justice system and rallied for legislation to support the physical and emotional well-being of our youngest Nevadans through community services providing needed resources and support to families with children PN-3.

Allies were pleased to see developments like Nevada's first birthing center, community health workers and doulas as new Medicaid resources, expansions of home visiting and a continued commitment to improving outcomes among youth impacted by the child welfare system.

- **AB 119.** Expands work of Maternal Mortality Review Committee to continue identifying causes of maternal mortality and include key demographic information.
- **AB 191.** Requires Medicaid to reimburse services of Community Health Workers, who are trusted, culturally competent public health professionals that connect community members to needed health and social services.
- **AB 256.** Requires Medicaid to reimburse services provided by doulas, who provide emotional and physical support and advocacy and resources to individuals experiencing reproductive health events.
- **AB 287.** Provides for licensing and regulation of freestanding birthing centers; requires a freestanding birthing center to perform certain screening, report certain information to the local health officer and make certain information available to the chief medical officer.
- **AB 189.** Expands Medicaid presumptive eligibility (PE) for pregnant people to receive early prenatal care by expanding the pool of providers allowed to process PE claims and eliminates the five-year wait-period for lawfully residing pregnant people to be eligible for Medicaid.
- **SB 420.** Of the roughly 350,000 Nevadans without health insurance, only 37% are eligible for Medicaid,

leaving approximately 220,000 people without coverage. To address this, legislators approved a public option insurance plan that goes into effect by 2026. Bill also expands Medicaid coverage for pregnant people by raising the eligibility threshold from 165% to 200% of FPL and requires Medicaid to cover breastfeeding supplies, certain prenatal screenings and tests and lactation consultation and support (only if funds are available).

- **SB 173.** Summer School bill requires reports on plans to address COVID-19 learning loss.
- **AB 266.** Requires class size information to be reported.
- **SB 354.** Restorative justice in education/pupil discipline, requires a plan of action to be provided before suspending or removing a student. A school is to offer certain services to a pupil who is temporarily removed from school; and a school is to recognize students who are homeless, in foster care, or unaccompanied when considering disciplinary action.
- **SB 397.** Requires the Division of Child and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services Program to solicit input from stakeholders to develop a budgetary enhancement to implement the program and include it in the 2023-25 Executive Budget.
- **AB 132.** Establishes provisions relating to custodial interrogations of children.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

CAA advocated for preserving child care slots and a budget that supported the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). The Interim Finance Committee approved \$93 million from CRRSAA. CRRSAA funds will help family-, friends-, and neighbor-care (FFN) providers become licensed child care providers by establishing family child care networks and recruiting and mentoring FFN providers. The legislature approved the Child Care Assistance and Development budget, which includes the requested QRIS fund.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Nevada for 2022

- Expand access to high-quality early learning programs.
- Increase access to children's health coverage under Medicaid and CHIP.
- Create a coalition of parent ambassadors to engage in advocacy efforts.
- Expand access to community-based programs, such as home visiting, community health worker, and home-based child care programs.
- Build a high quality early childhood work force.
- Create a communications plan, and messaging to improve early childhood outcomes.
- Establish a communications plan and a commission on early childhood education.
- Expand advocacy capacity through an advisory board and connections with elected officials and leader.

» **For more information on what's happening in Nevada, visit the [state policy landscape page](#).**

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# New Hampshire



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$1.6B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

2021 Regular Session  
(1/6 - 6/30)

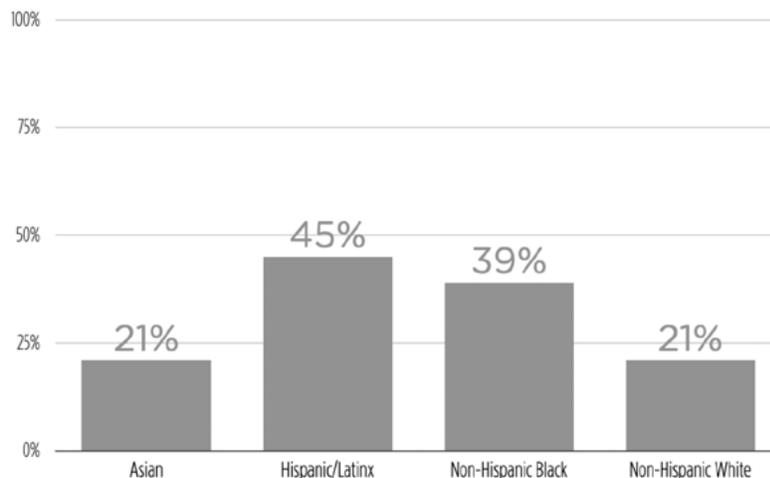


#### 22% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

26,931 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in New Hampshire, [New Futures](#), collects and disseminates critical and reliable state-level data, makes policy recommendations, and provides tools for legislators, public officials, and advocates to advance positive policies for children and families in New Hampshire. The organization trains partners to advocate for strong and proven policies for the future health and prosperity of New Hampshire's children. The 2021 session brought continued progress in sustainability and early learning, public health, and implementation of a system of care for children's behavioral health. New Futures and other advocates advanced several policies of shared and common interest and encouraged new advocates to engage with the legislative process by sharing their stories and lived experience for the first time.

**The session proved challenging, and there were setbacks in areas of diversity and health equity. But advocates were successful in working with policymakers to preserve and expand programs and resources for the state's most vulnerable citizens and stave off devastating budget cuts.**

- **HB 1.** New Futures' most important advocacy bill was the state budget bill and its deliberations. FY 22/23 budget advocacy protected existing funding for critical early childhood and primary prevention services such as child care scholarship, child protection, family resource centers, and children's behavioral health. The budget also included \$1.5M (\$750K a year) in additional funding for Medicaid Home visiting and \$150K (\$75K a year) in new funding to support SNAP incentive programs.
- **HB 120.** This bill would require the state to enhance monitoring of psychotropic medicine prescribed to children in foster care.
- A bill creating bachelor's and associate's level licenses to support enhanced reimbursement of community-based service providers
- Prevented a decrease in funding for Medicaid home visiting. The cut was proposed but defeated through coordinated budget advocacy.



## Influencing of Federal Relief Funding

Like all states, New Hampshire received a significant influx of federal relief funding. Advocates in New Hampshire scored legislative and administrative successes to help ensure the most effective use of these funds.

### Legislative

New Futures, in partnership with MomsRising, helped to lead a state-level cross sector group to “Re-imagine Early Care and Early Education” and provide recommendations on how to maximize impact of federal dollars and implement transformative change to the early childhood system. New Futures advocated during the budget session, participated on the Council for Thriving Children, Wellness and Primary Prevention Council, and other groups, which helped direct funding.

### Administrative

A broad coalition coordinated statewide prioritization of CARES funding. Issues included telehealth access, workforce retention, and financial stability. New Futures worked to coordinate vaccine rollout and identify client issues around accessibility. New Futures is coordinating around enhanced state agency and local allocations via ARPA. This includes SAMSHA, enhanced federal match on home- and community-based services, Child Care DBG, and MIECHV.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in New Hampshire for 2022

- Protect state investments in New Hampshire’s Childcare Scholarship Program to ensure access to quality child care through budget and administrative advocacy
- Educate, support and mobilize advocates and partners to engage in the NH legislative process through training, one-on-one technical assistance, story collection and connection to advocacy opportunities
- Advocate for Family Resource Centers and Home Visiting program funding in the New Hampshire state budget to prevent and mitigate childhood trauma
- Support individuals and organizations with shared priorities in building robust community-based and statewide health advocacy capacity, including assistance with direct legislator outreach and messaging
- Coordinate policy and advocacy efforts to address issues related to the ER boarding of NH’s children with acute behavioral health needs

» [For more information on what’s happening in New Hampshire, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# New Jersey



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$40.87B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

2020-2021 Biennium  
(1/14/20 - 1/11/22)

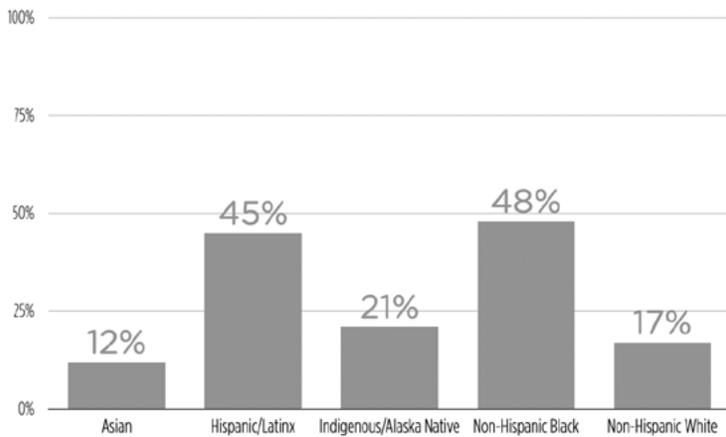


#### 29% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

269,316 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in New Jersey, [Advocates for Children of New Jersey](#) (ACNJ), works for a future where all New Jersey children grow up healthy, safe, and educated. They educate, inform, and engage leaders and the public on children's needs through research, data, and policy analysis. As one of their priorities, ACNJ works with local and state groups to promote high-quality early education from infancy to age 8.

**While New Jersey has taken significant steps this year in supporting a stronger birth-to-5 continuum, advocates believe there is a considerable amount of work yet to be done for the state's young children to address continued emergencies and stabilize the essential industry of child care.**

At the time of this report (November 2021), three child care bills supported by advocates have been introduced in the current legislative session, which ends in January 2022. ACNJ worked with legislators to develop this bill package introduced in earlier in the session to help stabilize the child care system. Due to COVID's impact on the child care community, A4746 would require state provider subsidy payments for child care services to be based on enrollment. The State Senate and Assembly passed this bill unanimously, and it is awaiting the governor's signature. As there have been concerns regarding the long-term costs of the bill, ACNJ has been working closely with the governor's office to address these issues. DHS plans to address the prospective policy changes outlined in A5733, which would require DHS to establish a quality-based reimbursement system for registered Family Child Care, by using ARPA dollars towards that end. ACNJ will continue to advocate in favor of the passage of the third bill, A5731, which will allow gross income tax credit for certain child care staff, including infant-toddler staff and registered family child care providers.

- **P.L. 2021, Chapter 133.** Funding in the proposed FY22 budget addresses EC issues: 1) \$50M for preschool expansion, 2) \$10M to NJ Economic Development Authority for child care facility and business needs, 3) \$6M in Department of Human Services budget to increase subsidy to keep pace with minimum wage increases, 4) \$8.5M in Department of Human Services budget for child care facilities, a significant issue in increasing infant/toddler care, 5) \$8.5M to expand Medicaid coverage for 365 days

postpartum, 6) \$450K for a Doula Learning Collaborative (DLC) to reduce maternal and infant mortality and eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes by providing training, workforce development, supervision support, mentoring, technical assistance, direct billing, and sustainability planning (DLC's focus will be to develop and support the doula workforce that delivers care to NJ's Medicaid and CHIP members as enrolled NJ Family Care providers), 7) \$450K to establish a Doula Registry, 8) \$1.2M for a rental assistance program to provide stable housing for pregnant women.

- **AB 1079/SB 703.** Requires certain health care professionals, including every hospital that provides inpatient maternity services and licensed birthing center, to undergo explicit and implicit bias training. Each year, improved training will affect more than 100,000 newborns and their mothers.
- **SB 690.** Universal home visiting law guarantees all new parents at least one free home visit from a nurse within two weeks of the child's birth, with the option of receiving two more within the next three months. The law ensures that all families have equal access to the same critical resources and supports, without stigma, that will enhance the health and well-being of the entire family. The FY22 state budget includes \$2.7M to get the program started, as well as \$2.1M for the current intensive evidenced-based programs. In NJ, there are approximately 100,000 births per year.
- **SB 890.** Maternal Mental Health: Concerns maternal mental health, provides that no later than a specified date, the Department of Health shall report on its efforts to secure and utilize federal sources of funding to support maternal mental health.<sup>1</sup>
- **AB 4004.** Pandemic Task Force on Racial and Health Disparities: Establishes COVID-19 Task Force on Racial and Health Disparities, provides that the Task Force shall conduct a study on how COVID-19 has disproportionately affected NJ's minority and vulnerable communities and the short- and long-term consequences of the pandemic on these communities.<sup>1</sup>
- **AB 5445.** Child Care Providers in Need Support: Makes a specified amount in federal funds available to the Economic Development Authority to support child care providers in need, provides that the Authority shall establish the size of the awards and eligibility of entities to meet the needs of child care providers in responding to the public health crisis.<sup>1</sup>
- **AB 5705.** Appropriates \$10M from GF to Economic Development Authority to support child care providers impacted by COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>
- ACNJ's advocacy played a role in the Department of Human Services' decision to extend the child care subsidy enrollment-based payment through December 31, 2021. This put the cumbersome swipe card system of taking attendance on hold while making it easier for parents to release their children to the providers' care in a timely manner.

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds



In New Jersey, advocacy successes on American Rescue Plan allocations include:

- Waiving parent copays in the child care subsidy program through the end of 2023
- Providing an additional \$300 per month per child for subsidy payments until the end of 2023
- Providing \$1,000 bonuses to help child care providers recruit new workers and retain existing staff
- Offering grants of \$20,000 - \$80,000 to center-based child care providers to help stabilize their operations, including increased wages and facilities improvements. Family child care homes are eligible for grants up to \$2,000
- Providing family child care providers enrolled in Grow NJ Kids (New Jersey's child care quality rating and improvement system) with increased subsidy reimbursements based on increased levels of quality
- Providing incentives to child care programs to offer evening, weekend and non-traditional hours of care

## Other Federal/State Achievements

- New Jersey became the second state in the nation to pass a statewide universal home visiting law, allowing parents the opportunity to receive at least one home visit from a nurse within two weeks of their child's birth at no expense.
- Expanded Medicaid coverage for new mothers for 365 days postpartum
- \$50 million in preschool expansion funding

- \$100 million of federal funds for child care to fund facilities improvements and employee supports
- Increasing the eligibility for the Child Dependent Care tax credit to allow families that earn up to \$150,000 to take advantage of the tax credit, more than doubling the number of families qualifying for the credit
- \$2.45 million to support the existing evidence-based home visiting program
- \$20 million in the Cover All Kids Initiative that will help maintain current health care coverage for low-income families and help enroll the estimated 90,000 children who remain uninsured
- \$83 million investment in child care to increase the child care subsidy reimbursement rates for center-based child care by an average of 25 percent, with a 70 percent increase since 2018 for infants and toddlers

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in New Jersey for 2022

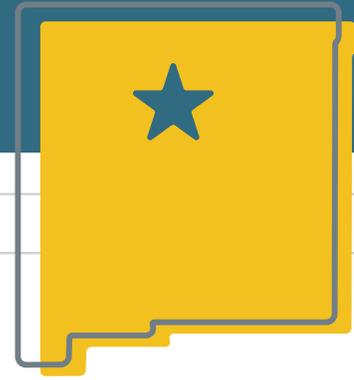
- Increase preschool access to more 3- and 4-year-olds by advocating and supporting eligible school districts, so that they apply for the state funding and implement their program through a mixed delivery model.
- Advocate through legislation for increased child care subsidies through a tiered reimbursement rate for family child care providers that participate in NJ's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Grow NJ Kids.
- Develop successful communications/messaging strategies that will bring public attention to early childhood issues and lay the foundation for effective stakeholder engagement in state policy decision-making.
- Advocate through legislation for state child care subsidy payments to be permanently based on enrollment rather than attendance.
- Ensure the successful implementation of the new universal home visiting law that provides all New Jersey families welcoming a new baby into their home with at least one cost-free post-partum home visit.
- Develop stronger relationships and advocacy partnerships with families affected by early childhood policies so that the parent voice is included in policy advocacy and decision-making.
- Develop and advocate for long- and short-term strategies to effectively use COVID child care funding to address the staffing crisis by increasing workforce compensation and benefits.
- Secure increased support of the early childhood legislative and policy agenda from elected officials by developing and collaborating with additional early childhood constituent advocates.

**» For more information on what's happening in New Jersey, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# New Mexico



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$8.89B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

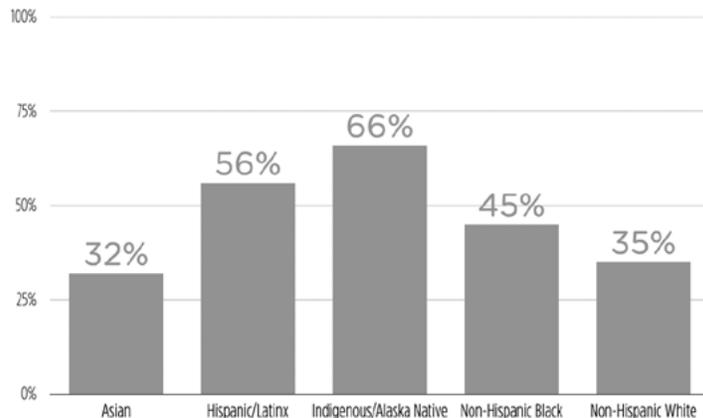
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/19 - 3/20)

**51% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
110,316 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in New Mexico, **Southwest Women's Law Center** (SWLC), seeks to harness the power of law, research, and creative collaborations to create greater opportunities for women and girls in New Mexico to fulfill their personal and economic potential. SWLC has been working since 2016 to advance a Paid Family Medical Leave bill to support children and their families in New Mexico.

### The 2021 legislative session provided advocates the unique opportunity to address many of the state's long-standing problems that were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Using a bold set of priorities, advocates in New Mexico worked closely with broad and diverse coalitions to ensure that: all New Mexicans got help meeting their basic needs; the state built a budget that supports families, children, workers, and businesses; the state kept and put money in the hands of New Mexicans who will spend it quickly and locally; current revenue streams were protected and new revenue streams were debated; and equity, transparency, and access in policymaking were promoted. Many of these priorities were achieved through the expansion and increase of tax credits and rebates for those earning low incomes and the passage of paid sick leave for all private-sector employees.

- **HJR 1.** Voters can soon decide whether to draw permanent, stable funding, more than \$200M each year, for early childhood care and education programs from the state's \$22B Land Grant Permanent Fund. The funding will be divided 60/40 between early care and education and K-12 education. Lawmakers had to pass a joint resolution (HJR 1) to put this issue on the November 2022 ballot. Advocates originated the proposal more than ten years ago and created a strong coalition that has continued this work. Some 130,500 children will be impacted (78% POC) annually.
- **HB 291.** Expands tax credits and rebates for those who earn the least. Bill will increase the state's Working Families Tax Credit by 47%, expand the credit eligibility to ITIN filers, DREAMers, and workers ages 18-24 without children; and significantly improve racial equity in the state's tax system. To avoid the loss of ARP dollars, the legislature raised a tax on private health insurers. Some 260,000 families will be impacted (49% POC) annually.
- **SB317.** raises \$160 million in revenue to support a new Health Care Affordability Fund that will reduce

healthcare premiums and cost-sharing for New Mexico residents who purchase insurance through the state's health insurance exchange, provide resources for healthcare initiatives for uninsured New Mexico residents, and reduce premiums for small businesses and their employees purchasing coverage in the fully insured small group market.

- **HB 20.** Healthy Workplaces Act: New Mexico now requires employers to provide their workers with paid sick leave. Effective July 2022, private-sector workers can accrue 1 hour of paid leave for every 30 hours worked, up to 64 hours annually. Some 235,500 workers will be impacted (75% POC).
- **HB 2.** Creates an emergency relief fund to provide cash assistance payments to nearly 25,000 households ineligible for a federal stimulus check primarily because of immigration status. In total, the fund received \$12M in appropriations between November 2020 and March 2021. The coalition's work led to an additional nearly \$7M appropriated in local-level economic relief for immigrants in Bernalillo County and Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces. Legislature increased funding by nearly \$26M for pre-k, home visiting, child care professional development and retention, and early intervention, helping more than 116,000 children younger than five succeed.
- **SB 1.** Relief package gives a one-time rebate (\$600) to residents who receive the federal and state EITC and the Working Families Tax Credit, and provides economic relief to low-income essential workers and their families. An estimated 97% of the value of the credits (over \$97M in relief) goes toward workers raising children.
- **HB 112.** Requires hospitals providing indigent care to treat all patients equally regardless of immigration status and prohibits discrimination based on immigration status.
- Advocates defeated some costly Social Security income exemption bills that would have cost the state more than \$100M each year and exacerbated racial inequity in the tax code.
- Legislation to tax food was also introduced and killed. Bill would have harmed New Mexico children and disproportionately harmed low-income New Mexicans.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Through an executive order and using emergency funds available through ARP, beginning August 2021, New Mexico will raise Child Care Assistance income eligibility for families from 200% FPL to 350% FPL with a phase-out at 400% FPL, meaning a modest increase in income won't result in loss of access to the assistance.

Another administrative change was the adoption of a cutting-edge cost estimation model to set new child care subsidy rates paid to providers. New Mexico is the first state to do so. New rates increase subsidy payments to providers in all settings. Increases will allow child care businesses to better support true costs of providing high-quality education and care and will be better able to staff their classrooms with credentialed and well-compensated professionals.

Advocates played a key role in passing numerous tax and budget policies, making recommendations on spending of federal relief funding from CARES Acts 1 and 2, CRRSA, and ARPA in eight policy areas. Results include more than \$20 million for immigrant families left out of federal relief, a one-time rebate of \$600 for low-income essential workers, and a \$5 million appropriation for food insecurity programs.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Early childhood advocates in New Mexico also made progress in their long-term revenue-raising campaign. They advocated for the introduction of revenue-raising bills to be included in tax bill, HB 291. Though the revenue-raising provisions did not pass the final legislative committee, the research, communications, education, and advocacy work propelled these provisions forward.

The New Mexicans for Fair Lending Coalition led a push for policy improvements that would have capped interest rates and fees on small loans such as payday and refund anticipation loans. The legislation did not pass, but the issue had more media coverage and support among legislators than in previous sessions. Fair lending is a particularly salient racial justice issue in New Mexico, where the prevalence of high-interest loans is

especially high in Native American areas.

The Paid Family & Medical Leave Act (PFMLA) was passed through two committees in the House of Representatives before being tabled in the House Appropriations and Finance Committee. Although it did not pass this year, the Paid Family & Medical Leave Coalition increased in size and worked closely with stakeholders to improve the bill during the session. The ongoing advocacy efforts have built significant momentum and public support around the issue.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in New Mexico for 2022

- Establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave program (PFML) within the NM Department of Workforce Solutions.
- Expand stakeholder engagement, including grassroots and business sectors, and increase reach of external communications to build momentum for Paid Family & Medical Leave statewide.
- Improve the wellbeing of Native American children through the development and passage of a revised state Indian Child Welfare Act.
- Collaborate with legislators, the governor's office, and the Department of Workforce Solutions to develop a strong PFML bill for the 2022 legislative session.

**» For more information on what's happening in New Mexico, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# New York



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$74.75B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

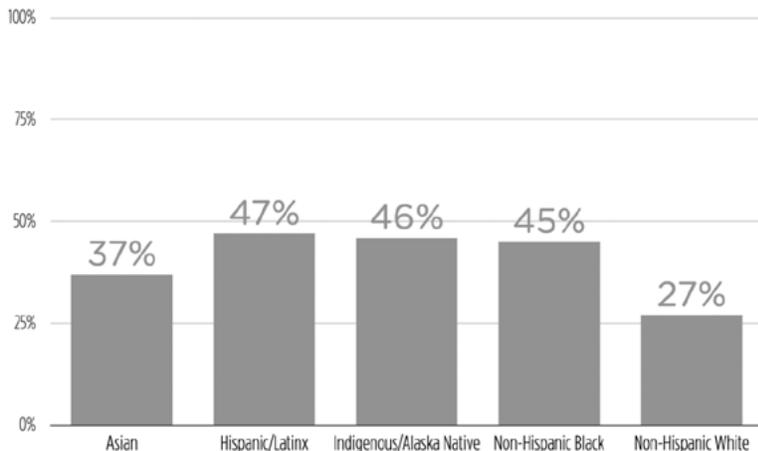
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/6/21 - 12/31/21)

 **36% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
698,54 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead allies in the state of New York, the [Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy](#), is a 148-year-old statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to policy analysis and advocacy in support of public systems that meet the needs of disenfranchised populations and people living in poverty—particularly New York children and families. The Schuyler Center partners with the [Alliance for Quality Education](#).

**New York advocates and policymakers are celebrating an enormous step forward in early childhood policy: passage of the Child Poverty Reduction Act — legislation that declares the state’s commitment to cutting child poverty in half in ten years and establishes the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council tasked with developing a plan to reach that goal.**

In addition, the final 2021-22 state budget contains some extraordinary investments in children and families, and New York leaders have agreed to raise revenue on high-income earners and corporations, which will allow for sustained investments in low-income communities, moving toward a more equitable New York.

Advocates remain concerned however, about families left behind. They fended off proposed cuts to services critical to family and child well-being—services that are lifelines during a global pandemic. While the proposed cuts were avoided because of legislative intervention, many New York other chronically underfunded services need new investment. Advocates and policymakers continued working together post-budget, making gains in early intervention and additional child care wins.

- **S.2755-C/A.1160-C.** The new Child Poverty Reduction Act declares policymakers’ intent to cut child poverty by 50% in 10 years and establishes the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council tasked with developing a plan. The council will evaluate specific policies and their impacts on child poverty, including racial disparities, make budget and policy recommendations with benchmarks and timelines, and publicly share data to make sure that New York meets goal. In 2019, before the pandemic hit New York, 712,000 New York children lived in poverty. Due to racism, children of color in New York disproportionately experience poverty.

- Budget bill. The final 2021-22 State Budget contains extraordinary investments in children and families. Among the headlines: a commitment to fully fund the state's public schools to correct longstanding inequities in the state funding formula, which led to sharply unequal funding for low-income schools; creation of the strongest-in-the-nation Excluded Workers Fund; \$2.3B in new (mostly federal) funds for child care; \$105M in new funds for pre-k; a first-in-the-nation guarantee of affordable broadband; and elimination of co-pays for vision care and dental care for hundreds of thousands of low- to moderate-income families who get coverage through New York's health care exchange.
- **S.2506-C/A.3006-C**. Cap on child care subsidy parent share at no more than 10% of family income over FPL. Thousands of families will benefit from this policy win. MaNew York families will see their child care bill drop from as much as \$7,500 to less than \$2K a year.
- **S.7179/A.7681**. Expands eligibility requirements of youth reentry into foster care. Bill allows youth 16 or older who were discharged from foster care and who are or likely to be homeless the option of reentering foster care.
- **S.7128/A.7721**. Extends Child Care Availability Task Force. Extends the term and expands the scope of the Child Care Availability Task Force to oversee and monitor implementation its recommendations. This bill calls for recommendations to be incrementally implemented in a way that centers and improves racial equity and prioritizes underserved communities.
- **S.5162/A.5840**. Direct Deposit Payments for Child Care Providers. Allows child care providers to receive subsidy payments from the county via direct deposit, which will lead to fewer delays and paperwork.
- New York's governor, throughout the 18-month state of emergency related to COVID-19, issued monthly orders allowing counties, which administer New York's child care subsidy system, to waive maNew York subsidy requirements, including family co-pays; raising subsidy eligibility; allowing providers to be paid subsidies based on enrollment, not child attendance.
- Advocates fended off proposed deep cuts to preventive services in child welfare contained in the Executive Budget.
- **5560/A.5339**. Early Intervention Covered Lives. Brings much-needed revenue into the Early Intervention program and helps ensure that commercial insurers pay a share of Early Intervention services. The Covered Lives assessment will set a fee on state-regulated commercial health insurance plans to help pay for EI services. (Still unsigned by governor at time of this report's release.)
- **4051-A/A.4982-A**. Raises Age of Juvenile Delinquency from Age 7 to 12. Bill ends the arrest and prosecution of children under 12 as juvenile delinquents. During 2018, across New York, police arrested over 800 elementary school-aged children. Among these, more than 100 children arrested were aged 7 to 9. (Still unsigned by governor at time of this posting.)



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Empire State Campaign for Child Care pursued a legislative strategy to secure language in the New York state budget directing how remaining CARES Act, CRRSA, and ARPA child care funds should be used to meet needs of families and providers, and to drive system-change. Advocates secured several budget wins, including: 1) establishing a permanent cap on copays for subsidies at 10% of income over FPL (representing a step toward larger goal of capping child care costs at 7% of family income); 2) establishing statewide subsidy eligibility at 200% of FPL for the next three fiscal years with federal funds covering those costs; 3) establishing 12-month eligibility for next four fiscal years using federal funds; and 4) requiring that counties must pay a minimum of 24 absences per year for 4 fiscal years, including 2021 retroactively (representing a step toward larger goal of paying child care based on enrollment, not attendance).

Advocates also helped to ensure federal CRRSA funds were used to provide supports to children, youth and families engaged in the child welfare system.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in New York for 2022

- Track and monitor New York's progress in investing federal education (pre-k) and child care stimulus funds; ensure a diverse group of early childhood stakeholders have meaningful, regular input in roll-out.
- Convene a working group of providers, parents, advocates to develop a plan for New York to eliminate expulsions and suspensions in child care within five years.
- Cultivate and mentor at least two more of our emerging grassroots leaders to assume leadership roles on the Empire State Campaign for Child Care ("ESCCC").
- Develop a racial equity statement of principles to guide the work of the ESCCC with broad input from campaign members.
- Advance legislation to incrementally transform New York's child care subsidy system to be more uniform, equitable, affordable and accessible, including graduated phase-out; expand reimbursement for absences.
- Advance legislative and regulatory changes to adjust pre-K per child rates to more adequately meet the cost of providing the program.
- Cultivate five to ten directly impacted grassroots leaders to build the parent voice in the campaign.
- Advance regulatory, legislative and/or practice changes to ensure investment in pre-K programs align with investment in child care deserts to strengthen and expand access to infant and toddler care.



**» For more information on what's happening in New York, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# North Carolina



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$24.49B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE



2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/13 - 10/29)

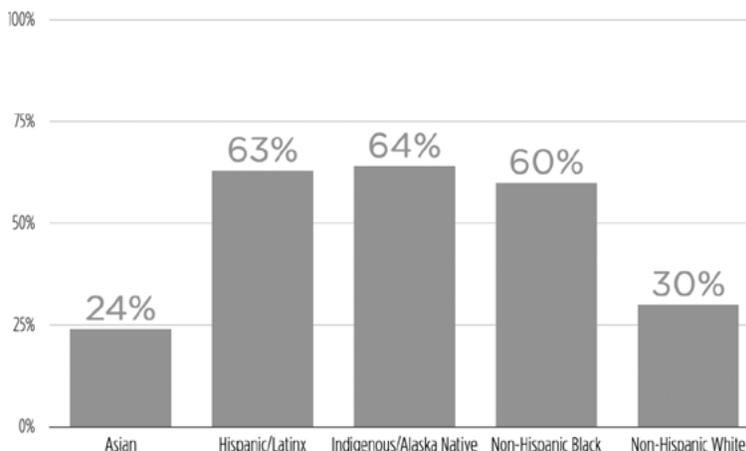
#### 43% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



467,920 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in North Carolina, **NC Child**, advances effective, data-driven policy solutions for a strong start in life, healthy children, safe and nurturing homes and communities, family economic security, and high-quality education. They provide research and data analysis, educate policy makers, engage the community, do media engagement and strategic communications, and coordinate the Child Advocacy Network.

**Despite a tumultuous session (at the time of this report there was not an approved conference budget), advocates have garnered awareness of early childhood agenda items—moving the needle during this session for environmental and postpartum health advocating for increased funding for SmartStart.**

- **HB 272.** NC Child successfully led efforts to address early childhood lead poisoning. Through the passage of H 272, NC Child helped lower the definition of a lead hazard in young children's drinking water in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention statute from 15 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion and will extend lead exposure protection to 30,000 young children in child care settings.
- **Budget bill.** NC Child led efforts to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months, resulting in 12 months of continuous postpartum coverage under the Medicaid for Pregnant Women categorical eligibility with required full Medicaid benefits. This will cover some 14,000 pregnant individuals. NC Child supported advocacy efforts focused on the North Carolina Partnership for Children/Smart Start's proposal for an increased investment of \$60M over the biennium (\$30M each year) to support child care quality initiatives, family support programs, and activities that improve children's health. There is an appropriation of \$30 million over the biennium (\$15 million each year). Advocates anticipate these provisions will remain in final budget.



## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

NC Child and its partners worked collaboratively to influence legislative and administrative decision-making regarding the federal relief funds for child care in 2021 including CRRSA and ARPA. Early education advocates developed and submitted recommendations to the Division of Child Development and Early Education and key legislators that included the following:

- 1) Expanding the availability of child care subsidy assistance;
- 2) Increasing the market rate and establishing a statewide floor for child care subsidies; and
- 3) Expanding the WAGE\$ salary supplement program statewide.

NC Child helped convene and activate advocates across the state for the utilization of funds across several other systems, including using funds to increase COVID-related supports in K-12 education and the availability of school nurses. NC Child continues to advocate for ARPA funds to assist with the mitigation of lead in child care, to support centers in removing and replacing sources of lead, including pipes and outdated infrastructure.



## Sustained Advocacy Campaign

It was the first year of a subsidy rate increase campaign, and advocates propelled HB 574 forward. Although advocates do not anticipate the subsidy rates proposal to be included in the final conference budget, efforts this year have significantly raised awareness of the issue among key NCGA Early Childhood Caucus members and have broadened the ECE advocacy community, which is speaking collectively on child care issues.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in North Carolina for 2022

- Strengthen the early childhood mental health system by finalizing the North Carolina EarlyWell Action Plan of policy recommendations and advocacy roadmap.
- Support EarlyWell stakeholders in moving from systems analysis and planning to administrative and legislative advocacy as EarlyWell transitions into a multi-policy, multi-year campaign.
- Ensure that young children have meaningful, ongoing access to comprehensive, high quality EPSDT services under the state's new Medicaid managed care model.
- Expand and strengthen NC Child's digital advocacy muscle to engage child/family advocates, particularly in communities that have been marginalized from policy discussions, in building public will for early childhood policy priorities.
- Ensure that North Carolina fully leverages ARP funding and strengthens state investment to increase access, affordability, and quality in the state's early care and education system.
- Leverage existing relationships with business leaders and local chambers of commerce that have been focused on Medicaid expansion for other early childhood priorities.

» **For more information on what's happening in North Carolina, visit the state policy landscape page.**



# North Dakota



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$2.51B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

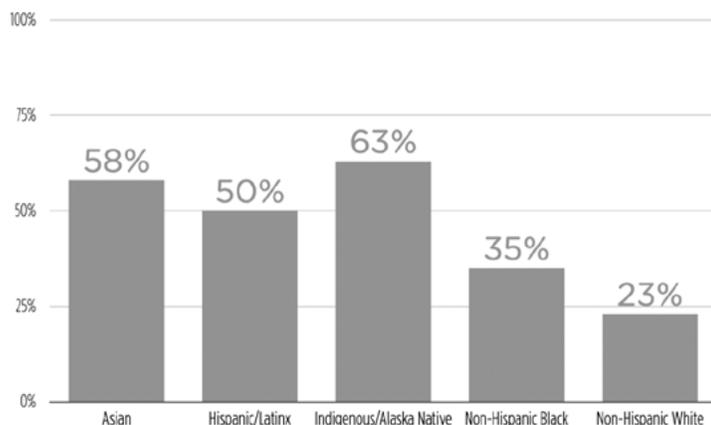
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: TWO**  
67th Legislative Assembly (1/5 - 4/29)  
Special Session (11/15)

 **44% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
26,200 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL28

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in North Dakota, [Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota](#), educates community members, stakeholders, and legislators about the importance of primary prevention for the health and well-being of children and families. These advocates provide a space for collaboration to occur and partnerships to thrive in order to create policy change that will positively impact children and families in North Dakota.

**Advocates and policymakers worked together to make significant steps forward for young children in the 2021 session, most notably the consolidation of early childhood programs into one division.**

Progress includes:

- **HB 1416.** Transitions early childhood education programs from Dept. of Public Instruction to Dept. of Health and Human Services, placing all EC services under one entity. Bill will increase efficiency and decrease duplication of services and may lead to the development of longitudinal data on children who receive supports.
- **HB 1466.** Early Childhood Education Grants: Funds a pilot grant program covering up to 20 classes over next 5 years for preschool to at-risk children on a sliding fee scale.
- **SB 2202.** Relates to a property tax exemption for property leased for provision of early childhood or adult day care services.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1076.** Removes sunset clause language, which would have called for the ND Children’s Cabinet to conclude its duties in 2025.
- **HB 1105.** Eliminates the subjective language “modest and discreet” and provides penalties for anyone attempting to restrict the breastfeeding of a child.
- **HB 1205.** Establishes a Maternal Mortality Review Committee.
- **HB 1247.** Sets in motion the merging of the Dept. of Human Services and the Dept. of Health. This is momentous and should lead to improved coordination of early childhood and maternal, child, and family

health services. The bill addresses multiple early childhood issues, as the merger will improve data collection and sharing and potentially change funding sources or mechanisms.

- **HCR 3011.** Allows for future study of fetal alcohol syndrome in North Dakota, its effects, and what can be done to prevent children being affected by FAS.
- **HB 1012.** This appropriations bill allows Dept. of Human Services to establish a statewide system to build systematic EC workforce voluntary training, which may include distance learning formats, a professional registry, certificates, and specializations, and to charge reasonable fees for all training and development courses to offset costs. It requires the department to establish and implement a buy-in program under the federal Family Opportunity Act enacted as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 to provide medical assistance and other health coverage options to families of children with disabilities and whose net income does not exceed 250% FPL. During a declared emergency, the department may not require payment of a premium or disenroll an individual for failure to pay a premium for families of children with disabilities.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

The proposed paid family leave bill passed out of the House as a study bill but failed in the Senate. However, there was more support for a paid family leave program than in prior sessions.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in North Dakota for 2022

- Strengthen and expand North Dakota's home visiting network by securing funding and resources through Medicaid and targeted case management.
- Convene agencies and legislators to develop an early care and education funding plan which braids all early childhood funds to deliver quality, full-day/year services.

» [For more information on what's happening in North Dakota, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$25.23B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

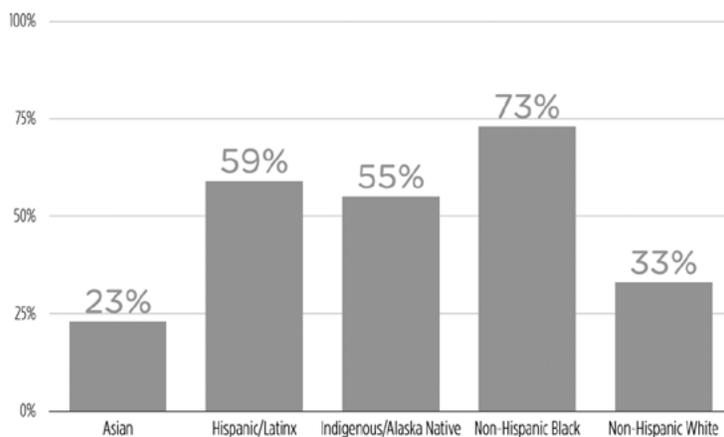
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
134th General Assembly  
(1/4 - 12/31)

**42% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
521,386 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Ohio, **Groundwork Ohio**, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization that champions high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age 5, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families, and communities.

**Groundwork Ohio and the state's network of advocates launched a robust education and advocacy effort that ensured Ohio's pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers remained a priority. While tough decisions remain, advocates are invigorated by the growing momentum to support young children and families.**

The governor's Eliminating Racial Disparities in Infant Mortality Task Force convened in early 2021 and is expected to release its final report and recommendations in September 2021. Groundwork Ohio participated in the task force and organized and hosted listening sessions (<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/eliminating-racial-disparities/listening-sessions-black-families>) with community partners and families in counties with high infant mortality rates.

Additional progress:

- **HB 110.** Created state appropriations for FY22-23:
  - 1) Extends postpartum coverage for Medicaid-eligible pregnant women from 60 days to 12 months, some 10,000 additional women will maintain access to critical health services.
  - 2) Appropriates \$29M over biennium for implementing infant vitality initiatives at state and local level, increasing awareness, and collecting data and includes \$500K to allow a universal needs assessment for vulnerable women.
  - 3) Invests \$2.25M in FY22 in Healthy Beginnings at Home to support stable housing for pregnant women and new mothers.
  - 4) Designates Maternal Mortality Awareness Month to increase awareness and prevention of pregnancy-associated deaths.

- 5) Increases investment in Ohio Help Me Grow to \$41.2M each fiscal year.
  - 6) Expands access to Ohio Help Me Grow for children ages 3-5 engaged in child welfare system.
  - 7) Provides more than \$6M over biennium to prevent child lead poisoning and support prevention efforts.
  - 8) Expands access to publicly-funded child care (PFCC) to families making up to 142% FPL,
  - 9) Expands access to PFCC to families with children who have special needs making up to 150% FPL,
  - 10) Provides \$50M in co-pay assistance for families accessing PFCC.
  - 11) Requires recent federal relief funding on child care to be spent on stabilizing and sustaining child care system, improving workforce recruitment, and increasing access.
  - 12) Doubles investment in Governor's Imagination Library to \$16M over biennium to support early literacy efforts.
- Ohio Dept. of Medicaid released Managed Care Plans selected to provide services beginning in mid-2022. Application requirements included many early childhood provisions and some plans zeroed in on prenatal to 5. This policy win will impact over 400,000 children ages 0-5 currently enrolled in Medicaid.
  - When the COVID-19 vaccine was released, early childhood educators were excluded from priority population with their K-12 peers. As a result of advocacy, they were included in a later, separate priority population.
  - During the state budget, the legislature attempted to eliminate Ohio's 5-star quality rating and improvement system, Step Up To Quality. While the high-quality mandate requiring center-based programs to be rated at least 3 stars or higher by 2025 was eliminated, the legislature did keep the 2020 mandate requiring all programs that participate in PFCC to be rated at least 1 star.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Like all states, Ohio received a significant influx of federal relief funding. Throughout the pandemic, Groundwork Ohio has participated in the child care strike force convened by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, to make recommendations on how the state should spend down federal child care relief funds. Groundwork Ohio advocated for their inclusion of family child care in the state's federal allocations. Additionally, Groundwork Ohio participated in discussions on the use of funding and implementation through the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

SB 109, Utilizing Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, passed. The bill provided grants deriving from federal relief funds to businesses and child care providers:

- 1) Increased funding to maintain market rates at the 25th percentile,
- 2) Increased child care eligibility from 130% to 142% of FPL and 150% of FPL for children with special needs,
- 3) Secured Hero Pay stipends for eligible child care employees in licensed ODJFS programs to include center-based and family child care home employees; and
- 4) Provided one-time pandemic support payments to eligible licensed ODJFS child care programs.

### Sustained Advocacy Campaigns



HB 145 is still pending in committee. It is a bipartisan bill that would expand initial eligibility for the Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) program from 130% to 200% of FPL. This legislation has received strong support from business leaders, child care and early childhood professionals, health care providers, parents, community organizations, and more. This bill educated members on the importance of increasing child care eligibility, gained a lot of press coverage, and influenced legislators to increase child care eligibility to 142% of the FPL in the state budget.

In 2020, there was great momentum around declaring racism a public health crisis. In 2021, legislation was reintroduced to declare racism a public health crisis, but the General

Assembly has yet to act on this legislation. Advocates are working with stakeholders and policymakers to reinvigorate and advance this critically important issue.

HB 142 would allow Medicaid to provide reimbursement for doula services. While this bill is still pending in committee, there has been increased bipartisan focus on allowing Medicaid reimbursement for doula services as Ohio continues to grapple with high rates of infant and maternal mortality and morbidity. Advocates continue to advocate for this policy change.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Ohio for 2022

- Secure long-term, stable funding for Ohio's child care system while equitably recovering and expanding quality capacity by influencing the spending of emergency and ongoing federal funds and building political will to increase state investments during FY24-25 budget deliberations.
- Identify short and long-term policy recommendations to improve infant and early childhood mental health supports across the state, educate statewide policymakers on opportunities and act upon short term recommendations through strategic administrative and legislative advocacy.
- Deepen understanding of policy priorities by producing new and updated research assets that build upon ongoing disaggregated quality child care data analysis, financing tools including cost modeling and shared services, and workforce policy research including a State of Family Child Care report to support the strongest and smartest case for increased investments to support Ohio's child care system.
- Support a quality early education workforce through the development and implementation of targeted strategies that build infant/toddler capacity and address inequity in access and funding experienced by Black families, rural families and the professionals that serve them.
- Improve the experience and outcomes of young children and families in the child welfare system by working with local and state policymakers to identify, fund and implement key prevention services for this population.
- Leverage executive agency relationships to be a partner in delivering upon current administration policies and priorities while educating potential new gubernatorial candidates in consideration of Ohio's gubernatorial election occurring a couple of months after the grant term ends to put us in the strongest position to deliver upon policy priorities in the FY24-25 deliberations (February-July 2023).
- Increase access to health coverage and a continuum of supports that address racial disparities in infant and

maternal mortality outcomes in Ohio by extending postpartum coverage for all Medicaid-eligible women and building capacity and improved financing mechanisms for clinical and non-clinical, evidence-based interventions. Build staff capacity to improve upon Groundwork enterprise activity (policy/advocacy, coalition management, communications, research) and specific policy expertise aligned with policy priorities through strengthened partnerships and the implementation of Groundwork's strategic organizational vision to build and operate three expert centers (i.e. the Center for Maternal and Young Child Health Transformation, the Center for Family Voice, and the Center for Early Learning).

**» For more information on what's happening in Ohio, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# Oklahoma



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$6.75B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

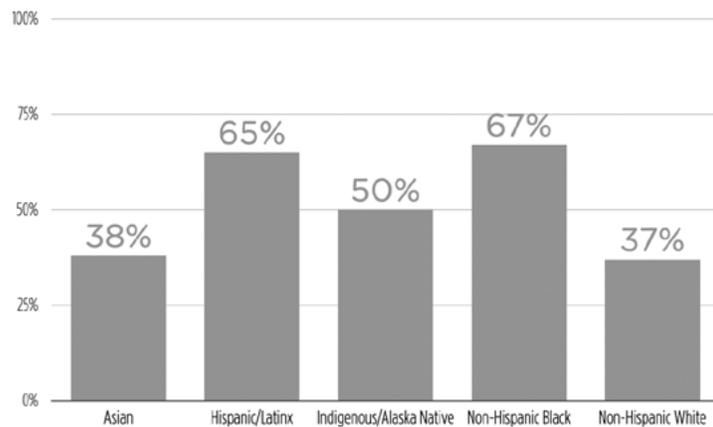
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: TWO**  
2021 Regular Session (2/1 - 5/28)  
Special Session (11/15)

 **47% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
216,549 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Oklahoma, the [Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness](#), seeks to provide better opportunities to the children and families in the state by engaging businesses and the public in supporting and investing in early childhood. They work to coordinate an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children.

**In 2021, Oklahoma saw the passage of increased supports for families with young children, added accountability measures intended to address child maltreatment, and a focus on increasing professional competencies of early childhood educators.**

Legislation also passed aimed at ensuring state agencies and executive offices are accountable to the state legislature when attempting to spend federal funds on activities that produce long-term or recurring costs. Progress includes:

- **SB 229.** Creates the Redbud School Funding Act, relates to taxes on medical marijuana retail sales, includes funding for redbud school grants in common education expenditures, relates to sales tax revenue, directs apportionment to State Public Common School Building Equalization Fund if certain conditions apply, sets maximum apportionment amount, relates to school day instruction, provides for blended instruction, deletes limitation on certain use of funds by the State Board of Education.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 1067.** Specifies apportionment of certain appropriated funds, provides for budgeting of funds in categories and amounts, requires development of performance measures, prohibits DOE from contracting for certain administrative costs in certain programs, provides for duties and compensation of DOE employees, requires reduction or withholding of state aid funds for certain purposes.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1569.** Creates the Oklahoma Play to Learn Act, which encourages school districts to implement professional development programs to provide for student play-based learning.
- **HB 1773.** OK Teacher Preparation Act: Requires study of multi-tiered systems of support in pre-service teacher preparation program, provides for training using evidenced-based and data-based procedures,

includes training for structured literacy and mathematics, adds training for applying behavioral sciences to classroom management, provides for training related to impacts of trauma and trauma-informed instruction.<sup>1</sup>

- **HB 1797.** Relates to child care facilities, criminal history searches, prohibits employment of individuals under investigation for abuse, relates to investigations of child care facilities, requires notification, and prescribes methods and timing for notification when abuse is substantiated.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2327.** Relates to the child care Restricted Registry, modifies notice requirements, requires notice to individual and certain facilities prior to recording an individual on the Restricted Registry, provides an effective date.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2748.** Creates an early childhood or elementary education alternative teacher certification, requires candidate hold a certain degree and have certain training and education hours within a certain period, provides for codification.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2962.** Restores the refundable provisions to EITC and reduces each nominal income tax rate by .25%
- **SB 95.** Establishes standards for sudden unexplained infant death investigation, requiring reporting and interviews within 48 hours after death.
- **SB 121.** Requires each school district to provide a sanitary location and paid breaks for lactating employees to express breast milk.
- **HB 2932.** Prevents state entities and executive branch offices from spending federal stimulus funds on long-term or recurring costs without legislative approval.
- OPSR publicly **supported the designation** of child care workers as essential by the Office of the Governor. This allowed OKDHS to waive co-payments and income eligibility limitations for child care subsidies for child care workers, which provided much-needed stabilization to the businesses. This change affects approximately 67,000 children and their families.

### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds



The Oklahoma Department of Human Services implemented some of advocates' recommendations, including coverage of child care subsidy co-payments, subsidized **kith care** for essential health employees, child care subsidy for the unemployed, increases to child care subsidy rates, sustainability payments to high-quality child care programs, wage supplements and stipends to child care staff, and the provision of no-cost training opportunities and technical assistance to build business competencies. Advocates also successfully supported the use of federal relief funding to support Child Care Resource and Referral's addition of business coaches to help child care programs build business competencies amid the pandemic and industry instability.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Oklahoma for 2022

- Increase quality data collection practices around early childhood care and education system supply and demand to provide better access for families and make informed funding decisions at the state level.
- Engage state and philanthropic leaders to support and advocate for integrated data on enrollment and availability of slots in child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, public school pre-k, home visiting/parent support programs, and health and mental health services into a statewide Early Childhood Integrated Data System.
- Advance living wages and benefits across settings for early childhood educators with comparable qualifications, experience and responsibilities. Creating compensation policies that include educators working with infants and toddlers is a fundamental matter of equity.
- Work with broad stakeholder networks and a focused task force to advocate for widespread adoption of a model pay scale.
- Better engage healthcare providers across Oklahoma to increase access to universal developmental screening and timely referrals.
- Establish cross-sector relationships and leverage healthcare providers as trusted messengers.

» **For more information on what's happening in Oklahoma, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Oregon



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$11.56B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: TWO

2021 Regular Session (1/19 - 6/26),  
Special Session

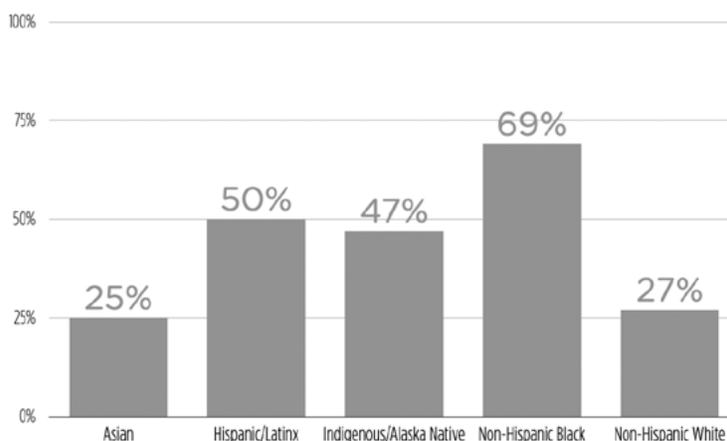


#### 33% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

135,723 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Oregon, the [Children's Institute](#), promotes cost-effective public and private investments in young children birth through third grade. The organization's goal is to increase the number of Oregon's children developmentally on track, arriving at kindergarten prepared for success and meeting third-grade benchmarks. The Children's Institute advocates for an education system that aligns and integrates early learning, family engagement and health with the primary grades.

**In the 2021 Legislative session, Oregon advocates and lawmakers worked together to pass numerous policies to advance racial equity in early childhood, expand early childhood investments, strengthen the child care system, and invest in families and communities.**

Among other critical wins, advocates successfully secured legislation and funding to prevent and eliminate suspension and expulsion in early childhood programs; reform the child care system to work for children, families, and providers; and make critical investments in early childhood programs to expand access to more families while improving quality and working conditions for staff. Progress includes:

- Social and Emotional Health Services Mapping. In Oregon, Medicaid services are provided by Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), which are financially rewarded if they meet designated metrics to improve community health. This year, the Oregon Health Authority adopted a policy developed by Children's Institute and their health partners to reward CCOs for addressing gaps in social and emotional health services for young children. Beginning in January, CCOs will engage preschools and other early learning programs, behavioral health providers, and other community stakeholders to map available social-emotional health services and develop plans to expand services that improve children's social and emotional health.
- **SB 52**. Directs DOE to develop and implement an education plan for students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two spirit, intersex, asexual, nonbinary or another minority gender identity or gender orientation.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 236**. Bans suspension and expulsion in early childhood programs entirely by 2026. Before the ban goes into effect, the policy supports Oregon's early childhood educators through robust coaching and

professional development.

- **HB 2166.** Directs the Early Learning Division to develop a system for early care and education programs that are culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and prevent expulsion or suspension.
- **HB 2060.** Identifies economically disadvantaged students based on State Board of Education rule for purposes of Student Investment Account distributions.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 3109.** Limits certain restrictions by local governments, planned communities, and condominiums on use of property for child care facilities.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 757.** Allows for conditional enrollment in the Central Background Registry pending results of a nationwide criminal records check through FBI if the person has completed a criminal records check and child abuse and neglect records check, amends definition of an exempt-prohibited person.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2059.** Modifies directive to Office of Child Care to develop quality recognition and improvement system for child care facilities.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2053.** Modifies community plan requirements for Preschool Promise Program.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2054.** Modifies recipients of and uses for grants provided under Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Program.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 2055.** Ensures that tribal communities across the state's nine federally recognized tribes are included in deciding how to grow access to high-quality, culturally specific early learning opportunities. This will be funded with \$850K in the ODE Grant in Aid budget.
- **HB 3073.** Shifts Oregon's child care subsidy program, Employment-Related Day Care (ERDC), into a child care assistance program that better serves low-income families and creates more financial stability for child care business owners and educators. It establishes a new state agency focused on early childhood care, Dept. of Early Learning and Care, to streamline Oregon's child care system. It allows OR to be more strategic in its use of funds to rebuild the early child care and education sector after COVID-19, improve programs, and advance equity.
- **HB 3379.** Prohibits manufacturing, retrofitting, selling, leasing, subletting or otherwise placing into stream of commerce any crib bumper pads or crib equipped with crib bumper pads.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 5513.** A grant to the Oregon Dept. of Education in Aid budget that will invest in some EC programs.
- **SB 5529.** Funds Family to Family networks, which provide tools for parents to become healthier family units, stronger advocates for their children, and active in their communities.
- **SB 53.** Updates terminology and funding provisions related to special education programs provided on local, county, or regional basis, provides that Superintendent of Public Instruction may provide special education on a local, county, or regional basis without regard to county boundaries for children who have a low-incidence disability, provides that State Board of Education shall develop a method of funding for such programs, provides for a study on special education programs.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 5006.** Using federal recovery dollars from ARPA, individual legislators received funds to dedicate to projects of their choosing. Senators received \$4M, and representatives received \$2M. Bill includes funding for some EC investments including \$4M to ECC partner, Latino Network.
- **SB 5505.** Funds the development of affordable housing for families.

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Administrative changes to **Child Care Subsidy:**

- Temporarily eliminates, then permanently reduces parent co-pays in child care subsidy,
- Pays providers based on enrollment, not attendance,
- Pays providers at the beginning of month, instead of after provision of care, and
- Increases income eligibility. This executive order affects approximately 7,000 children, who are in subsidized care with varying levels of benefits.
- Allies worked with legislators to secure CARES Act flexible funding to be spent on child care (in addition to the funding dedicated to child care). This resulted in an additional round of grants to child care providers.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Oregon for 2022

- Implement HB3073 and influence rulemaking to ensure child care governance reforms reflect the intentions of families and providers whose needs informed the bill.
- Improve the quality of health care coverage provided by Medicaid by developing and proposing for adoption a social-emotional health metric for Coordinated Care Organizations.
- Revisit the ECC's decision making structures, steering committee, and criteria and process for developing our legislative agenda to better center racial equity.
- Ensure via rulemaking that HB2166/SB236 implementation includes definitions of suspension and expulsion and a data collection plan.
- Continue to provide sustained leadership on advisory teams including the PPI team, State Inclusion Leadership team, and Suspension/Expulsion Prevention steering committee.
- Work with our partners to engage legislators to cultivate stronger and more informed early childhood champions.
- Identify approaches and priorities for the 2023 legislative session to expand equitable access to doulas and community health workers.
- Build our team's capacity to act on centering racial equity, including increasing our ability to minimize harm experienced by partners participating in the legislative process.



» [For more information on what's happening in Oregon, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

# Pennsylvania



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$33.15B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: ONE

2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/5/21 - 12/21/21)

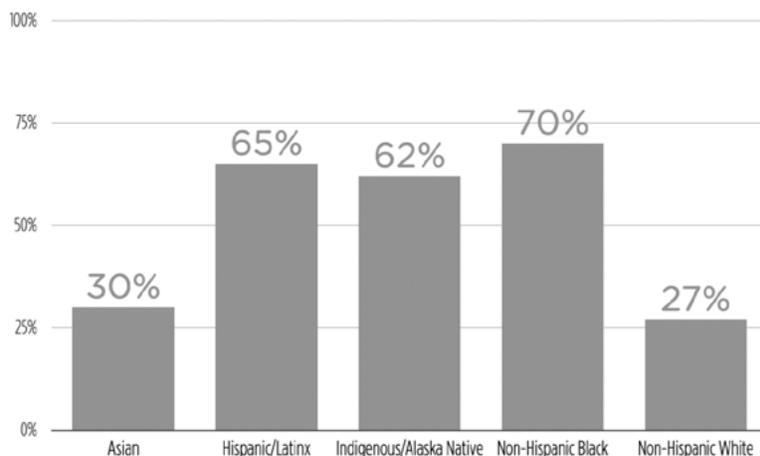


#### 39% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

478,703 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Pennsylvania, [Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children](#), is a strong, effective, and trusted voice to improve the health, education, and well-being of the Commonwealth's children. Their core strategies include research and analysis, strategic communications, mobilization, and government affairs. Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children focuses on 4 core areas: child abuse and neglect, early learning, health, and K-12 education.

**While Pennsylvania's most-recent state budget was minimalist—utilizing stimulus funds only where needed, reserving the rest, making sparse state investments, and adding to the Rainy Day Fund—there have been bright spots in early childhood areas.**

Progress includes:

- **SB 255.** State FY21-22 General Appropriations Bill:
  1. \$200M increase in basic education funding for Pennsylvania's public schools and an additional \$100M directed to top 100 underfunded schools through the "Level-Up" initiative, estimated to impact 35% of state's student population of 1.7M children.
  2. Additional investments in high-quality pre-k: \$25M increase for Pre-K Counts and a \$5M increase for the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program to serve more than 3,200 children.
  3. ARP Child Care Stabilization Funds were allocated for the full \$729M appropriation and were specified to receive an infant-toddler add-on payment.
  4. Early Intervention Part C received an increase of \$22.18M, while Part B saw an increase of \$11M in state funds.
  5. \$158.8M increase in state funding for County Child Welfare, a 14% increase over last year's appropriation from the Needs-Based Budget.

- SB 733/HB 1254 (various school voucher proposals). Pennsylvania education advocacy groups worked together to push back against specific efforts in both chambers to establish a variety of voucher proposals that would draw funding away from the public school system.
- HB 1332. Would have required school districts to publicly post on their websites their curriculum content as part of a broader strategy to ban specific materials.
- HB 958. Immunization Freedom Act would have allowed families to work with physicians to “craft their own vaccination schedule” for their children.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Like all states, Pennsylvania received a significant influx of federal relief funding. Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children worked within the state’s child care campaign, Start Strong PA, to influence how each of the stimulus funds for child care were allocated at the state level, but most impactfully in CARES I and ARP.

In the CARES I package, the child care campaign was successful in securing an additional \$125 million in unallocated, discretionary state-directed funds, with \$116 million directly going to child care and \$9 million going to pre-k. This is on top of the \$106 million Pennsylvania received in CARES funding specific to its CCDBG allocation.

Advocates can also take credit for wins included in State FY21-22 Budget Fiscal Code Legislation (HB 1348), which spoke to new federal programs. The bill:

- 1) Appropriated ARP ESSER funds in the following ways: \$250 million for learning loss and \$50 million for summer enrichment, dictated by federal law, \$20 million for educational programs for neglected, delinquent, and at-risk youth and is prorated based upon the share of federal Title I, Part D funding.
- 2) Set parameters for the use of \$728.9 million in ARP Child Care Stabilization funds (some additional, one-time program funding allotted for providers serving infants and toddlers).



### Sustained Advocacy Campaigns

Pennsylvania Partnership for Children and other advocates continue to promote Formal Kinship Care Policy Recommendations, child welfare legislation, and improved financing for home visiting. PPC’s report on formal kinship care and recommended policy changes resulted in ongoing conversations on needed changes to both the state’s Juvenile Act and longer-term changes to the Family Finding Law within the Human Services Code. Additionally, advocates continue to promote child welfare legislation, **HB 1866**, which would enact permanency provisions. After a year’s worth of research and stakeholder convening, PPC released its report on diversifying home visiting funding streams to sustain and grow home visiting services.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Pennsylvania for 2022

- Increase access to pre-k by advocating for additional funding in the state budget, including releasing the fourth edition of PPC's per capita investment comparison report.
- Expand health insurance options for women and children not currently eligible by advancing Medicaid and CHIP policies broadening post-partum coverage and removing immigration status restrictions.
- Continue receiving TA support to build upon our race equity learning journey by shifting externally to thoughtfully explain disaggregated data and advance equitable policy solutions.
- Reduce unmet need for home visiting by securing additional state funding; research Medicaid funding and produce funding options matrix; lead state campaign through contract uncertainty.
- Enact legislation to enable kin to care for children in the child welfare system, promote workforce policy changes through the administrative transition via coalition engagement.
- Increase access to high-quality mixed delivery child care by advocating for additional funding to address equitable access and workforce supports, including pay and professional development.
- Engage impacted communities to inform policy development in a more consistent manner through grassroots organization partners with expertise and best practices to respectfully collect feedback.



**» For more information on what's happening in Pennsylvania, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Rhode Island



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$4.15B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)



**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/5 - 6/30)

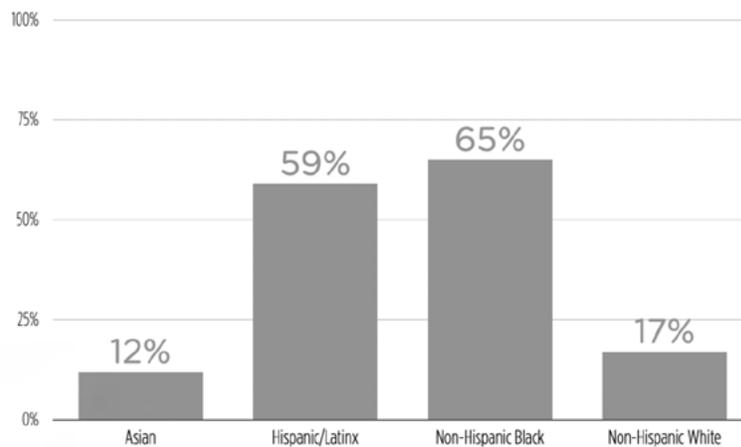


**33% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
30,681 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL



### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in Rhode Island is [Rhode Island KIDS COUNT](#), an organization that works to improve the health, safety, education, economic well-being, and development of Rhode Island’s children. They provide independent, credible, comprehensive information, and bring individuals and organizations together to advocate for equitable public policies and programs that improve children’s lives.

Advocates worked together in 2021 as the [Right from the Start Campaign](#) to advance state policies and raise budgets to help young children in Rhode Island — including increasing total funding for the Child Care Assistance Program to the highest funding level since 2006 and establishing a permanent cap on family copayments at no more than 7% of family income. The number of children receiving Child Care Assistance should grow from 5,000 to 7,000 (down from 10,000 pre-pandemic), and an estimated 50% are children of color. Home visiting services will reach 1,200 children enrolled, and about 54% are children of color.

In addition, the state extended its paid family leave program from four to six weeks. Medicaid now covers perinatal doula services, and commercial health insurance will cover these services beginning July 2022. With support of advocates, federal funding (PDG B-5 and GEERS) and Head Start and Child Care Assistance Program funding allowed for an expansion of Rhode Island Pre-K in 2020 and 2021.

**And in early 2021, advocates worked with partners on a voter education campaign to vote “yes” on a measure in the March 2021 special election. It passed and enables the state to borrow \$15 million in funds to improve early childhood facilities statewide.**

Progress in 2021 includes:

- **H6122.** FY22 state budget bill included several wins:
  1. Reduction and permanent cap on child care copayments to meet federal affordability standard,
  2. Continuation of the enhanced pandemic rates for child care through 2021,
  3. New rates for the Child Care Assistance Program that are higher than governor originally proposed,

4. 12-month pilot program to enable low-income college students to be eligible for college,
  5. Authorization and expanded Medicaid funding for home visiting (\$1.6M), and
  6. Coverage of perinatal doula services for Medicaid births
- **H5929/S484**. Perinatal doula services bill requires all commercial health insurance providers in Rhode Island to cover perinatal doula services beginning July 1, 2022.
  - **H6090/S688**. Bill adds additional weeks for parents to care for new babies, foster, and adoptive children and for all workers to care for seriously ill family members. Law expands Rhode Island's paid family leave program (Temporary Caregivers Insurance) to 5 weeks beginning in 2022 and 6 weeks beginning in 2023, from the original four weeks.
  - **H5130A**. Increases RI's current minimum hourly wage (\$11.50) incrementally to \$15 over next few years.
  - **H6032/S0004**: Medicaid and commercial insurance coverage of telehealth services was made permanent.
  - Increased the monthly cash assistance benefit amount by 30% for families in the RI Works Program, raising the monthly benefit for a family of 3 from \$554 to \$721 and allowed children ages 0 to 3 to receive the \$100/year clothing allowance payment for the first time (clothing allowance was previously only for children ages 4-17 in RI Works).

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates worked toward improved rates and payment policies for the Child Care Assistance Program. In 2021, they were successful at continuing the enhanced pandemic rates established under Executive Order in June 2020, and the state has continued to pay based on enrollment. In February 2021, the state began covering 100% of family copayments. Federal COVID relief funds and CCDBG funding supported these policy changes. Thanks to federal funding, the FY22 state budget extends the pandemic-enhanced rates through 2021 and permanently caps family copayments at 7% of family income. New rates in statute as of January 1, 2022 will be higher than the pre-pandemic rates, but some rates will be lower than the current pandemic rates. Advocates also supported efforts to provide relief and stabilization funds to child care providers to remain open during the pandemic, regardless of whether they take subsidy.

At the time of this posting, advocates were still awaiting decisions on ARPA funds to help families access Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and affordable, reliable, quality child care. First, advocates recommended ARPA funding be used to address the Early Intervention staffing crisis by increasing staff wages to reduce turnover and stabilize access to the program for children and families. Second, advocates are working to secure funding for a statewide child care wage supplement pilot project and other strategies to increase access to affordable, reliable, quality child care.

## Ongoing Advocacy Efforts

Advocates in Rhode Island are continuing working together as the Right from the Start Campaign to advance state policy and budget priorities for young children and families, including:

- Enacting a 12-month postpartum Medicaid extension to promote maternal and infant health
- Passing the The Early Educator Investment Act which requires the state to set goals and develop strategies to increase compensation of early educators, increasing rates and expanding eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program
- Increasing rates for the Early Intervention Program (IDEA Part C)
- Increasing wage replacement rates and extending the number of weeks of paid family leave to 12 weeks
- Sustaining and expanding access to Head Start and RI Pre-K
- Enacting sustainable, and equitable strategies to increase state revenue so the state can adequately fund programs and services that young children and families need.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Rhode Island for 2022

- Improve access to high-quality child care by enacting legislation to increase reimbursement rates, cap family copayments, and expand family eligibility for the RI Child Care Assistance Program.
- Work to improve compensation of early educators in child care, Early Intervention, and family home visiting by passing the Early Educator Investment Act and implementing a statewide wage supplement for child care educators.
- Grow and broaden the coalition working to advance RIght from the Start Campaign priorities and include more grassroots partners.
- Expand access to Head Start and RI Pre-K and maintain high program quality through state and federal budget advocacy.
- Improve the state's paid family leave program to meet national benchmarks by increasing wage replacement rates and extend the number of weeks by passing legislation.
- Continue our role as facilitators for the Rhode Island Early Learning Council to advise Governor Dan McKee and his staff during his first year in office to promote strong state policies and effective use of federal funds for children from birth through third grade.
- Sustain and improve access to early childhood IDEA programs through state and federal budget advocacy, including improved Medicaid rates.
- Develop and use more infographics and videos to communicate our policy priority messages to policymakers, providers, and voters who have limited time to read reports.



» [For more information on what's happening in Rhode Island, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# South Carolina



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$8.56B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

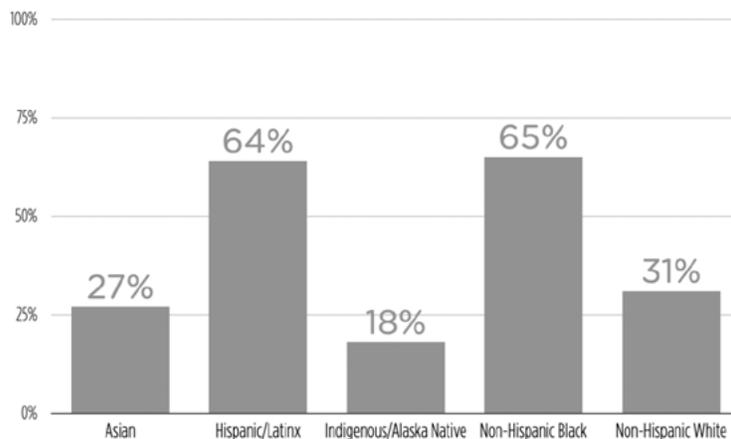
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
124th General Assembly  
(1/12 - 6/29)

**45% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
236,137 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our lead ally in South Carolina, **South Carolina First Steps (First Steps)**, is the statewide initiative for school readiness. It is both a state agency and a nonprofit organization, with a network of 46 subsidiary nonprofit partnerships. These local partnerships leverage state funding to fill gaps in services, connect children and families to services, convene local stakeholders around the needs of young children, and support state school readiness priorities. The First Steps state office also administers the state's mixed delivery, full-day 4K program.

**Early childhood issues have become decidedly bipartisan in South Carolina and, thanks to champions on both sides of the aisle and in the Governor's Mansion, young children and their families made significant gains in South Carolina this year.**

South Carolina is one of the growing number of states where the expansion of needs-based pre-k 4 (4K) is embraced as a bipartisan goal. Advocates and policymakers in this conservative state worked together on the effort in 2021 and the Governor championed expanding 4K from start to finish. In his rousing State of the State address, he described the importance of early childhood investment, brain development, and pre-k, and he included the program in his budget. The legislature overwhelmingly supported the expansion, enabling 40% of children, who were otherwise eligible but for their geography, to access the highly-impactful, full-day program.

Additionally, child welfare, after many years of unsuccessfully requesting additional dollars, also received a significant attention and an increase in funding. And, for the first time since its creation in legislation, the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council received state funding.

Progress includes:

- **HB 4100.** FY21-FY22 General Appropriations Bill: Significant new recurring and one-time funding for statewide expansion of needs-based 4K and authorization to extend the full-day, curriculum-driven

program statewide, extending reach to the 40% of children who were ineligible due to their geography. Total new funds added were \$3M to both SC First Steps and SC DOE's budgets. Funds include an increase in the allowable reimbursement rate. Dept. of Social Services received \$29M in new, recurring state funding for child welfare. Bill also included base funding for the Early Childhood Advisory Council. The \$102K is significant because it is the first time the General Assembly has allocated any state funds to the entity, which was created in legislation almost a decade ago. It lays the groundwork for the state's future investment in early childhood system building.

### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds



Advocates worked with governor's office to successfully achieve the goal of using federal GEER funds for early childhood. Some \$7 million was allocated to extend 4K in private and public schools into the afterschool and summer periods, offering a needed learning loss gap-filler for children and a key workforce support for families.

### Sustained Advocacy Campaign



South Carolina advocates made progress on Paid Family Leave for Public (State) Employees. The bill passed one chamber this session. Advocates will continue to push for this bill.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in South Carolina for 2022

- Increase the percentage of South Carolina's eligible children ages 0-5 served by First Steps' high-intensity programs from 5% to 7%.
- Strengthen the role of the Early Childhood Advisory Council as South Carolina's birth-through-five system governance infrastructure and Children's Cabinet, through a) the successful adoption of a shared strategic plan; b) endorsement by the Governor of the plan's priorities and measurable outcomes for improving the health and development of the state's birth-through-three population; and c) the adoption of an initial Two-Generation Policy Framework for South Carolina with input from the state's Family Voice Council.
- Create an inter-agency plan for blending and braiding funding strategies to sustainably reduce the percentage of South Carolina's children 0-5, particularly low-income children, living in a child care desert.



» [For more information on what's happening in South Carolina, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

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# South Dakota



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$1.86B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

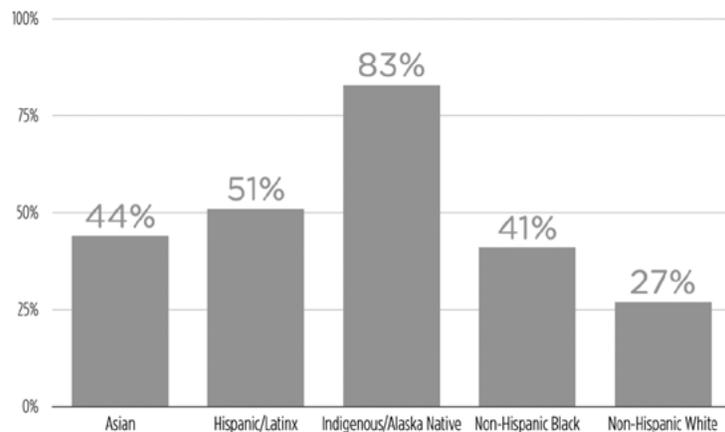
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: TWO**  
96th Legislative Session (1/12 - 3/29)  
Special Session (11/8)

**39% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
40,887 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key ally and grantee in South Dakota, the [South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (SDAEYC), works through [Early Learner South Dakota](#) to advocate at the local and state level to improve policy for early care and education in the state. Early Learner South Dakota's vision is that all children have access to high-quality early learning experiences and environments to create a solid foundation for lifelong success.

**In 2021, early learning stakeholders continued building relationships with state legislators and educating them on the impacts of early learning.**

Marijuana reform and one-time funding projects dominated the legislative session in South Dakota. Early childhood progress:

- **HB 1132.** Adds dental hygienists to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse.
- **HB 1097.** Defeated. Would have provided for philosophical exceptions to required vaccinations.<sup>1</sup>

### Sustained Advocacy Campaign



KIDS COUNT is part of an early childhood coalition developing a strategic plan for legislative priorities in the next three to five years. There is interest from advocates to support stricter child care licensing requirements and finding solutions that make child care more accessible and affordable in the state. Advocates drafted legislation to create a Mandatory Registration List of all unregulated providers, through the Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS offered to assist with this voluntary list and has included the partnership/initiative into the three-year state plan. Advocates will recommend that ARPA dollars fund this process.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in South Dakota for 2022

- Implement a voluntary registry list of all currently, unregulated providers in the state to increase communication and access to state and local resources.
- Conduct statewide poll in order to decipher where support for early learning lies with South Dakota voters
- Increase our relationship to become a third party contract with the state to implement relief or block grant dollars
- Increase access to accurate data about the supply and demand of early care and education in the state, including the capacity to disaggregate by race and understand potential inequities in the system.
- Increase the number of Early Learning Communities in the state in order to improve the public awareness of the importance of quality early learning experiences among parents, the general public, and elected officials
- Further increase our knowledge of the QRIS process to better support our state Enrichment System.
- Implement the state QRIS system and updating current resource and referral systems among the regional Early Childhood Enrichment Offices across the state.
- Build relationships among businesses, economic development and military groups to strengthen our advocacy and policy message in South Dakota



**» For more information on what's happening in South Dakota, visit the state policy landscape page.**

# Tennessee

## Policy Landscape and Progress:



## \$16.31B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

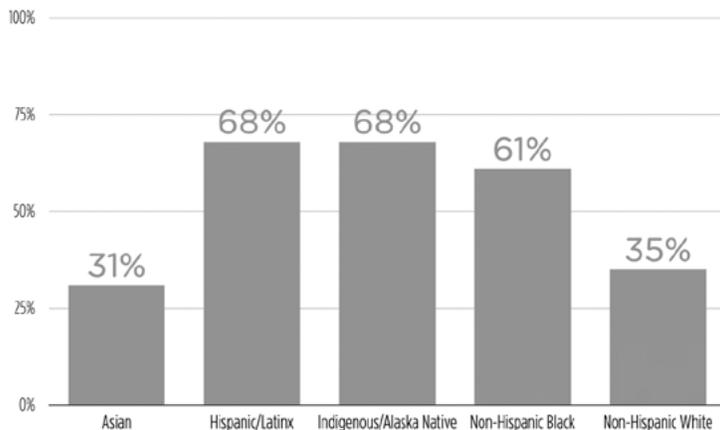
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: THREE**  
112th General Assembly (1/12 - 5/6)  
Special Session I (10/18-10/20)  
Special Session II (10/27-10/20)

**44% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
319,835 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

## PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's lead ally in Tennessee, **Tennesseans for Quality Early Education** (TQEE), works to advance high-quality early care and education through policy development and advocacy. They do this by leading a statewide coalition and promoting a robust policy agenda that reflects the importance of the birth through third grade continuum in preparing children for future academic success.

**With both bold reform and incremental policy wins, Tennessee advocates and policymakers are changing the landscape for the state's young children and their families.**

The two big wins in Tennessee this year were the child care task force bill, which launches Tennessee's work toward a fully reimagined child care system, and the TANF bill, which unlocked hundreds of millions of previously stockpiled federal TANF funds and ensures they'll get to where the need is greatest. Tennessee had the largest TANF surplus (unobligated balance) in the nation at \$740+ million prior to the legislation. Also, through a handful of minor child care-related bills, TQEE drove legislative conversation, built greater understanding of the issues around inadequate child care, and spurred momentum for change.

Progress includes:

- **HB 142/SB 751.** A Strategic Reset of Tennessee's TANF Program. \$730M+ of Tennessee's federal TANF block grant was unused as of 2020 Bill
  1. Establishes a reserve not to exceed the state's annual TANF block grant (\$191M),
  2. Ensures future funds other than reserve are fully allocated and that funds are deployed in counties proportionally to their share of children in poverty, and
  3. Invests \$182M of surplus funds in the planning, implementation and rigorous evaluation of seven evidence-based pilot initiatives, all with goal of strengthening family self-sufficiency and interrupting cycle of poverty and government dependence.
- Other provisions included increased penalties for fraudulently receiving TANF assistance, an optional alternative set of incentives and supports for individuals pursuing education advancement, and an

increase to the monthly cash assistance grant. Negotiations resulted in adoption of the provisions of the Tennessee Opportunity Act into the governor’s legislation in what was arguably a model for collaboration among the legislative and executive branches of government and the nonprofit community, producing one of the most consequential pieces of legislation this session.

- **SB 598/SB 677.** TN Child Care Taskforce – Strengthening Tennessee’s Workforce of Today and Tomorrow. Establishes a 15-member taskforce charged with creating a strategic action plan that will better ensure the state’s working families can access quality, affordable child care. Task force will comprise commissioners from various departments, two legislators, representatives from the business community, and providers of high-quality child care programs.
- **SB 73/SB 739.** Mental Health Trust Fund for Public Schools. Governor Lee prioritized \$250M toward addressing the mental health challenges of students. Under the bill, \$25M will be immediately available for mental health services, and a trust fund of \$225M will be established and overseen by a board. Subject to the approval of this board, annual earnings on the fund will be available to school districts to contribute to mental health services for students.
- **SB 670/SB 807.** Accessible, Responsive Government. Ensures that child care providers have access to regular, consistent communication with the Dept. of Human Services. DHS commissioner will designate a specific staff person to serve as a liaison to child care providers, community stakeholders, Dept. child care staff, and partner agencies.
- **SB 996/SB 1105.** Authorizes Department of Human Services to issue payments based on enrollment vs. attendance. Enrollment-based payments remove financial challenges that providers may experience with child absences and provide greater certainty and stability for providers to remain solvent. This bill reinforced a practice which the Dept. of Human Services began in 2019.
- **SB 1509/SB 1104.** Provides reimbursements to child care providers on behalf of low-income families.
- **HB 1114/SB 22.** Authorizes a state agency to contract with a child care provider to offer child care services to agency’s employees in agency’s facilities, at no cost to government. Finding appropriate and affordable facilities is often a challenge for child care providers, and state government buildings often have unused spaces which could be dedicated to this purpose.
- **SB 7001/HB 7003.** Ensures standardized tests are administered to ensure visibility into student progress while “holding harmless” educators, schools, and students for test outcomes.
- **SB 7002/HB 7004.** Allocates resources for tutoring and summer and afterschool programs to accelerate learning and address learning loss due to the pandemic.
- **SB 7003/HB 7002.** Establishes a new phonics-based reading program to help boost literacy rates.
- **SB 164.** Authorizes a Parents’ Day Out or similar program operated by a religious institution or organization to provide 12-hour per week child care services in whatever block of time desired.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 386.** Requires department to accept out-of-state medical records evidencing immunization of a dependent child of a military parent against each disease designated by the commissioner of health as required for attendance at any school or child care facility.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 749.** Designates certain licensing periods as provisional licensing periods, requires the department to establish and implement a quality assessment and rating system to evaluate child care agencies, makes various other changes relative to licensing of child care agencies.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1268.** Requires Dept. of Children’s Services to notify appropriate court when dept. has knowledge that a foster parent from a kinship placement violated a court order by allowing a child to visit parent within a certain number of hours.<sup>1</sup>

### Sustained Advocacy Campaign



**HB 537/SB 581,** Rightsizing the Nurse to Student Ratio in Our Schools, was deferred to 2022. For nearly 30 years, the state’s funding formula for public schools has included a component for school nurses. Unfortunately, this formula only funds a school nurse for every 3,000 students in a school system. Legislators filed legislation this year on behalf of TQEE that would reduce this ratio to recognize the nationwide best practice of a school nurse for every 750 students. While most legislators are supportive of such a change, the cost of roughly \$42 million was an insurmountable hurdle, and the legislation was deferred to next year. TQEE has begun working on creative and cost-effective solutions to addressing school health and mental health and will engage stakeholders on this topic in 2022.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Tennessee for 2022

- Guide the creation of a clear, actionable plan for transformational change to Tennessee's child care system that prioritizes quality, affordable, accessible care for economically and otherwise disadvantaged children and families
- Establish the first expansion of Tennessee's Voluntary PreK program in a decade
- Establish statewide ECE shared measures of success and practice framework for children 0-8
- Expand Medicaid
- Expand our ECE policy and practice expertise
- Establish a network of school-based health clinics which provide both behavioral and physical healthcare for schoolchildren and their families living in underserved communities of Tennessee
- Expand our communications capacity to capture and share powerful stories and optimize digital mobilization and advocacy



**» For more information on what's happening in Tennessee, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# Texas



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$58.9B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

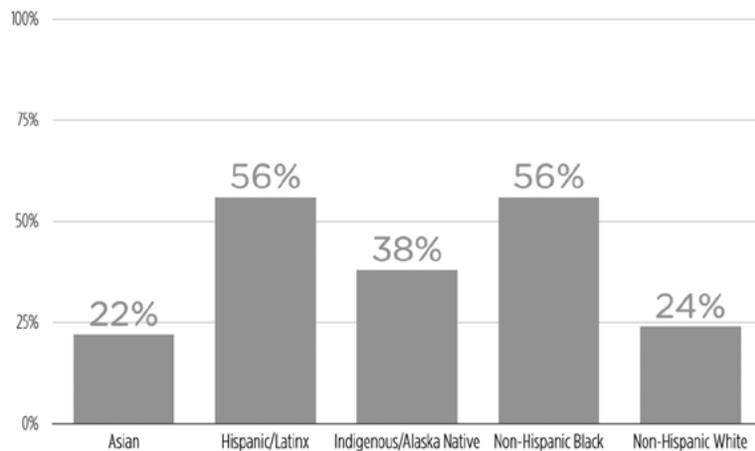
 **ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
87th Legislature  
(1/12 - 5/31)

 **44% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
1,565,212 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance for Early Success has two principal grantees in Texas. **Children at Risk** serves as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children. Through its research and advocacy programs, they are a leader in understanding the health, safety and economic indicators impacting children, and educating public policy makers about their importance in improving the lives of children. **Texans Care for Children** is a statewide, nonpartisan, multi-issue children's policy organization. They develop policy solutions, produce research, and engage community leaders to educate policymakers, the media, and the public about what works to improve the well-being of Texas children and families.

The Texas Legislature made important progress supporting young children in 2021. Texas finally passed legislation to boost the quality of care offered by providers who participate in the subsidy system, create a state plan to support the child care workforce and address disparities in compensation, limit pre-k class size to 22 students, allow moms to keep Medicaid insurance for six months after childbirth rather than just two months, and prevent children from losing their Medicaid due to inaccurate midyear eligibility reviews.

The early childhood coalition in Texas worked with legislators to successfully stop a planned cut to funding for Early Childhood Intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and delays.

Progress includes:

- **HB 133.** Extends mothers' postpartum Medicaid insurance coverage from 2 to 6 months. This policy will help about 150,000 Texas mothers each year keep their Medicaid insurance for 6 months postpartum, which will promote health for moms and their infant's health and development.
- **HB 2658.** Allows eligible children to remain enrolled in Medicaid insurance by reducing inaccurate mid-year eligibility reviews in Children's Medicaid. About 65,000 Texas kids were kicked off their Medicaid insurance in 2019 alone because of inaccurate mid-year reviews that occur at months 5, 6, 7, and 8 of during a child's year in Medicaid. The new law will reduce the mid-year reviews to just once at month 6, reducing the risk of kids getting kicked off coverage by 75%. As such, the new law will help prevent over

- 48,000 Texas kids each year from being incorrectly kicked off Medicaid health coverage.
- **SB 2081.** Limits pre-k classes in public schools to a maximum of 22 students.
- **HB 725.** Makes Texas children eligible for public school pre-k if they were in foster care in other states.
- **SB 560.** Creates a state strategic plan to cultivate bilingualism across all early learning systems and set clear benchmarks to increase number of bilingually-certified teachers, number of students who are bilingual or multilingual, and availability of high-quality dual-language immersion classes in pre-k through 12th grade.
- **HB 2256.** Creates a certification in Bilingual Special Education to build a pipeline of school leaders equipped to serve needs of English-Learner children with disabilities and developmental delays.
- **HB 2607.** Mandatory Texas Rising Star for subsidy child care providers: Requires subsidy providers to participate in previously voluntary quality rating and improvement system, Texas Rising Star. With an appropriate phase-in period and increased access to supports and coaching, HB 2607 will improve the quality of care available to the more than 136,000 children currently enrolled in a subsidized program. Bill collects child care operational I.D. to better track implementation of private-public pre-k partnerships.
- **HB 619.** ECE Workforce Strategic Plan and Goals: Requires Texas Workforce Commission to develop plan to help educators achieve credentials and degrees, earn living wages, and use the TX Early Childhood Professional Development System and Workforce Registry. Plan will include recommendations for 1) Improving data collection practices, 2) Increasing compensation and reducing turnover, 3) Eliminating racial and gender pay disparities, 4) Strengthening paid professional development and career pathways, including apprenticeships, 5) Improving local workforce board support systems, technology, and participation in the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System.
- **SB 1555.** Reimbursement Rates: Aligns CCR and TWC nomenclature and adjusts reimbursement rates to more adequately support child care providers who adhere to CCR Minimum Standards and accept TWC's child care subsidies.
- **HB 1792.** Centralizing TRS Assessors: Improves process by which Texas Workforce Commission works with providers to get them on the path to quality and increases the efficiency by which child care providers can become Texas Rising Star certified, in order to be eligible to partner with school districts.
- **SB 225.** Relates to the regulation of child-care facilities and family homes.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 1061.** Relates to background and criminal history checks for operators and employees of certain child-care facilities.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 1896.** Relates to regulation of child-care facilities and provision of health and human services by Dept. of Family and Protective Services and Health and Human Services Commission.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 452.** Relates to prevention and Early Intervention Programs and Practices.<sup>1</sup>
- Advocates stopped the budget cut that the Senate passed for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) funding for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays. Advocates secured \$339M for ECI, maintaining level funding. Texas serves about 50,000 infants and toddlers age 0-3 through the ECI program every year.
- Alliance-supported organizations worked with lawmakers to launch the bipartisan House Early Childhood Legislative Caucus, which is the first of its kind in Texas, and helped plan educational opportunities and provide early childhood data and research to Caucus staff and members.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates engaged stakeholders, analyzed data and created maps, and provided recommendations for the allocation of federal child care relief dollars to Governor Abbott, Texas Workforce Commission and other state leaders. Advocates influenced decisions that prioritized child care deserts, communities of color, sustainability, and support for quality. The results for CARES ACT Distribution (\$371 million) included: \$52.4 million for essential workers to receive child care, \$18.5 million in FY21 to serve more low-income children, \$173.1 million for enhanced reimbursement rates, and \$17.5 million in FY20 to cover local workforce development boards' increased costs. Some \$47.6 million currently remains.

Using federal COVID relief dollars, legislators boosted funding for the [Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium](#) and authorized the Consortium to expand its services to support moms during and after pregnancy. Not only will this step help Texas moms during this critical time for infants' and toddlers' brain development, but we hope it will

provide further momentum for addressing the gaps in our state’s maternal health and mental health policies.



## Sustained Advocacy Campaigns

Advocates will continue to work on **HB 168**. It would have promoted a supportive and inclusive environment for children with disabilities in child care. It also would have prevented discrimination in child care based on disability and ensured that more children in child care with disabilities received Early Childhood Intervention services.

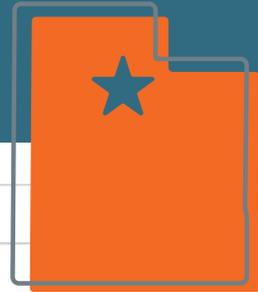
They will also continue to work toward racial equity. The Sunset Review, a legislative oversight tool used to hold state agencies accountable, has a proven track record of improving state laws and policy. SB 399 would have required the Sunset Advisory Commission to assess agencies’ efforts to reduce racial disparities when under review. This requirement would not have created new or more government but would have instead utilized an existing and long-established process to evaluate how all branches of Texas state government are addressing racial disparities.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Tennessee for 2022

- Expand the number of and increase access to high quality early learning programs, home-based or center-based, through policy change and improved provider outreach. (Children at Risk)
- Focus all our early childhood efforts through the racial equity lens reducing barriers for families and the early childhood workforce for high quality programs. (Children at Risk)
- Present recommendations around the allocation of CRSSA and ARP federal dollars, and track how monies are invested for sustainability and equitable access. (Children at Risk)
- Support the newly formed House Early Childhood Legislative Caucus by helping to plan educational opportunities and providing new early childhood data and research. (Texans Care for Children)
- Promote pre-k quality through conducting research and supporting agency efforts to monitor quality and support diverse delivery. (Texans Care for Children)
- More effectively center equity and the voices of Texans with lived experience into all facets of our work. (Texans Care for Children)
- Build a high-quality early childhood workforce focusing on education, compensation and retention strategies. (Children at Risk)
- Work with agencies to support their efforts to increase the number of subsidized providers participating in Texas Rising Star, Texas’ QRIS). (Children at Risk)
- Work with the new caucus and others to develop and communicate a slate of interim charges and build consensus to advance Early Childhood policy priorities. (Children at Risk)
- Ensure Texas takes steps to maximize Family First Act funding to expand mental health, substance use and other services to keep more families safely together. (Texans Care for Children)
- Enhance our communications through more online features such as individual campaign webpages, more regular updates on legislative activities, and videos to reach broader audiences. (Texans Care for Children)
- Ensure federal relief dollars (CRRSA and ARP) are invested in sustainable improvements for young children and their educators. (Children at Risk)
- Monitor the improvements in reimbursement rates for subsidy providers. (Children at Risk)
- Work with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and early childhood partners to ensure the state best leverages federal funding to support quality child care in Texas. (Texans Care for Children)
- Elevate family stories to help improve transitions from ECI to Part B Special Education and support building a pipeline of bilingual special education teachers. (Texans Care for Children)
- Produce high quality research by expanding our research team to develop stronger, data-driven cases for smart investments in kids and families. (Texans Care for Children)

**» For more information on what’s happening in Texas, visit the state policy landscape page.**



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$8.87B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

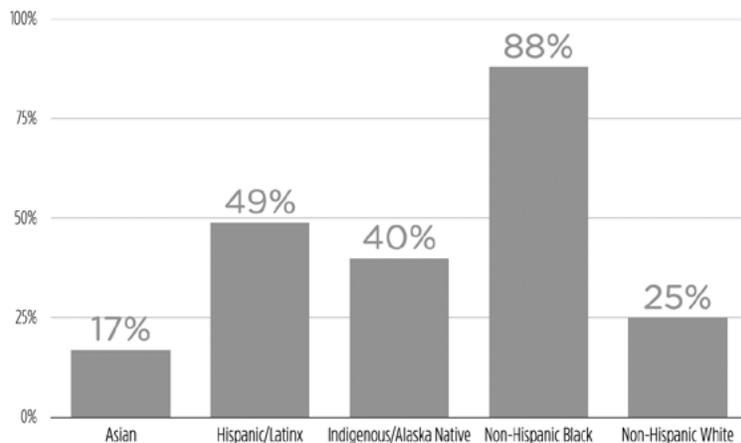
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/19 - 3/05)

**31% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
139,922 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key allies in Utah at [United Way of Salt Lake](#) provide backbone support for and work through the Promise Partnership Regional Council, a cross sector partnership working to ensure every child in Utah has the opportunity to succeed in school and life. The Partnership focuses on creating lasting social change by addressing systemic challenges, scaling practices that work, and leveraging its influence to create alignment and political will.

**Utah made some important investments in early childhood programs during the 2021 session. Advocates worked to expand preschool and full-day kindergarten and increase temporary subsidies for families who need child care. Investments were also made to align preschool through third grade, supporting increased student outcomes.**

Progress includes:

- **HB 277.** Child Care Eligibility Amendments raises (until 2023) the income threshold for families eligible for child care subsidies to 85% median income and requires Office of Child Care to pay providers based on enrollment, not attendance.
- **HB 337.** Relates to mental health services provided to a child.<sup>1</sup>
- **Budget bill.** Advocates helped to secure an additional \$7M in ongoing funds for Optional Enhanced-Day Kindergarten program (essentially full-day K, though some districts use the funds to extend the day for an hour for all students). This change will serve an estimated 4,000 additional children.
- **Budget bill.** Advocates helped to secure \$5M in 2021 to support the Early Learning Training and Assessment that aligns learning from preschool through third grade, improves early learning in literacy and maternal healthematics, supports teacher training/development, and requires a standard maternal health assessment.
- **Budget bill.** Advocates helped to secure an additional \$3M in ongoing funds for School Readiness Grants/High Quality Preschool program.
- **Budget bill.** Advocates helped to secure \$500K in one-time funds to support a mini-grant program to

pilot some innovative ideas to better align programs and increase kindergarten readiness. United Way of Salt Lake will match the grants. This public/private funding mix allows early childhood providers maximum flexibility to innovate and try new ways of aligning programming to be child/family centered.

- Advocates helped to kill **HB 271**, Home Child Care Amendments, which would have increased the number of children a residential child care provider could have before being required to get a residential child care certificate.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

For the next few years, child care providers will be paid based on enrollment, not attendance, which advocates hope to make permanent in the future.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Utah for 2022

- Expand access to preschool for children who belong to low-income families and communities of color by laying the groundwork for a county ballot initiative.
- Engage family members and caregivers in planning, design and implementation to ensure policy solutions meet the needs of and are effective in communities they target.
- Increase access to full-day kindergarten for all Utah families who want it by passing legislation that makes it universally available within the next three years.
- Develop interventions that increase access to affordable, quality child care by convening stakeholders to build understanding of Utah's child care sector, family needs and evidence-based solutions.



» [For more information on what's happening in Utah, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

# Vermont



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$1.66B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

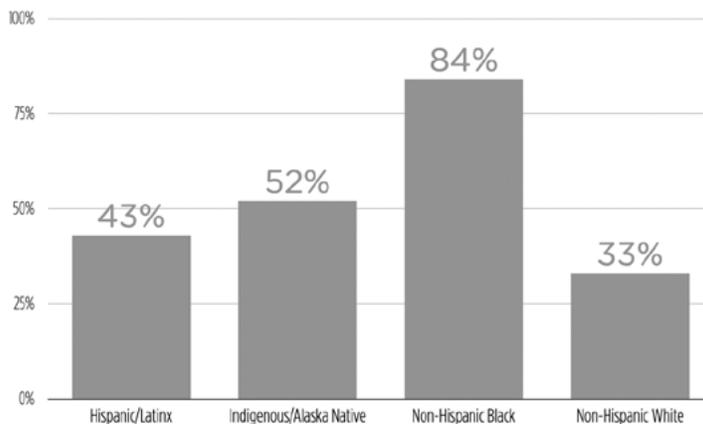
 **UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (R)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/6 - 5/28)

 **35% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
18,484 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance's key allies in Vermont are [Let's Grow Kids](#) (LGK) and [Voices for Vermont's Children](#) (VVC). LGK is a statewide movement to secure affordable access to high-quality child care for all Vermonters by 2025. LGK partners with local communities to strengthen the existing early childhood education system and mobilizes Vermonters to demand policy change and increased public investment in high-quality child care. VVC conducts research and analysis on policy solutions to improve the lives of children and youth, and advocates for those changes in the legislature and beyond. Their efforts focus on addressing equity through systemic change rather than individual-level interventions.

This was a unique session for many reasons. The virtual space allowed advocates to monitor many more committees and yet, the lack of in person interaction made it difficult to have quick, meaningful connections with the legislators.

**Yet in this unusual environment, Vermont advocates and policymakers succeeded in setting the stage for true child care reform. New legislation lays the foundation for the accessible, affordable, high-quality, equitable system the state's families and businesses need in the future.**

The child care bill makes \$12.7 million in investments now in increased child care financial assistance rates that will support more families, programs to grow the early childhood education workforce, and IT infrastructure to stabilize Vermont's early childhood education system. And it charts a future course by setting twin goals for family affordability and compensation for the early childhood education workforce. It also engages experts to analyze Vermont's current system and identify a stable, long-term funding source for a transformed child care system.

Progress in 2021 includes:

- **HB 171.** Vermont's new child care legislation has many significant components.
  1. Describes goals for the state that no family will spend more than 10% of its annual income on child care, and EC educators will be fairly compensated and well supported.

2. Continues transforming Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program to expand eligibility to more families, reduce family co-pays, and increase reimbursements paid to child care programs. By 2024, an estimated 500 additional families with an average of 2 children will enroll and receive benefits.
  3. Strengthens ECE workforce by increasing investment in existing scholarships for current EC educators and creating a new scholarship program and student loan repayment support program for new EC educators.
  4. Upgrades failing IT system used to administer Vermont's ECE system.
  5. Analyzes ECE system in Vermont and develops recommendations on how to strengthen and streamline governance, administration, and accountability structures and resources.
  6. Strengthens systems to ensure that voices of those most impacted by the system are informing the state's work to administer the child care system and allocate federal COVID response funds for child care.
  7. Charges experts with identifying a stable, long-term funding source for a transformed child care system.
- **SB 114.** Proposes to continue the ongoing work to improve literacy for all students, while recognizing that achieving this goal will require a multiyear and multidimensional effort.<sup>1</sup>
  - **Protection of Vital Agency.** The governor proposed dismantling Vermont's Child Development Division, which oversees child care financial assistance and regulation, Children's Integrated Services, ECE professional development, specialized child care, and the Quality Recognition and Improvement System, and distributing its work across several state agencies, with much of the child care work going to the Agency of Education. This was a cost-saving and streamlining initiative, as opposed to one driven primarily by the field or the needs of families. Advocates successfully pushed back against the change happening in a vacuum.
  - **Budget protection.** Advocates helped to stop the legislature from accepting a significant reduction in the Reach Up budget.
  - **Advocates elevated the Families First Prevention Act** and drew attention to Vermont's delayed implementation. If Vermont does not get the Act approved, Vermont could lose significant funding.

### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds



In 2021, CRRSA funds have been used for a grant program to support child care programs with monthly funding for a range of recovery purposes, including staff costs. Advocates helped to establish the guidelines for these grants and successfully advocated for the purposes to be as broad as possible, with as few hoops as possible in terms of application and reporting. Seventy-four percent child care programs applied and are receiving monthly payments through 2021 from this program. Advocacy partners also worked effectively with the legislature to establish a stakeholder engagement process for the state to determine how to allocate ARP funds. That process is underway, and partners are focusing heavily on investments in compensation for early childhood educators as a key need.

Advocates in Vermont supported increased funding for Reach Up funds (Vermont's TANF program) using federal relief funds. Successes included increased financial supports for families in the state budget and one-time payments from the federal relief funds in December.

### Sustained Advocacy Campaigns



Advocates have been working for some time to shift the state to a more robust enrollment-based system within Vermont's state financial assistance program and to promote equity for families and increase stability for child care programs serving low-income children. They have also been advocating that the state base reimbursement rates on the true cost of providing care instead of the current outdated and artificially deflated market rate surveys. H.171 as introduced would have implemented these changes. This provision didn't make it into the final bill, but it did direct the Department for Children and Families to study the potential cost of these two changes. Advocates made significant strides in educating legislators about the importance of these two policy proposals.

Advocates also continue to convince the legislature that members can help to ensure that voices of people most impacted by systems are at the table where decisions are made. This year, legislative committees wrote this expectation into language in the state budget bill to direct stakeholder engagement to include BIPOC voices as decisions are being made about how to invest American Rescue Plan Act funds. It's a small step but has been a long time coming.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Vermont for 2022

- Expand eligibility for Vermont's child care subsidy program, increase reimbursement rates paid to programs, and change payments from attendance-based to enrollment-based. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Ensure the core elements of Vermont's universal pre-K program – universality, portability, and mixed-delivery – are upheld during any system change discussions. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Enhance our community engagement work to ensure all Vermont families are able to share their stories and engage in the advocacy process. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Establish a universal, publicly-administered, equitable paid family and medical leave program. (Voices for Vermont's Children)
- Provide more accessible and timely data and analysis in support of our policy goals so that our legislative and organizational partners have the information they need to advance progressive change for kids and families. (Voices for Vermont's Children)
- Implement a minimum compensation scale for early childhood educators and ensure continued funding for scholarships and student loan repayment support. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Support partner efforts to increase investments in coordinated services. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Expand our family economic security coalition to advance policies to eliminate child poverty, including cash assistance, refundable tax credits, and access to safe housing and nutritious food. (Voices for Vermont's Children)
- Expand the community schools model beyond the PK-12 construct established in the 2021 legislative session, to encompass early childhood. (Voices for Vermont's Children)
- Secure continued state funding for child care capacity development and secure new funding for child care business development technical assistance. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Expand our coalition to ensure that Vermont's underrepresented communities are a part of the coalition process in developing and advancing a shared policy vision. (Let's Grow Kids)
- Complete our campaign to establish an Office of Child, Youth & Family Advocate to provide oversight and transformation of the child welfare system. (Voices for Vermont's Children)
- Engage and center the voices of impacted people in our coalitions, messaging, and direct advocacy, so that policies are grounded in lived experience and address systemic inequities. (Voices for Vermont's Children)



**» For more information on what's happening in Vermont, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# Virginia



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$22.69B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT

House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)



#### 2021 SESSIONS: THREE

2021 Regular Session (1/13 - 2/08)  
Special Session I (2/10 - 3/1)  
Special Session II (8/2-8/10)

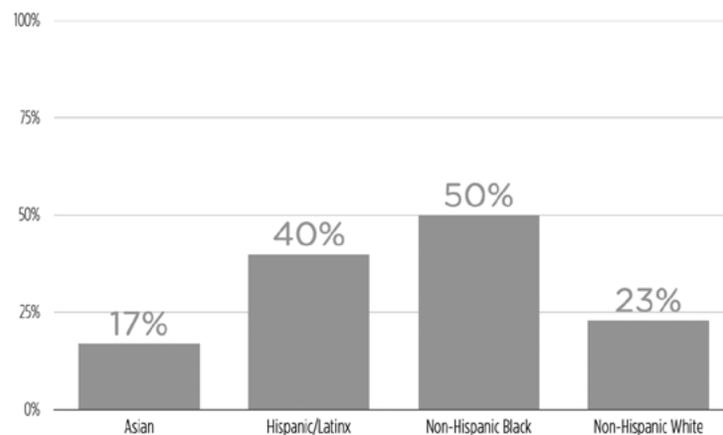


#### 31% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

274,718 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our key allies in Virginia are the [Virginia Early Childhood Foundation](#) (VECF) and [Voices for Virginia's Children](#). VECF is the non-partisan steward of Virginia's promise for early childhood success, working in tandem with diverse stakeholders to ensure equitable opportunities for all families with young children to thrive. Voices for Virginia's Children is the commonwealth's only independent, multi-issue child policy and advocacy organization and is the KIDS COUNT data center for Virginia. Using this data and independent policy research, they determine unmet needs and threats to child well-being, recommend sound policy solutions, provide objective input to policymakers, and educate and mobilize leaders and concerned citizens to support policy initiatives.

**The policy steps taken this year will directly impact families' lives and tackle long-standing inequities by providing maternal health coverage for immigrant mothers and expanding access to child care eligibility to help economically disadvantaged families afford care and return to the workforce.**

The highest profile legislative changes in Virginia took steps to address racial equity and opportunity. These changes include abolishing the death penalty, being the first state in the South to pass a Voting Rights Act, declaring racism a public health crisis, and decriminalizing marijuana use, including dedicating a portion of future revenues to early education. Legislative action often with bipartisan support, also strengthened the child care business model, expanded child care subsidy, and explored financing of a comprehensive early education system. The General Assembly restored Governor Northam's historic \$85 million in early education funding, expanded early childhood mental health initiatives, and improved child care child eligibility to ensure that Virginia is moving toward a more comprehensive, unified, and solid foundation for early education.

Progress in 2021 includes:

- **SB 1316.** Provides strategies to strengthen child care business model through background check portability and use of subsidy contracts. Portability is key to enabling child care businesses,

communities, and support systems to safely and efficiently use substitute lists. Bill addresses challenges from use of inadequate financing mechanisms for allocation of federal child care subsidy funds on behalf of vulnerable families seeking to access subsidized child care. Through proposed pilot included in the bill, child care programs accepting contracts agree to meet higher standards of quality and thereby receive additional funds and supports that assist with stabilizing fixed costs of ensuring stable, quality classrooms. Bill charges DOE and School Readiness Committee to analyze financing strategies that promote industry stability, program quality, and improved and equitable compensation for early educators.

- **HB 2206.** Expands income eligibility levels for child care subsidy to families with children under 6 up to 85% of Virginia's median income and extends eligibility to families in a job search process. Bill was amended to fast-track elimination of a requirement to provide child support enforcement information when applying, removing a long-standing barrier for single parents. Newly enrolled families could exceed 6,000 children.
- **HB 2105.** Charges Virginia's School Readiness Committee to provide recommendations for and track progress on financing of a comprehensive birth-to-5 early childhood care and education system that addresses both affordability for families and adequate compensation for educators. Approximately 65,000 children under 5 are in publicly funded preschool programs.
- **HJR 51.** Directs the DBHDS, DOE and DSS to jointly study feasibility of developing an early childhood mental health consultation program available to all early care and education program.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1823.** Requires buildings built before 2015 and housing any public-school classroom, licensed child day program, or other program that serves preschool-age children to have at least one carbon monoxide detector.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1800.** Budget Initiatives to Improve Maternal Health and Prenatal Health Care Benefits, Particularly for Women of Color: 1) 12 months of postpartum health coverage for economically disadvantaged mothers enrolled in Medicaid/FAMIS, 2) Prenatal health care coverage for economically disadvantaged mothers who are undocumented immigrants, 3) A Medicaid-funded doula benefit for eligible moms to obtain doula care during pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum follow-up will be available by July 2021. General Assembly directed state Medicaid agency to continue planning for a Medicaid-funded home visiting benefit. Approximately 25,000 pregnant women are enrolled in Medicaid/FAMIS.
- **SB 1303.** Requires each local school division to make in-person learning available to all students by choice of parent or guardian, contains an emergency clause.
- During budget amendment process, the House of Delegates voted to reduce the governor's proposed funding for the Virginia Preschool Initiative's (VPI) per pupil amount by \$11M in FY22. Thanks to early childhood advocates, the final budget included the governor's proposed increase to the VPI per pupil amount from \$6,326 to \$7,655.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates engaged in research and outreach to influence the spending of federal relief funds. As of May 2021, a total of \$359 million in federal relief funds have been invested in child care in Virginia. In addition to the formula allocations for CCDF in CARES and CRSSA, the Virginia General Assembly directed an additional \$74.9 million in CRF to child care during a fall 2020 special session.

The allocations for child care include:

1. \$63 million to improve eligibility for child care through July 31, 2021 (HB 2206),
2. \$10 million in ESSA GEER funding for early education,
3. \$7 million to pilot contract payments and paying by true costs (SB 1316),
4. \$6 million to expand early childhood mental health consultation,
5. \$4 million for early educator retention grants,
6. 4 rounds of direct cash assistance to open child care providers totaling \$197 million.

Advocates served as intermediaries to connect relevant state agency decision makers with early childhood stakeholders.



## Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Paid family leave continues to gain momentum. Two coalitions, **Virginians for Paid Sick Days** and **Campaign for a Family-Friendly Economy Virginia**, seek to provide workers with access to paid leave, and the EC community supports these coalitions. The Commission to Examine Racial Equity recognized paid leave and child care access as vehicles for improving economic opportunity for families of color.

## GOING FORWARD

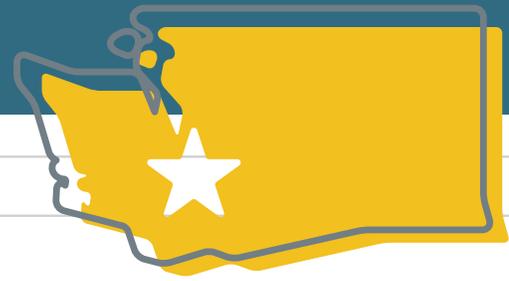
### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Virginia for 2022

- Leverage partnerships to advocate for equitable policies and increased funding to expand access to high quality child care, Early/Head Start and full-day pre-k in diverse settings. (Virginia Early Childhood Foundation)
- Build the power and influence of early educators’ voices to effectively advocate for improved policies and investments. (Virginia Early Childhood Foundation)
- Voices will center equity in advocacy models that directly engage with providers and parents. (Voices for Virginia’s Children)
- Engage and elevate the voices of grassroots stakeholders to inform state-level policy and investments to improve salaries, benefits, and working conditions for early childhood educators. (Virginia Early Childhood Foundation)
- Help parents with young children, particularly Black and Brown families, move on a path from economic survival to stability and mobility by advancing policy changes indented to support longer-term wealth building. (Voices for Virginia’s Children)
- We believe advocates live intersectional lives and will engage on multiple topics related to child well-being to shape policy solutions and promote an agenda. (Voices for Virginia’s Children)
- Ensure that families most impacted and with lived experiences are authentically part of the statewide advocacy efforts.
- Increase state child care investments targeted to infant and toddler care. (Voices for Virginia’s Children)
- Bring mental health supports to parents and young children in the settings where they live, work and play by removing barriers to mental health access and bringing more support to schools and communities. (Voices for Virginia’s Children)



» [For more information on what’s happening in Virginia, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

# Washington



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$25.89B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

#### ALIGNED GOVERNMENT



House (D), Senate (D),  
Governor (D)

#### 2021 SESSIONS: TWO



2021-2022 Biennium (1/11 - 4/25)  
Special Session (10/2021)

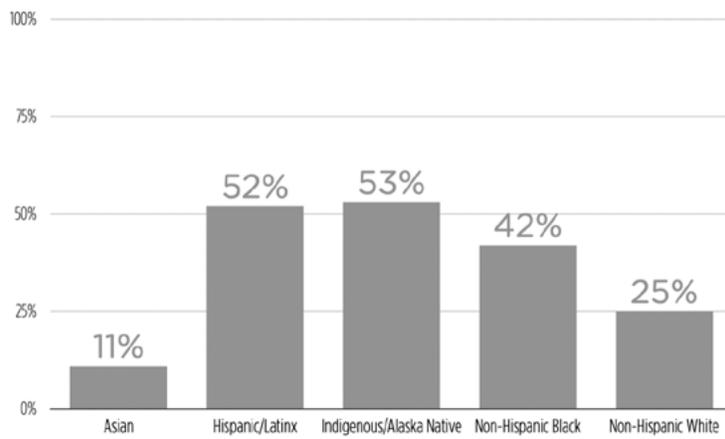
#### 31% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



256,291 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our grantee in the state of Washington, [Children's Alliance](#), is a multi-issue advocacy organization working to ensure that laws, policies and programs work for kids. Their overall goal is to promote positive early learning outcomes for children through effective policy advocacy, with specific emphasis on improvements for populations of children at risk of not being school-ready. Children's Alliance leads a coalition of 125 organizations across the state, and collectively, they hold state leaders accountable until they secure the resources required to make all children safe and healthy.

**Despite dire projections, including a \$9 billion budget deficit, Washington policymakers made a bold commitment to the future of the state's families with the approval of the Fair Start for Kids Act. More than \$850 million will go toward increasing and expanding eligibility for subsidies, support of child care providers, home visiting, and maternal and infant mental health services.**

2021 progress includes:

- **SB 5237.** Fair Start for Kids: Enhances families' access and affordability for high-quality early learning programs, including child care and Washington's pre-k program. Act has three main components: workforce support and expansion, increasing affordability for families and adding infant and toddler care support. Act creates a stronger foundation for the workforce by increasing compensation, providing health insurance, professional development opportunities, technical assistance for providers, and increasing subsidy rates.
- **HB 1325.** Children and Youth Behavioral Health: The health care authority shall allow reimbursement for certain services related to mental health assessment and diagnosis and require providers to use current version of the diagnostic classification system for mental health assessment and diagnosis of children from birth to a certain age.<sup>1</sup>
- **HB 1331.** Concerns early learning facility impact fees.
- **HB 1370.** Increases amount of loans or grants for certain purposes relating to construction or renovation

of early learning facilities, modifies provisions relating to school district eligibility to receive funding from the early learning facilities grant and loan program.<sup>1</sup>

- **SB 5151.** Concerns foster care and child care licensing by the department of children, youth, and families.<sup>1</sup>
- **SB 5331.** Establishes an early childhood court program for young children and their families involved or at risk of becoming involved in Washington's child welfare system.<sup>1</sup>
- A capital gains tax will fund future years of Fair Start for Kids programs and services. The constitutionality of this funding mechanism was immediately challenged upon passage, and Children's Alliance joined with other advocacy organizations in filing an amicus brief supporting the tax. Advocates hope that it withstands judicial review and provides benefits to needy children, families, and providers.

## County-Level Win

The reauthorization of the **King County Best Starts for Kids** Levy passed in August 2021. Total funding more than doubles the amount generated over the first (prior) six years. The property tax levy (an estimated \$872 million) goes to the prevention-oriented regional plan focused on supporting the healthy development of children and youth, families, and communities across the county. New initiatives include:

- A pilot project to explore the benefits of paying child care providers a livable wage.
- Expansion of child care subsidies to those left out from the state's Working Connection Child Care program, i.e., unemployed, homeless, and undocumented families.
- A King County Child Care Subsidy Program to reduce or fully subsidize child care costs for 3,000 low-income families. It would have a specific focus on communities that can least afford child care because of long-standing inequities or emergent challenges, such as unemployment, homelessness, and undocumented status.
- A Child Care Workforce Development Project, which would supplement the meager wages of child care providers. The program would increase the salary and benefits for approximately 1,400 child care workers across the county, focusing on child care providers that serve low-income communities and communities of color. Each year, the county would evaluate the demonstration project to determine how these wage and benefit changes affect recruitment and retention.

## Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates supported the use of federal funds for the Fair Start for Kids Act, which passed.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Washington for 2022

- Ensure that the Fair Start for Kids act is fully implemented with its legislative intent guiding administrators.
- Employ a more targeted strategy to identify and mobilize and deploy our 9,000 members and staff/lobbyists to engage with uninformed or resistant legislators to ensure passage of our key initiatives.
- Ensure that issues that weren't resolved in the Fair Start for Kids act receive legislative attention in the 2022 session.
- Rebuild our community engagement capacity so that our actions and values (advocating WITH, not FOR communities) are consistent.
- Ensure that state administrators are attentive to the racial equity implications and goals of the Fair Start for Kids act.

**» For more information on what's happening in Washington, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# West Virginia



## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$4.58B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

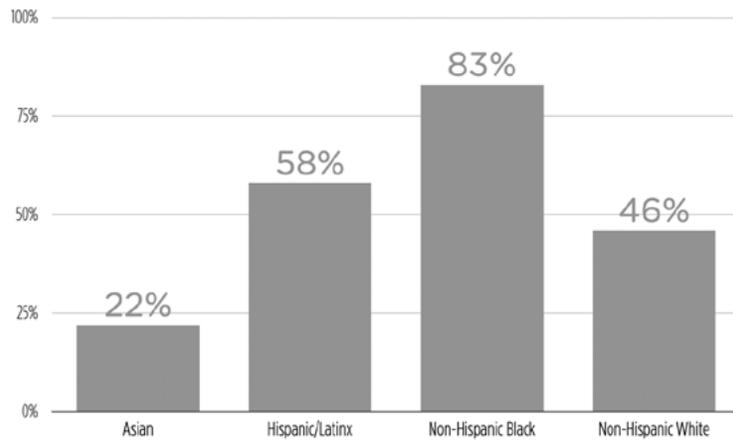
**ALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (R)

**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021 Regular Session  
(1/13 - 4/10)

**49% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
82,616 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our grantee in West Virginia, **TEAM for West Virginia Children (TEAM)**, works with communities and families to advance the well-being of children, making their needs and healthy development a priority. TEAM partners with an integrated network of programs to advocate for children, champion family-friendly communities, educate the public, and strengthen families. They convene a Legislative Action Team of the state's leading organizations to monitor pending legislation and advocate for policies and legislative proposals that benefit children.

### Wins in West Virginia include both new policy and a successful protection of a crucial revenue stream.

When the governor of the state proposed a elimination of the personal income tax, a coalition of TEAM, the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, organizations serving families, parents, early childhood programs, educators, and others sprung into action and worked with policymakers to defeat the plan. This coalition also protected early childhood programs and other services from significant cuts and killed a bill that would allow programs serving children in foster care to discriminate based on sexual orientation. Advocates helped to extend Medicaid coverage up to 12 months postpartum and continued to build support for Paid Family Medical Leave, despite having limited access to lawmakers due to the pandemic.

Progress includes:

- **HB 2266.** Expands Medicaid coverage up to 12 months postpartum following the birth of a child.
- **SB 89.** Exempts certain kindergarten and preschool programs offered by private schools from registration requirements.<sup>1</sup>
- The state increased its **reimbursement** for childcare providers by \$4 per child per day.
- Advocates persuaded the state to refrain from sending notification to essential employees that childcare subsidies would end on Dec. 31, 2020 when passage of the federal budget deal extending those benefits was imminent.

- A coalition of advocates opposed governor’s proposal to eliminate the state personal income tax. Eliminating the income tax would eventually have resulted in a loss of over 40% of state revenue with significant cuts beginning in Year One. All bills ultimately failed. After initially trying to build support for the plan following legislative session, the governor called the proposal, “Dead as it can be.”
- Advocates spearheaded efforts to defeat **SB 13**, which would have allowed programs serving children in foster care to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

“The Earlier, The Better” Child Care Policy Workgroup provided recommendations regarding the distribution of ARP funds to support childcare and encouraged increase reimbursement for childcare providers, which was enacted with a \$4 per child per day increase.

Advocates developed recommendations for using supplemental funds provided via ARP for the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention. Team for West Virginia presented recommendations, which were accepted by state leadership and submitted to Administration for Children and Families. Funding was to be distributed beginning August 2021.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Advocates continued to build support for enactment of Paid Family Medical Leave during the past year. Although the legislation did not advance out of Committee, lawmakers agreed to have a follow-up Interim Study on enactment of the policy. In addition, all members of the Democratic Caucus signed a letter to US Senator Joe Manchin urging him to support PFML at the federal level. Having the unity of the Democratic Caucus and Republican support for bills providing paid leave to public employees increases the likelihood to enact PFML in West Virginia.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in West Virginia for 2022

- Enact comprehensive Paid Family and Medical Leave for all West Virginia workers.
- Strengthen policies and practices to advance racial equity and address over-representation of young children of color in the child welfare system.
- Continue to develop effective messaging regarding tax policy, so that efforts to repeal the state personal income tax and slash revenue are not enacted.
- Preserve current and future funding for early childhood programs, which face imminent cuts if proposals to eliminate state personal income tax are enacted.
- Increase our capacity to address racial inequities including broadening engagement with Black leaders and families to center equity in all aspects of our work.
- Expand access to quality early childhood programs including childcare and home visiting.
- Build grassroots support from small businesses for early childhood policies in order to build political support for their implementation.

» **For more information on what’s happening in West Virginia, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$18.93B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures

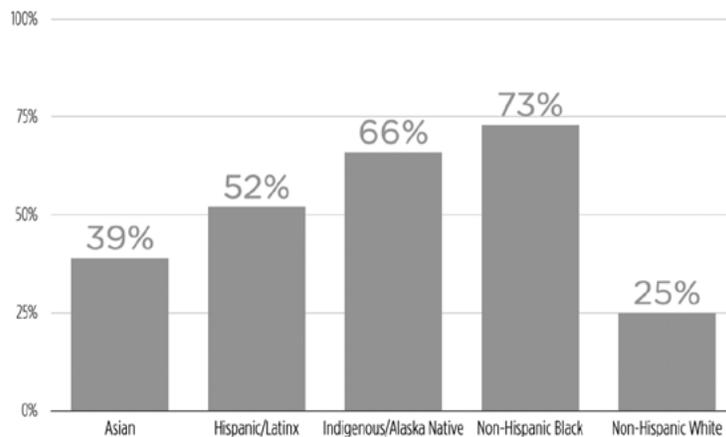
 **UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)

 **2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/4/21 - 12/31/21)

 **34% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
205,215 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL

#### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



The Alliance for Early Success has two key allies in [Wisconsin: Kids Forward](#) and the [Wisconsin Early Childhood Association](#). Kids Forward provides research, public education, and advocacy for the development and implementation of equitable and inclusive public policy that improves child and family well-being in health, economic security, safety, and education. Wisconsin Early Childhood Association is the state affiliate of NAEYC, and engages in state level early childhood policy and budget work, including running advocacy campaigns and fully engaging their membership.

**Advocates in Wisconsin continue to work with policymakers from across the state to generate support for early care and education, push for funding, and educate them on the state's child care needs and the impact on the state's workforce and overall economy.**

Progress in 2021 includes:

- **State Budget Bill - Act 58.** The budget bill includes several advances for young children and their families:
  1. Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit: Creates a nonrefundable state individual income tax credit for child and dependent care expenses, beginning in tax year 2022. Credit amount is set at 50% of amount of the federal child and dependent care expenses tax credit. This new state tax credit replaces the current law deduction from income for child and dependent care expenses and is expected to increase the child care tax break by nearly \$10M per year.
  2. \$3.2M in state budget for social emotional training and TA in early education.
  3. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program. Using an increase in federal funding, the final budget allocates an additional \$29 million over the next two years to raise rates for the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. The increase is projected to boost rates from the 33rd percentile of market rates statewide to the 65th percentile.
  4. Medicaid rate increases (speech therapy and PT).
  5. Behavioral/mental health and oral health provider-increase in Medicaid rate. Oral health received a Medicaid increase.

6. Increased funding for Reach Out and Read.
  7. Expanded Medicaid coverage by 30 days for postpartum,
  8. State budget increase to 65% market for rates for subsidy creation of child care counts (Dept. of Children and Families to direct CARES and CRRSAA funding to child care programs).
  9. \$10M in Retention and Recognition grants for child care workforce.
  10. Increase in school based mental health grants.
  11. Increased kinship care rates, \$1M TANF to in home prevention services.
  12. Several items in the state budget bill were made possible with CARES Act Emergency and Supplemental Programs and CRRSAA.
- Avoided legislative leadership proposing overhaul of state QRIS - addressed misinformation with legislative offices.



### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates worked with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and members of the Joint Finance Committee for CARES and CRRSAA approval. They are currently working with DCF on ARPA. The State Budget Bill reflects some of their successes.



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

The Wisconsin Legislature expanded Medicaid coverage by 30 days for postpartum, and **SB 562** would expand it to one year.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Wisconsin for 2022

- Coordinate education and advocacy strategies to promote the benefits of BadgerCare (Medicaid) expansion targeting the child care/ECE workforce AND families with young children. (Kids Forward)
- Produce an updated report on Equity in Wisconsin ECE systems with 2021 data (both qualitative and quantitative). (Kids Forward)
- Develop communication strategies that promote equitable universal child care and expand our use of data and storytelling capacity to contextualize the numbers and create compelling advocacy pieces. (Kids Forward)
- Streamline costs for child care businesses administration and overhead while maximizing revenues spent on children, families and the workforce through policy change and additional shared services. (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)
- Identify and leverage at least two major Republican donors in our legislative advocacy efforts, such as Kwik Trip, Diane Hendricks, and WI Manufacturers and Commerce. (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)
- Explore creation of a tool-kit for the implementation of equitable quality learning and cultural competency in early education settings. (Kids Forward)
- Organize a series of virtual convenings that include experts in ECE and health care to design action strategies for BadgerCare expansion. (Kids Forward)
- Increase compensation and benefits for the ECE workforce to become a sustainable industry with wages commensurate with education, skills and experience and benefits through increased funding and policy change. (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)
- Advocate for early childhood education budget investments and policies that are grounded in equity and reflective of the needs of minority communities in Wisconsin. (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)
- Create and launch a campaign to jump-start development of an equity focused path toward universal child care, in alignment with national and state partners. (Kids Forward)
- Engage parent advocates along with state and national experts to develop a tool-kit for equitable early learning and cultural competency. (Kids Forward)
- Ensure families have access to affordable and available high-quality care that meets their needs by implementing 5-10 community feedback loops that will inform policy change. (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)
- Increase business engagement in our advocacy work. Businesses organizations will incorporate our initiatives/policy changes into their legislative requests and employers will meet with legislators. (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)

**» For more information on what's happening in Wisconsin, visit the state policy landscape page.**

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# Wyoming

## Policy Landscape and Progress:

### \$18.93B State Budget

Estimated FY2021 State General Fund Expenditures



**UNALIGNED GOVERNMENT**  
House (R), Senate (R),  
Governor (D)



**2021 SESSIONS: ONE**  
2021-2022 Biennium  
(1/4/21 - 12/31/21)

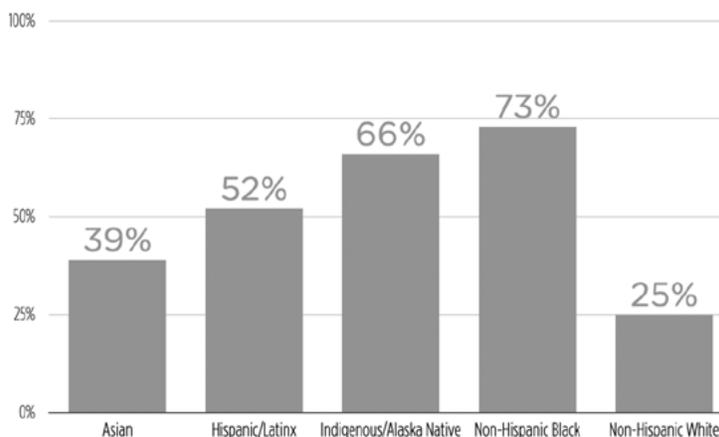


**34% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN**  
205,215 Young Children (0-8) in  
Households Below 200% FPL



### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN 0-8 IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, BY RACE

Percentage of Children 0-8 Living in Households Below 200% FPL



Our allies in Wyoming, **Wyoming Kids First**, lead a public-private partnership for the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies that affect children, families, and the early childhood workforce. Wyoming Kids First simultaneously works at the local and state level to advance a comprehensive vision for Wyoming's youngest children.

The 2021 legislative session was difficult. Education Committee membership turned over significantly in both chambers, and legislators did not respond well to virtual platforms and a corresponding increase in their email traffic. Ongoing COVID-19 guidance and precautions made communication with new legislators a challenge.

**In spite of the enormously challenging advocacy environment, advocates stayed engaged and positively influenced the spending of federal relief funds.**

Progress in 2021 included:

- Advocates helped to protect the general funds designated to the WY Quality Counts program that provides information for families and business training and scholarships for the early childhood workforce.

### Influencing of Federal Relief Funds

Advocates worked with the Governor's Office and state agencies to promote effective use of funds, distribution of funds directly to those who needed them, and coherence between decisions and funding streams. These decisions included:

- Allocation of CARES Child care DBG/Child Care DF funds to pay child care assistance based on enrollment rather than subsidy (CARES and CRRSA funds).
- Commitment to pay child care assistance at the 75% of the market rate for as long as funds will allow, up from just below 25% and without an end date (with CRRSA and ARP funds).

- Four direct financial relief programs for child care and early learning programs with intense technical assistance to ensure access and use of funds before child care stabilization grants launched (\$8.9 million).
- Collaboration to strengthen investments in initiatives being led by the Wyoming Preschool Development Grant, including funds for trauma-responsive practice, community grants, the Wyoming Early Childhood Integrated Data System, and state-level technology systems.

Advocates also helped to secure:

- Allocation of Governor’s Emergency Education Relief funds to support early childhood and kindergarten transitions (\$243,000).
- Inclusion of early childhood educators in professional learning opportunities funded by ESSR via the Department of Education.
- Allocation of general Wyoming CARES Act funds to replenish financial relief programs specifically designed for child care and early learning programs (\$3.4 million).



### Sustained Advocacy Campaign

Wyoming Kids First educated policymakers and advocated for Wyoming’s early childhood governance bill, which received significant attention and died in the State House. The education of policymakers and elevating the voices of families and early childhood educators were crucial in moving the bill forward.

## GOING FORWARD

### Top Alliance Grantee Priorities in Wyoming for 2022

- Improve coordination for and advance a comprehensive approach to kindergarten readiness in alignment with a 2021 Legislative Interim topic for the Joint Education Committee.
- Write and deploy a Wyoming Early Childhood Policy Agenda to focus advocacy efforts and clearly articulate the challenges that exist and changes that are necessary.
- Support the statewide expansion of Medicaid.
- Coordinate messaging and generate broad-based engagement to direct coordinated and impactful use of one-time federal early childhood investments (CRRSA, ARP).
- Strengthen grassroots strategies to encourage, equip and elevate early childhood educators as advocates.



» [For more information on what’s happening in Wyoming, visit the state policy landscape page.](#)

#### STATE PAGE ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Early Care and Education Bill Tracking, Searchable Database for 2021. August 2021.

#### DATA SOURCES:

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## Appendix A: References

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## Appendix B: Survey Respondent Organizations by State, 2021

State	Survey Respondent
Alabama	Alabama Partnership for Children
Alaska	Alaska Children’s Trust
Arizona	Children’s Action Alliance
Arkansas	Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
California	Advancement Project California Children Now
Colorado	Clayton Early Learning Colorado Children’s Campaign
Connecticut	Connecticut Association for Human Services
DC.	DC Action Educare DC
Delaware	Rodel
Florida	Children’s Movement of Florida
Georgia	Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS)
Hawaii	Hawaii Children’s Action Network
Idaho	Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

Illinois	Start Early
Indiana	United Way of Central Indiana (convenes Indiana Early Childhood Education Coalition)
Iowa	Common Good Iowa
Kansas	Kansas Action for Children
Kentucky	Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
Louisiana	Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
Maine	Maine Children's Alliance
Maryland	Maryland Family Network
Massachusetts	Strategies for Children
Michigan	Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health Michigan's Children
Minnesota	Children's Defense Fund Minnesota
Mississippi	Mississippi First
Missouri	Kids Win Missouri
Montana	Zero to Five Montana
Nebraska	First Five Nebraska
Nevada	Children's Advocacy Alliance
New Hampshire	New Futures Kids Count
New Jersey	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
New Mexico	New Mexico Voices for Children
New York	Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
North Carolina	NC Child
North Dakota	Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota
Ohio	Groundwork Ohio
Oklahoma	Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
Oregon	Children's Institute
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Rhode Island	Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
South Carolina	South Carolina First Steps
South Dakota	United Way of the Black Hills
Tennessee	Tennesseans for Quality Early Education
Texas	Children at Risk Texans Care for Children

Utah	United Way of Salt Lake
Vermont	Let's Grow Kids Voices for Vermont's Children
Virginia	Voices for Virginia's Children Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
Washington	Children's Alliance
West Virginia	TEAM for West Virginia Children
Wisconsin	Kids Forward Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

### Appendix C: Methodology Detail

The findings in this report describe achievements in 50 states and the District of Columbia. Frontera Strategy, with assistance from the Alliance, administered an online survey from July to September 2021 to its state allies. Alliance for Early Success emailed an invitation to complete the survey to each grantee. Timing of the invitation usually coincided with the state's completion of the legislative session. Generally, an executive director, a policy director, or a development director of the grantee organization completed the survey. The response rate was 100%.

The survey took from 40 to 130 minutes to complete, depending on the number of wins in the state. The survey asked for a description of bills passed, executive orders and administrative changes enacted, and key defensive plays achieved during 2021, the early childhood policy and fiscal landscape in 2021, and a summary of the state's legislative session. It also asked respondents to describe how their organizations and partnering advocates have influenced the spending of federal relief funding in 2021 in their states. Lastly, respondents highlighted advocacy efforts that may have not crossed the finish line in 2021 but hold promise for the future. In the survey, respondents identified the early childhood issue(s) associated with each win.

To complement the survey data, Frontera Strategy followed up with state allies via email and phone. Frontera Strategy also reviewed legislative summaries and updates shared or published by Alliance allies, and Frontera incorporated findings from an online data tool managed by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

This report also contains data on poverty among children birth through 8, poverty by race/ethnicity, estimated State General Fund expenditures, and political party alignment to contextualize achievements at state capitols. See References for data sources.