

# Early Education Commission

*A community leadership collaborative supporting the United Way's goal of ensuring children are ready for school*



United Way of  
Metropolitan Atlanta

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## Research Abstract

**Title:** “Federal Early Childhood Policy Guide for the First 100 Days,”  
National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)

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This guide was developed by NIEER to inform the incoming administration about immediate changes needed in federal child care and early learning policies for children under age 5. It declares that these changes “must be part of an effective plan to help get the economy back on track,” and notes that current trends in federal and state early care and education policy are directly opposite of what is needed to support economic recovery and job creation. As families with young children seek to fill newly created jobs, states are cutting back on child care subsidies, and federal investments have failed to keep up with inflation. The 6-page guide also notes that neither federal nor state policies promote the high quality needed to ensure that children’s learning and development are enhanced rather than harmed by preschool programs.

Background cited in the guide includes a brief overview of spending in major federal and state programs for children under age 5, stating the 110<sup>th</sup> (2007-2008) Congress introduced 402 bills with provisions relating to child care and 101 bills relating to preschool. Analyzing key details of the currently-proposed economic package, the guide states that new facilities and expanded services providing quality education and child care together will provide both short-term economic stimulus and increased economic growth. The brief also examines state pre-K and child care, Early Head Start and home visitation, child care subsidies and special education.

Specific recommendations include:

- Invest in early learning programs that provide child care as part of the economic recovery plan up to \$19 billion *over two years*:
  - \$15 billion in grants to states to construct new early care and learning facilities for 1 million more children.
  - \$1 billion in start-up funds to adequately equip new classrooms.
  - Up to \$3 billion in matching grants to states to raise quality and increase enrollment for early learning programs that provide child care.

- Increase the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) by at least \$500 million to restore purchasing power, expand access to child care access, and improve quality.
- Increase Head Start/Early Head Start appropriations by at least \$1 billion to provide cost-of-living increases, expand coverage and fund collaborations with state programs.
- Create a presidential Early Learning Council to coordinate major federal programs for early learning and child care and to facilitate federal-state cooperation.
  - This would ensure policy coordination from birth through elementary school, including programs like parental leave, home visitation, early intervention, child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, and state pre-K.
  - Require states to have a comprehensive 0-5 plan for early care and education and set aside part of the new federal funds for 0-3.
  - Create data systems that work across departments (at state and local levels) so that services and costs for children 0-5 can be tracked across multiple funding streams.

Link to full article:

<http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/18.pdf>