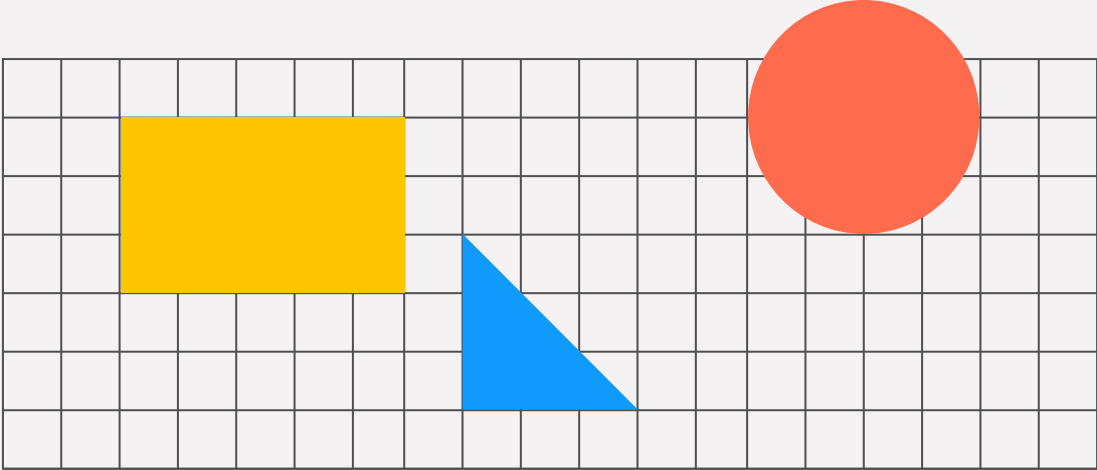


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# Federal Policy and Early Education: A Crash Course

Education Writers Association National Seminar 2026  
Baltimore, Md.



## Moriah Balingit (that's me!)

Moriah is an Associated Press reporter focused on early education, including childcare.



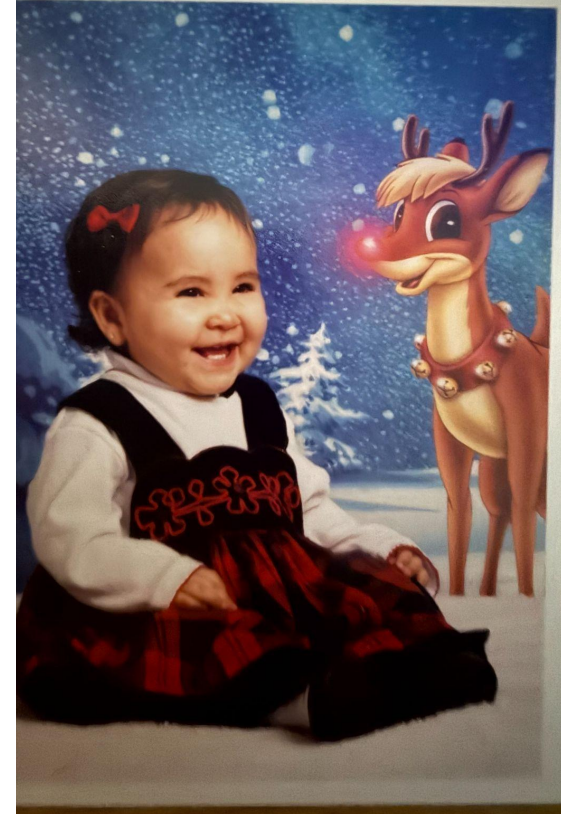
## Jackie Mader, Hechinger Report

Jackie write stories on the early years of childhood, spanning childcare, early elementary school, family policy and prenatal health.



## **Maya Lora, Baltimore Banner**

Maya covers Baltimore City schools, school choice and early childhood education.



## Dr. Ruth Friedman

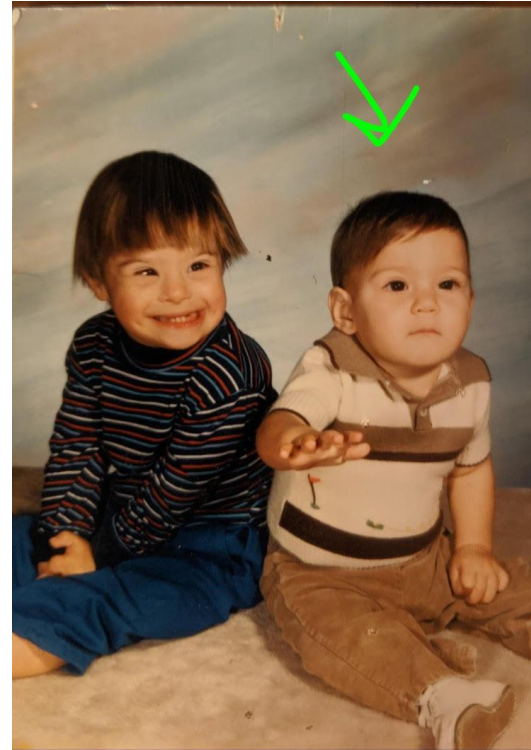
Dr. Friedman is a national expert on early childhood policy with over 25 years of experience in child and family public policy.

Under President Biden, she headed the Office of Child Care.



## Aaron Merchen, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Aaron is the executive director of early education policy and programs.



# Who pays for it?

- States, counties, cities and school districts.
- Parents *are paying on average more than \$13,000 a year per child.*
- Employers.
- And also ...



# THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (what we're here to talk about)



# Head Start

Began in the 1960's as part of LBJ's War on Poverty.

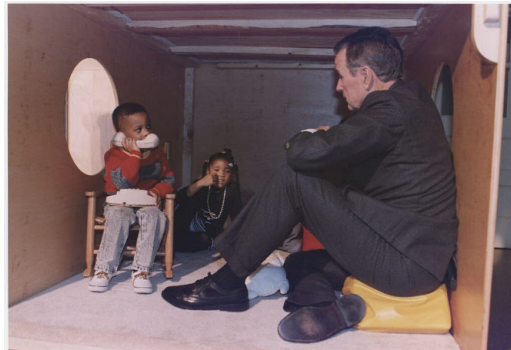
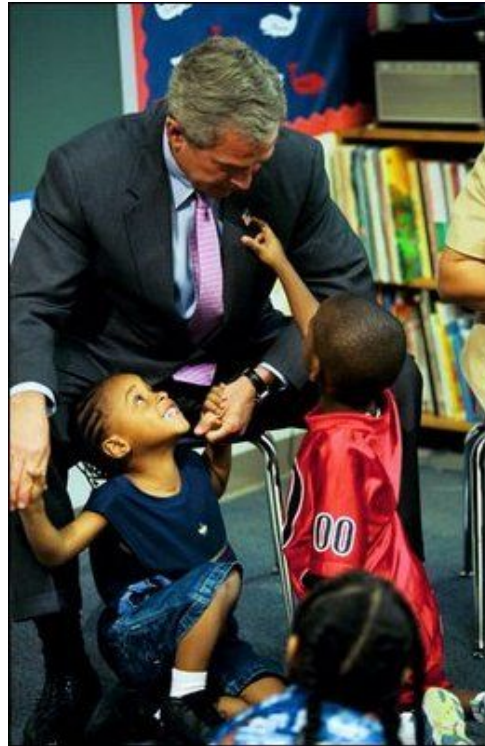
Federal funding goes directly to public and private entities to provide Head Start program.

Multi-generational and wraparound.

Hundreds of thousands of children enrolled.



# It has historically had bipartisan support



# How could things change?

Project 2025 called for eliminating the program.

The Trump administration wants to remake the program by ...

- barring immigrants without legal status from enrolling

- barring any “DEI” initiatives

Trump rolled back a Biden-era rule that would have given Head Start teachers raises.

Head Start is very sensitive to funding disruptions.



# Child Care Development Fund

Funds state child care assistance programs that help needy families pay for childcare.

Criteria and rules vary radically by state.

Part of the funding is to help families move off of Temporary Aid for Needy Families (cash assistance).

Created during the presidency of this guy →



# How are things changing?

The Trump administration is remaking the program ...

- will no longer require states to pay providers by enrollment + ahead of time
- no long require states t have a 7 percent cap on copayments

Pandemic-era funding ended, but childcare needs did not. State programs are strained.

- Many states have waitlists.
- Others have cut what they pay providers.

After viral video, the Trump Administration tried to halt CCDF funding to six states and put additional requirements on other states.

Received an \$85 million increase in FY2026 for a total of \$12.4 billion.



# How immigration enforcement impacts early education

One in five of those who work in early care and education are foreign-born.

The Trump administration has rescinded work authorization for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, forcing some providers to let staff go.

Immigrants – even those with legal status – are leaving the workforce and the country, putting additional strain on the childcare workforce.

The Trump administration has rescinded the “sensitive locations” memo that asked immigration officers to steer clear of childcare operations.



**That's all for now ....**

