

# Public Policy Notes

## Southern Early Childhood Association

### Is Your State Prepared for a Disaster?



#### Save the Children

Since 2005, **Save the Children** has been on the front lines of emergency preparedness and response, with a significant proportion of their emergency response occurring in SECA states.

- ⇒ In 2005, they responded to Hurricane Katrina which devastated the Gulf Coast region of the South.
- ⇒ In 2008, they responded to tornadoes in Arkansas and Tennessee, Hurricane Gustav in Louisiana and Hurricanes Ike and Dolly in Texas.
- ⇒ In 2010, the BP Oil Spill occurred, affecting families and communities in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.
- ⇒ In 2011, a tornado devastated a significant portion of Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- ⇒ In 2012, Hurricane Isaac affected Louisi-

ana and Mississippi.

⇒ In 2013, a major tornado occurred in Oklahoma.

Source: *Get Ready, Get Safe Project*, [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)

They also began reporting on the preparedness of states to deal with emergencies and disasters and have published annual report cards to identify which states have adopted policies.

In July, the organization issued the **2014 Disaster Report Card**. This report identifies state policies and regulations that are designed to protect children in the event of a disaster.

The **Report Card** rates these four items:

- 1) Does your state have a plan for evacuating children in child care?
- 2) Does your state have a plan for reuniting families after a disaster?
- 3) Does your state have a plan for children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs?

- 4) Does your state have a multi-hazard plan for all K-12 schools?

Here's how the SECA states fared:

- ◆ The majority of the SECA states (**AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, TN, TX, WV**) have plans in place to meet all four contingencies.
- ◆ **Georgia** has a plan only for K-12.
- ◆ **Florida** and **South Carolina** have plans for reuniting families and K-12.
- ◆ **Virginia** has plans for child care, reuniting families and K-12.

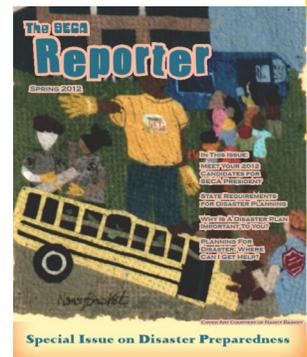
Our region of the country is consistently vulnerable to major disasters from tornadoes, hurricanes and floods. **Encourage your Governor to ensure that plans are implemented if in place and to create those plans if they are still needed.**

September 2014

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#### Disaster Planning

In the Spring 2012 issue of *The SECA Reporter*, you'll find a wealth of resources on disaster planning for early childhood programs.  
[http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/publications\\_reporter.php](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/publications_reporter.php)

# America Speaks: A New Poll

In May and June of this year, the **First Five Years Fund** conducted a poll of 800 registered voters to determine how the American public feels about investing in early childhood education as a national priority.

Early childhood education came in second as a national priority, following only “increasing jobs and economic growth”. The priorities were ranked by importance and the percentage of respondents.

1. Increasing jobs and economic growth/89%
2. Ensuring children get a strong start/85%

3. Improving the quality of our public schools/78%
4. Ensuring access to affordable child care/67%
5. Reducing tax burdens on families/63%

This support was evident regardless of political affiliation with Republicans, Independents, and Democrats almost equally supportive of investments in early childhood education.

The poll also found that seven (7) in ten (10) voters support “a proposal that would increase federal investment to help states provide more access to high-quality early childhood programs for low-and-



moderate-income families.” 71% of voters (including 60% of Republicans) expressed total support with 23% opposed.

The **First Five Years Fund** website contains a wealth of information and data, including specific resources about Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

To access these resources, to go <http://ffyf.org/resources/#/>



## How Much Could We Improve Children's Life Chances by Intervening Early and Often?

Isabel V. Sawhill and Quentin Karpilow

This brief is an update of an earlier paper by Kerry Searle Grannis and Isabel Sawhill, originally published in October 2010, "Improving Children's Life Chances: Results from the Social Genome Alliance."

## Intervening Early and Often

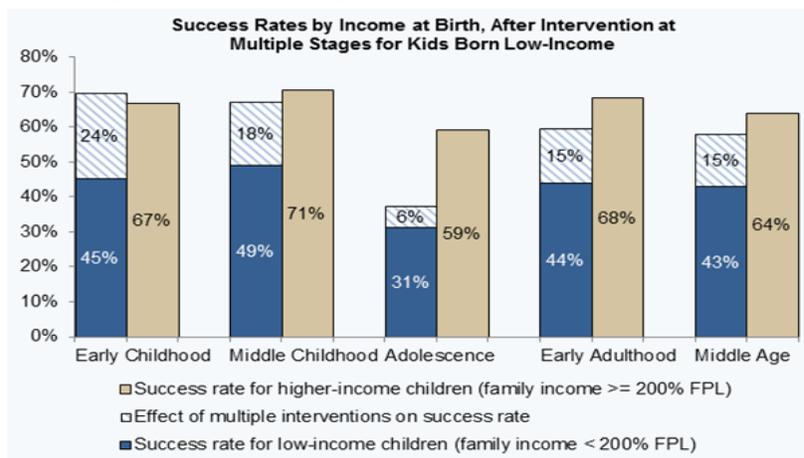
life from birth to age 40. Using data on a representative group of American children and a life cycle model to track their progress from the earliest years through school and beyond, we show that well-evaluated targeted interventions can close over 70 percent of the gap between more and less advantaged children in the pro-

portion who end up middle class by middle age. These interventions can also greatly improve social mobility and enhance the lifetime incomes of less advantaged children.” Source:

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/07/improve-child-life-chances-interventions-sawhill>

The Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institute has published a brief entitled, *How Much Could We Improve Children's Life Chances by Intervening Early and Often?*

The brief states that “Children born into low-income families face barriers to success in each stage of



# Fixing Our National Accountability System

*Fixing Our National Accountability System* is a new report from the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE).

This report “calls for replacing the current system of test-based accountability with a system much more likely to result in improvements in student performance....the current system has not only failed to improve the performance of the at-risk students it was designed to help, but has alienated the best of our current teachers and created an environment in which able young people choosing careers are less likely to choose teaching.

The report explains that the countries in which student performance is outstripping the achievement of American students are not using accountability systems like ours, which they view as

more appropriate for industrial-era blue-collar workers than the kind of professionals they want in their schools.” Source: NCEE, <http://www.ncee.org/accountability>

According to an Executive Summary provided by NCEE, the “core components of this report rest on three fundamental principles:

- ◆ Testing
- ◆ Use of Data
- ◆ Policies for Professionals”

The author of the report, Marc Tucker, President of NCEE, recommends that:

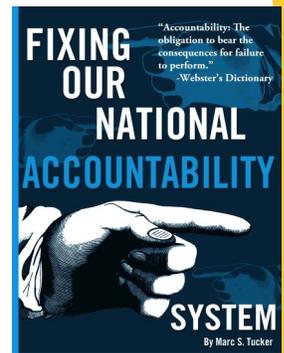
- We move from low-quality testing to high-quality accountability tests, taken only three times during a child’s

school career.

- We use data to identify schools that need assistance and deploy a team of expert educators to assist that school. The data should be available to the public but not utilized to rank or score schools.
- We enact policies that attract our brightest and best teachers to teach in and lead schools with at-risk populations. Teaching should be transformed into a high status profession.

If you would like to see a full copy of the report, an Executive Summary, Press Release and Key Takeways document, go to

[www.ncee.org/accountability](http://www.ncee.org/accountability).



## More Kindergartners are Hispanic

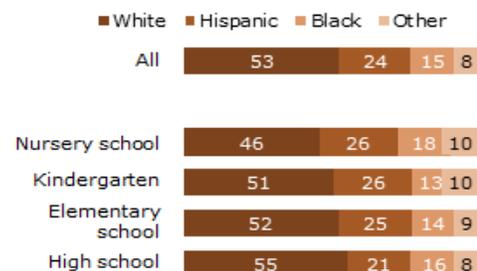
The Pew Research Center recently released a report that indicates that the nation’s Hispanic public school populations continue to grow and have become the 2nd largest ethnic group in the public schools. According to the report, more than “12.4 million Hispanics were enrolled in the nation’s public school pre-K through 12th grade in October 2011.....In 2007, for the first time, 25% of all kindergarten students were Hispanic and the trend continues

upward.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 1/3 of the nations’ children ages 3-17 are projected to be Hispanic by 2036. With the growth of a student population that may have English as a second language, there are many implications for education.

For more information, access the [Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project](#)

Figure 2.1  
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Public School Enrollment, October 2011 (%)



Notes: The figures above refer to the white- and black-alone populations. White, black and other include only the non-Hispanic portions of those groups.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center analysis of the October 2011 Current Population Survey

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Southern Early Childhood Association

1123 S. University, Ste 255  
Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 800-305-SECA

Fax: 501-227-5297

E-mail:

info@southernearlychildhood.org

www.southernearlychildhood.org

Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern  
Children"

## How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

*This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.*

*SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information*

*that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at*

*[http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy\\_newsletter\\_sign.php](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php)*

*to receive notice of its availability each month.*

## News From the SECA States

### Texas

On August 29th, a judge declared **Texas' school finance system** unconstitutional. The judge ruled that, although the Texas legislature committed an extra \$3 billion-plus into the school formula in 2013, it still constituted a "Robin Hood" approach and that the state failed to distribute funding equitably among poor and wealthy districts. The State of Texas is expected to appeal the ruling. Seven major court battles have been fought over this issue since 1968. *Source, The Associated Press, 8/29/14*

### North Carolina

The state's plan to provide



**Judge Hobgood of North Carolina vouchers for K-12 students to attend private schools** has been declared unconstitutional by a Superior Court Judge in North Carolina. The North Carolina Association of Educators and public school boards challenged the program. Under the program, families would receive \$4,200 for each student to help pay for private school tuition. 1,879 vouchers had been approved for the 2014-2015 school year and the dis-

bursement of those funds was halted upon the judge's ruling.

*Source:*

*<http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/08/21/4086127/judge-finds-nc-voucher-program.html>*

### Tennessee

Six new school districts opened their doors outside the corporate limits of Memphis, TN. The former Shelby County district which encompassed the city of Memphis and suburban municipalities was one of the largest school districts in the nation. The split came after the suburban municipalities challenged the consolidation with Memphis. The Memphis schools remain under state control.

*Source: Ed Week, 8/20/14*