

Policy Panel

- Kuna Tavalin, Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Council for Exceptional Children
- Sharon Walsh, IDEA Infant and Toddlers Coordinators Association (ITCA) and Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
- Diana Autin, Executive Co-Director and Policy Director, National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment



**2023 OSEP LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT DIRECTORS'
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Agenda

- CEC's lens toward federal policy
- Overview of recent Congressional actions
- Overview of annual appropriations
- Current hot topics in education/potential future action
- ITCA and DEC Priorities
- Funding Update
- New IDEA Early Childhood bill
- Child Care Proposal Out for Comment
- National PLACE Purpose & Priorities



CEC's Policy Priorities

- Protecting and supporting the IDEA
- Protecting and expanding policies outside the IDEA that support students with exceptionalities
- Strengthening the professions that provide the specialized interventions, education, and services to infants, toddlers, children and youth with exceptionalities
- Advocating for ample funding of IDEA
- Advocating for policies that promote safe, inclusive, and supportive schools



Recent Congressional Action

Fiscal Responsibility Act

- Signed into law June 3
- Suspends debt limit until January 2025
- Freezes Federal discretionary spending for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
- Allows for a 1% increase for FY 2025

Parents Bill of Rights

- Passed in House only, part of Republican agenda
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of Republicans voted for an amendment to defund ED



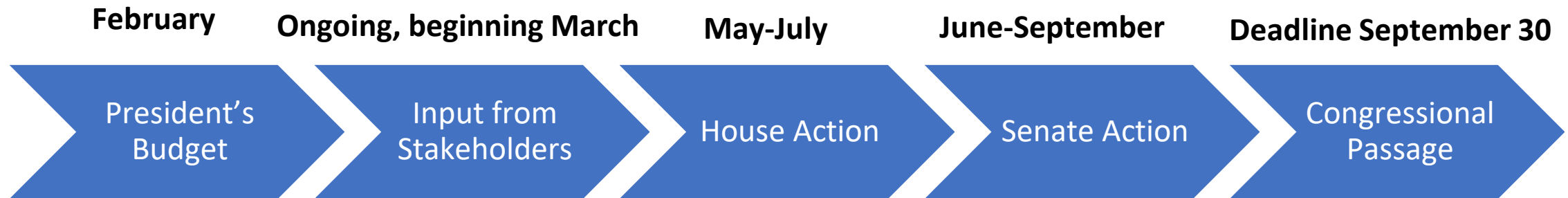
IDEA Full Funding Act

- Introduced by Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), U.S. Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA)
- More than 20 Senators and 60 House Members support the bill
- The bill seeks to rectify nearly 50 years of underfunding of IDEA
- Currently, the federal government funds less than 13% of that cost, placing an unfair burden on students, teachers, families, and schools.
- The bill would provide incremental, annual increases that will reach the full 40% by fiscal year 2033.
- The bill has broad support from over 60 national organizations



Annual Appropriations

Typical Appropriations Cycle



Where we are today:

- Budget Released March 9
- House Labor/HHS bill passed Appropriations subcommittee in July
- Senate TBD



Fiscal Year 2024: The Politics

- Fiscal Responsibility Act:
 - ◆ Puts caps on spending
 - ◆ House Republicans propose spending less
 - ◆ Cuts to some programs inevitable
 - ◆ Both parties prioritize IDEA spending when there are excess funds to be spent
- Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) pledged to work together
 - ◆ In practice, a very hard task
- September 30 deadline
 - ◆ FRA created a new, secondary deadline of January 1, 2025, which will trigger cuts



Current Hot Topics in Education

Youth mental health:

- Surgeon General's declaration of youth mental health crisis
- Social media, COVID, bullying, school shootings, youth suicide rates

Personnel shortages:

- Amplified by the pandemic
- Politicization of school board meetings, etc. making it worse
- Chairman Sanders Town Hall

Culture Wars

- Parental rights/choice
- Trans students (sports, restrooms)
- Impacts of school closures due to COVID



Outlook for the Year

Appropriations the biggest “must-do”

- Education Sciences Reform Act reauthorization
- Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act reauthorization

*Congress is reactionary by nature: be prepared for the unforeseen!



Policy Panel

Sharon Walsh

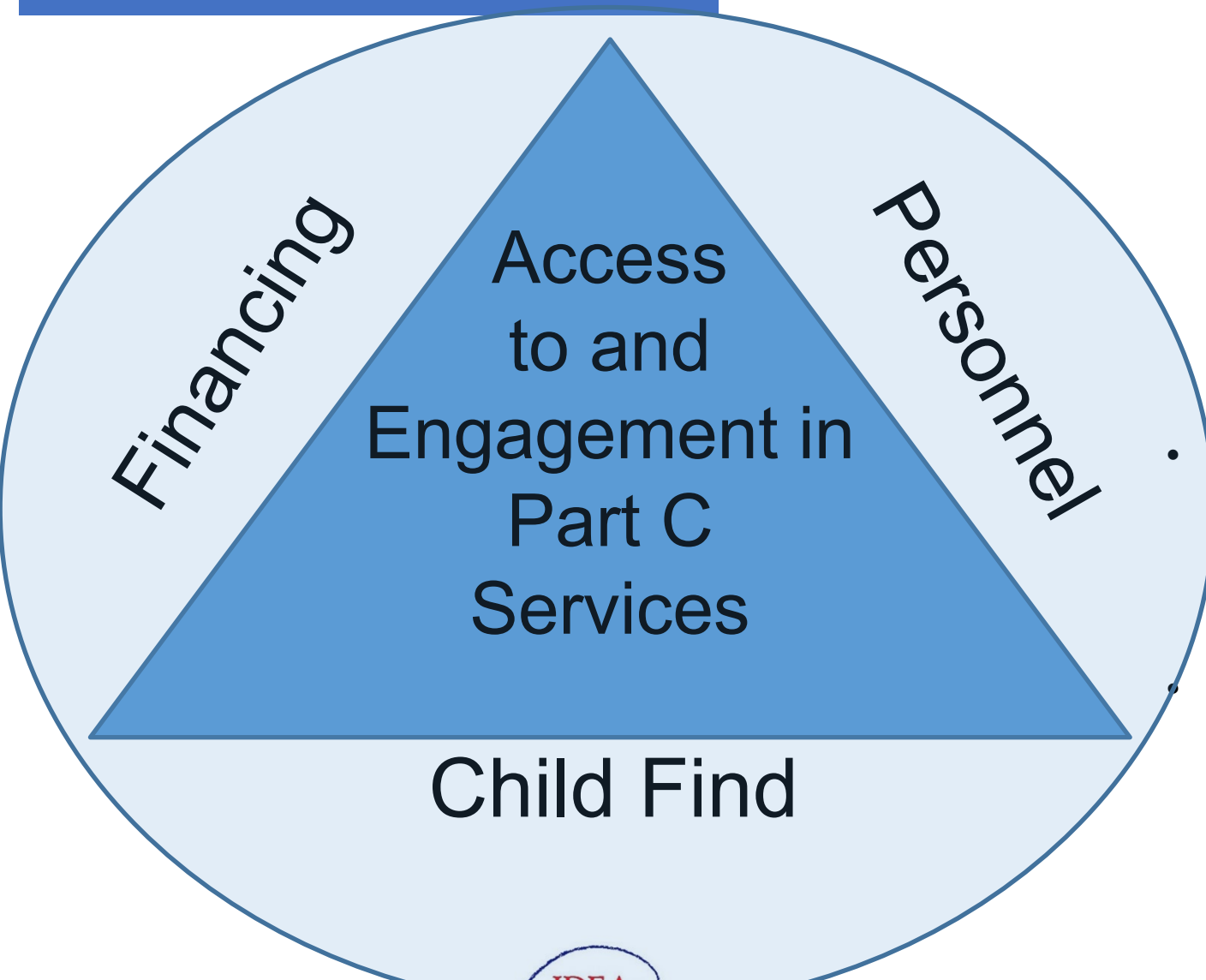
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ITCA Priorities



- Member Advocacy
 - Leadership Development
 - DMS 2.0
 - Extended Year Option(s)
 - Timeliness of Guidance and other Documents
 - Personnel Shortages
 - Promotion of ITCA Priorities to OSEP leadership and TA Centers
- Access to Part C Services
 - Child find
 - Personnel Shortages
 - Financing of Part C
- Member Communications
 - Monthly Member Calls
 - Federal Updates
 - Webinars based on Member Needs/Requests



DEC Priority Issues Agenda May 2020

<https://www.dec-sped.org/priorityissues>

Achieving High-Quality Inclusion

Acknowledging and Addressing Bias

Responding Appropriately to Child Behavior

Creating and Maintaining Strong Family Partnerships

Adequately Equipping a Highly Effective Workforce

Providing High-Quality Environments, Interactions, Instruction, & Supports



Final FFY 2023 Omnibus Appropriations

- Enacted New Year's 2023 after several Continuing Resolutions (CR)
- Includes \$540 million for Part C, a \$43.7 million increase over FFY 2022.
- Includes \$14.2 billion for 619 Preschool, a \$850 million increase over FFY 2022;
- Funds were allocated to states July 1, 2023.
- Only one proposed Part C policy change was included to allow Part C lead agencies to use federal funds in certain circumstances for three-year-olds as they transition from Part C to preschool special education:

“Provided further, That, notwithstanding section 638 of the IDEA, a State may use funds it receives under section 633 of the IDEA to offer continued early intervention services to a child who previously received services under part C of the IDEA from age 3 until the beginning of the school year following the child's third birthday with parental consent and without regard to the procedures in section 635(c) of the IDEA.”



FFY 2024 Appropriation Process

- President's request - significant increases/policy changes for C
- Fiscal Responsibility Act set a freeze and a 1 % cut on FFY 2023 levels if appropriations are not enacted by 1/1/24
- Agreement must be reached by 9/30/23, or a Continuing Resolution (CR) is needed to keep the government open
- If agreement is not reached, a government shutdown will occur
- Few Congressional days remain after the Congressional August recess before September 30th



House Subcommittee Bill

- Awaiting full Committee markup before floor consideration
- Includes a 28 percent cut below 2023
- Program detail is not available yet but seems to be a freeze for IDEA and child care
- Significant cut in Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies
- A cut of \$750 million in Head Start
- A \$35 million cut in the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant
- Eliminates funding for programs including the Preschool, Development Grant, Healthy Start, English Language Acquisition, Title II-A, Promise Neighborhoods, Social and Emotional Learning grants, Teacher Quality Partnerships, Child Care Access Means Parents in School, and others
- Senate expected to release funding numbers before the recess



Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act

- ❖ Federal funding for IDEA early childhood programs has not kept pace with growth and inflation continuing a decrease in federal per child funding while child count continues to grow
- ❖ Significant efforts across many advocacy partners to address this issue
- ❖ Bill establishes glide path of increasing authorization levels amounts
- ❖ Bill is parallel to the Part B Full Funding Act efforts
- ❖ Mark DeSaulnier is planning to introduce again in this Congress



Child Care Changes Proposed and Open for Comment

- ACF has proposed changes to the CCDBG grant (comments due August 28, 2023) which would:
 - Cap family copayments at no more than 7% of family income
 - Encourage states to waive copayments altogether for families at or below 150% of the federal poverty line
 - Ensure providers are paid in a timely manner based on program enrollment not attendance, as is the case for private-paying families.
 - Encourage states to accept online applications for CCDBG enrollment and making it easier for families to access subsidies for siblings when one child is already receiving a subsidy through CCDBG.



National PLACE Purpose and Priority

Strengthening the voice of families and family-led organizations:

- At decision-making tables at all levels across the systems that impact children and families
- With an eye toward equity and lifting up often excluded voices and perspectives

So that all systems:

- benefit from the experiences and expertise of diverse families and the family-led organizations that support them, and
- can meet the needs of all children and families



National Place: Who we Are

Our members are:

- Parent Centers (Parent Training and Information Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers)
- Family to Family Health Information Centers and Family Voices Affiliates
- National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health chapters
- Parent to Parent USA affiliates
- Local Family Empowerment Centers
- Local Family Resource Centers
- And more!



Hot topics for families & Parent Centers

Dueling visions of “parents’ rights” – exclusionary vs. inclusionary

Family engagement

- What does it mean? Who gets to define it?
- What is the role of Parent Centers in building it? Supporting it? Partnering with federal, state, and local agencies in making it happen?
- Recognizing and benefiting from the “value add” of family-led organizations

Equity and the backlash against it

Breaking down silos



Hot topics for families and Parent Centers

Federal, state, and local budget issues – and not just education!

Addressing the long-term impact of COVID:

- Long COVID
- Making up for lost time and lost services
- Exacerbated personnel shortages and what this means for instruction, LRE, related services, discipline, leadership, and family engagement
- Families, children, and professionals starting out “at the end of their ropes”



Resource Spotlight

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website
 - Brings together IDEA information and resources from the Department and its grantees.
 - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
- IDEAS That Work
 - For information from research to practice initiatives funded by OSEP that address the provisions of IDEA and ESSA. This website includes resources, links, and other important information relevant to OSEP's research to practice efforts.
 - <https://osepideasthatwork.org/>





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