

Glossary of Policy & Advocacy Terms: A Guide to the ABCs and Acronyms of the Infant-Toddler Policy Process

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Administrative Advocacy – Speaking out about how rules and regulations are developed. This is sometimes called “regulatory advocacy.” State and federal agencies must implement the laws passed by the state legislature and Congress, respectively. To do so, they develop rules and regulations. Administrative advocacy can include testifying at hearings on proposed regulations and educating agency staff about research that should inform their rulemaking.

Advocacy - Speaking out on issues of concern. Advocacy can come in many forms, including raising awareness about a particular issue or engaging in efforts to change policies.

Amendment – A proposal to alter the text of a pending bill or other measure by striking out some language, by inserting new language, or by both striking out and inserting new language. An amendment can be offered in committee or on the floor of the House or Senate.

Appropriations – Legislation to provide the money required to fund governmental departments, agencies and programs previously established by authorizing legislation.

Authorization – Legislation to establish a proposed governmental program (such as Early Head Start). Authorizations may be for a specified amount of money or an indefinite amount (“such sums as necessary”), but do not actually provide any money.

Bill – A proposed law introduced in either chamber of Congress or the state legislature.

Block Grants – Federal funds given to state or local government, which must be spent for a general purpose that is specified by the grant. An example is the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

Budget Reconciliation – The process Congress uses to adjust tax and spending levels to meet the budget goals established by that year’s Congressional budget resolution.

Budget Resolution – Legislation which sets forth the Congressional budget goals for the year. The budget resolution is not signed by the President, and therefore does not hold the power of law.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) – CAPTA is the key federal legislation focused solely on addressing child abuse and neglect by helping states in the support and improvement of their Child Protective Services systems. It provides funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities. It also makes available grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for demonstration programs and projects.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – CACFP is an entitlement program that provides federal funds for healthy meals and snacks served in child care centers (including Head

Start centers) and family child care homes. It provides reimbursement for food and meal preparation costs, training regarding the nutritional needs of children, and on-site assistance in meeting the program's nutritional requirements.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) – The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) revised the structure of federal funding for child care, creating the CCDF as an umbrella program for several different funding streams. This streamlined block grant attempts to maximize states' flexibility in administering child care programs and establishes a single set of rules and regulations that apply to all components of the fund. Thus, CCDF is sometimes referred to as the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which, although providing only one of the funding streams that make up CCDF, governs the goals and content of all child care programs under CCDF. CCDF funding is divided into three streams of federal funds: Federal mandatory funds that do not require a state match; federal mandatory funds that do require a state match; and federal discretionary funds that do not require a state match.

Community Mental Health Services Block Grants (CMHSBG) – The Community Mental Health Services Block Grant is authorized by Part B of Title XIX of the Public Health Service Act and is the single largest federal contribution dedicated to improving mental health service systems across the country. The Center for Mental Health Services' Community Mental Health Services Block Grant awards grants to the states to provide mental health services to people with mental disorders. Through this federal-state partnership, the Center for Mental Health Services supports existing public services and encourages the development of creative and cost-effective systems of community-based care for children and adults with mental disorders. CMHS is the federal agency that oversees State Mental Health Plans and Implementation Reports, using mental health experts for the regional consultative application review process.

Coalition – A group of organizations working together in pursuit of a common goal. Working in coalition allows members to make efficient use of time and resources and creates a stronger base of support for advocacy efforts.

Conference Committee – The House and Senate appoint members to this committee to resolve differences between versions of legislation passed by both bodies. Both chambers then vote on the combined legislation, which is called a “**conference report**.”

Continuing Resolution – A bill, also known as a “CR,” enacted by Congress to continue the funding for programs and agencies into a new fiscal year when the regular appropriations process has not been completed on time.

Discretionary Funding – Funding provided by Congress or the state legislature in an appropriations act, usually annually, for a specific program or purpose. About one-third (1/3) of all federal spending falls into this category. Examples include: national defense, education, housing, social services, transportation, and foreign aid.

Domestic Discretionary Programs – Programs other than defense-related activities and foreign aid/international affairs for which funds are made available each year through the appropriations process.

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) – EPSDT is Medicaid’s comprehensive and preventive child health program for individuals under age twenty-one. It provides screening services, including comprehensive physical exams, appropriate immunizations, vision, dental, and hearing services, as well as health care to correct problems found in screening.

Earmark – Statutory language that directs a federal administering agency, a state agency and/or a grant recipient to undertake specific activities with a specified amount of the total program allocation.

Entitlement Program – A program creating a legal obligation on the part of the federal government or state governments to provide payments or services to a person, business, or unit of government that meets the criteria set in law (i.e., school lunch, Medicaid, Social Security, TANF).

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – FMLA requires public agencies and businesses with more than 50 employees to offer unpaid family leave of up to 12 weeks to parents of newborns, those who are adopting children, and those who must care for an ill family member.

Fiscal Year – The twelve month accounting year. For the federal government, the fiscal year is October 1 through September 30 of the following year. Each state determines its own fiscal year calendar.

General Assembly – The term used by many states to describe their state legislature.

Head Start/Early Head Start – A federally-funded program for low-income children and their parents (pregnant women, babies, toddlers and preschoolers), designed to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, and other social services. Program approaches for delivering services in Early Head Start include: center-based programs, home-based programs and mixed-approach programs.

Hearing – A session at which testimony is given by experts in order for Members of Congress or state legislators to gather information on proposed legislation. Hearings are held by committee and subcommittee chairs on legislation that has been referred to their committee or subcommittee.

Legislative Advocacy – Speaking out about issues of concern in the legislative branch of government. This may include support or opposition to a bill, crafting new legislative language, providing testimony at hearings or contacting your state legislators or Members of Congress.

Mandatory Spending (also known as direct spending) – Spending that is authorized through permanent law, not through the appropriations process. Examples include entitlement programs, such as Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. If Congress wants to change the level of

spending for a mandatory program, it must first change the underlying authorization act. Mandatory spending accounts for two-thirds (2/3) of all federal spending.

Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant (Title V of the Social Security Act) – A block grant which provides federal funds to states to improve the health of pregnant women, mothers and children.

Mark-Up – The process used by Congressional and state legislative committees to review and revise a bill.

Medicaid (Title XIX of the Social Security Act) – A means-tested program that pays for medical costs of various assistance recipients and specified other groups among the poor. It is funded by federal and state (and sometimes local) government.

Omnibus Bill – The package legislation that results when a group of bills on related topics are combined into a single bill for consideration on the floor of the House and/or Senate.

Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – IDEA provides federal funds to states and local communities to assist in their efforts to provide a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. Part B of IDEA contains provisions relating to the education of school-aged and preschool-aged children with disabilities. The preschool program is often referred to as the Section 619 program, referring to the section of the law describing services for this age group.

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Part C of IDEA authorizes the creation of early intervention programs for babies and toddlers with disabilities, and provides federal assistance for states to maintain and implement statewide systems of services for eligible children, ages birth through 2 years, and their families. States and jurisdictions participating in Part C must provide early intervention services to any child below age 3 who is experiencing developmental delays, has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, and some states serve children who are at-risk for serious developmental problems.

Pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) – A requirement that before any increases in mandatory spending are instituted, legislators must first find a way to pay for them either through an increase in revenue/taxes or spending reductions in other areas.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PRWORA) – This “welfare reform” law replaced the old Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) with TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), set time limits for receipt, mandated work, ended the entitlement to assistance and provided block grant funding giving states great flexibility in designing the TANF program.

Public Policy – A system of laws, regulations and funding priorities forming the foundation for how government operates.

Reauthorization – The process by which legislation is renewed for a specified number of years.

Regulation – Specific direction for the implementation of a law. Regulations are developed by an administering agency (or agencies) identified in statute. Regulations incorporate processes for enforcement and compliance.

Sine Die – Final adjournment at the end of a legislative session. Bills under consideration but not enacted must be reintroduced in the next session.

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) (Title XX of the Social Security Act) – SSBG allocates funds to states to support a variety of social services programs for adults and children. Grants are determined by a statutory formula based on each state’s population. States are given great flexibility in their use of funds and are fully responsible, within the limitations of the law, for determining the use of their funds.

State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) (Title XXI of the Social Security Act)– SCHIP is a joint federal-state program which gives states the option, within federal guidelines, of expanding health coverage to children in families with incomes up to or above 200% of the poverty level. SCHIP is not an entitlement program.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – SAMHSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), established by an act of Congress in 1992 under Public Law 102-321. SAMHSA was created as a services agency to focus attention, programs, and funding on improving the lives of people with or at risk for mental and substance abuse disorders. SAMHSA is a collaboration between the states, national and local community-based organizations, and public and private sector providers.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) – The new means-tested cash assistance program, replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Its primary goals are to assist needy families with children and reduce dependency through job preparation, work and marriage. Features of the program include: benefit levels that vary by state, a requirement that beneficiaries go to work within two years of claiming the benefit, a limitation of benefit receipt to a maximum of 5 years overall, and funding in the form of block grants to states giving states flexibility in program design.

Title IV-B of the Social Security Act – Title IV- B provides funding for child welfare services, as well as for preventive and supportive services for families. Subpart 1 Child Welfare Services, provides federal grants to states and Indian Tribes for basic child welfare services including child protective services, supportive services to prevent unneeded placements in out-of-home care or to provide services to children in foster care. It is funded with discretionary funds. Subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, funds family preservation and family support services, pre-placement preventive services, reunification services, follow-up services, services to promote parenting skills, and adoption promotion and support services. It is funded partly through mandatory funding and partly through discretionary funding.

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act – Title IV-E is an open-ended entitlement program that provides federal funding for foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and independent living services. Through this program, the federal government reimburses states for the costs of children placed in foster homes or for other types of out-of-home care (including related administrative, child placement and training costs). It also provides financial support to states for adoption assistance and independent living services. However, reimbursement for foster care or adoption assistance payments is available only for those children who would have been eligible for the old AFDC program.

Unanimous Consent – A procedure whereby a matter is considered agreed to if no Member of Congress or state legislator on the floor objects. These motions save time by eliminating the need for a vote.

Veto – The refusal by the President or Governor to sign into law a bill passed by both the House and Senate. A veto may be overridden by a vote of 2/3 of the Members present in each chamber, allowing a bill to automatically become law without the President's or the Governor's signature.

Vouchers – A form of demand subsidy (e.g., food stamps, Medicaid) which functions as a cash equivalent for the purchase of specified goods/services. Vouchers provide more freedom of choice than a specific service but less than a cash benefit.

Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC) – WIC includes a supplemental food program that supplies vouchers issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide for the nutritional needs of low-income women, infants and young children.

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