



Early Childhood Policy Council

Agenda and Transcripts

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Physical Meeting

1000 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

WestEd, 5th floor, Capitol Room

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome
- Introduce new Council members
- Review of agenda

2. Council May Revise Letter Discussion

- Subcommittee shares draft letter
- Council discussion
- Possible Council endorsement

3. Family Access and Federal Policy Subcommittee Discussion

- Subcommittee shares draft content
- Council discussion

4. Workforce Needs Subcommittee Discussion

- Subcommittee shares draft content
- Council discussion

5. General Public Comment

- Members of the public are invited to provide verbal comment

Attendance

ECPC Council Members:

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, Becky Beland McNaught, Catherine Brozowski, Claire Ramsey, Diana Ramos, Donna Sneeringer, Gabriela Gonzalez, Karla Pleitéz Howell, Maéva Renaud, Mary Ann Hansen, Mary Ignatius, Matilda Soria, Miren Algorri, Natali Gaxiola, Ranae Amezquita, Ristyn Woolley, Sonia Jaramillo, Stephen Propheter, Tonia McMillian, Tony Jordan.

Hosts:

Diana Yactayo, Jateri Willis, Karin Bloomer, Kim Sato, Ramee Serwanga, Estefania Buitrago (SP), Martha Schmitz (SP), Wendy Feng (CN), Xiangyao Bowler (CN).

Meeting Transcript

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Meeting features

Karin Bloomer:

Before we begin the meeting, I'd like to review a few Zoom features with you. We will enable these features after providing these instructions. In a few moments, we'll be offering the closed captioning feature in Zoom. To access this feature, you will need to locate the live transcript button at the bottom of your Zoom screen and then click "Show Subtitle". This will allow you to view the closed captions in English throughout the meeting.

In a moment, we will also offer language interpretation services. I will now turn things over to our interpreters to describe how you can listen to this meeting in English, Spanish, or Mandarin.

Spanish Interpreter:

Good morning. In order to access language interpretation to English, click the interpretation symbol in the meeting controls, click the language you would like to hear. We have Spanish and Mandarin interpretation available for this meeting. And optionally, to hear the interpreted language only, you can click mute original audio.

[Spanish language 00:01:01]. Mute original audio. [Spanish language 00:01:25]. Thank you. [Spanish language 00:01:48].

Mandarin Interpreter:

[Mandarin language 00:01:48]. Mute original audio. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. We will now activate the interpretation feature. Please select your preferred language channel at this time. And a few more items of note. We will be opening up the

chat feature for five minutes at the end of each agenda item to invite written public feedback.

During the final comment period, we will also invite verbal public comment from those here in the physical meeting room as well as those on Zoom. The slides we share during today's meeting will be posted on the ECPC webpage within the next week. And finally, council members who are on Zoom, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Law requires that you keep your cameras on at all times during this meeting. If you're unable to use your camera due to technical difficulties, please let us know.

And now I will turn the meeting over to Council Chair Claire Ramsey.

- [Welcome, Review of Meeting Agenda, and Council Member Introductions](#)

Claire Ramsey:

Well, good morning again, everyone, and so nice to be here with you all today. I hope you are having a good May. I know it has been very busy with the budget, May revise coming out, but happy to be welcoming many new members today. I'm Claire Ramsey. I'm one of the chief deputy directors at the Department of Social Services, and I serve as chair for this council.

For roll call, just a reminder, we will have our support team take note of the council members who are in attendance, so we won't be doing a roll call of the full council, but we will be welcoming as a starting place our new members and our new appointees, and we're really happy to have them all with us today. And we're going to take a little time as our first agenda item to... I'm going to name them all, and then have them each introduce themselves a little bit, just for a minute so we can all get to know them.

So, our new council members are Ranae Amezquita, Catherine Brozowski, Gabriela Gonzalez, Tony Jordan, Becky Beland McNaught, Maéva Renaud, Liz Simons, Wendy Sims-Moten, and Matilda Soria. I apologize if I've mispronounced anyone's name. I will make sure to get it right from here on out if I've said anything wrong. Let me start with Ranae and see if she would like to introduce herself.

Ranae Amezquita:

Good morning, everyone. I'm Ranae Amezquita. I'm the Executive Director for Early Childhood Education with the Los Angeles Unified School District. I'm really happy to be here today. And part of my work includes building those bridges between our early childhood programs, our TK programs and other departments within our district. Thank you.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you. Welcome. Catherine?

Catherine Brozowski:

Morning everybody. I'm Catherine Brozowski. I'm the Executive Director of the Audacious Foundation. We're a charitable foundation based in Santa Barbara, California. Our work is focused on whole child education. We are deeply involved in the early childhood community focused on quality of early childhood education, outdoor classrooms, and outdoor play. This year we're hosting our 16th annual retreat for early childhood leaders, which have included our local policymakers, our assembly member and the Senate pro temp have been participating in that.

I went to UCSD, University of Washington, studying public administration in my master's poly sci undergrad, and I'm a mama. I've got a six-year-old and a 13-year-old.

Claire Ramsey:

Welcome, Catherine.

Catherine Brozowski:

Thank you.

Claire Ramsey:

Gabriela? And Gabriela, if you're talking, you're on mute, and if you haven't arrived yet, that's okay. I can go to the next person. Okay. Tony?

Tony Jordan:

Good morning. Tony Jordan. I'm the Executive Director of the Child and Family Services Division at the Stanislaus County Office of Education. And this last program year, we had the pleasure of impacting the lives of children, families, and the professionals that work in our programs. Just over 20,000 lives impacted between the 10,000 children we serve, and their families, and the staff that help all of our programs go around. We serve in an 8-county region, and excited to be participating as a council member with this group. So, thank you, and good morning.

Claire Ramsey:

Welcome, Tony. And next is Becky.

Becky Beland McNaught:

Hi, Becky Beland McNaught. It's great to be here. I am currently the Head of Communications at the Sacramento Kings. So my day-to-day is not in early childhood, but prior to this role, I was the First Partner's chief of staff for the first three years of the Newsom administration. So had the privilege of working with Jen to create and build and develop her programs, many of which, obviously, focused on early childhood wellbeing. And I currently serve on the board of the California Partners Project, her nonprofit.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you. Welcome. Maéva, and I'm worried you're the one... I'm worried I'm mispronouncing your name, so please correct me if I've said it wrong.

Maéva Renaud:

You did a wonderful job. Thank you so much. Good morning, everyone. My name is Maéva Renaud. I'm originally from Port-a-Prince, Haiti. Always have to shout out where I'm from. I'm so honored to join this council to collaborate with you all around what's going to be best for our youngest learners. I'm the VP of Advocacy & Policy with Kidango, and we are an early childhood nonprofit in the Bay Area, where we serve about 6,000 families, where we offer general childcare and state preschool.

And we also have a family childcare home education network where we support about 71 childcare providers. And the majority of my work is really around grassroots organizing and making sure that we are centering the voices of our ECE professionals and our families for systems change. And really happy to be here with you all, and looking forward to working with you on positive outcomes for our children.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you so much and welcome. And now Matilda?

Matilda Soria:

Hello, everyone. I'm Dr. Matilda Soria. I'm the Executive Director of the Child and Family Success Division of the Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, or FCSS. I oversee early care and education, the Foster and Homeless Youth Education Services Department, our Cradle to Career Initiative, Health Services, and I also support government relations. And prior to joining FCSS, I served within the nonprofit sector developing and providing community-based educational programs for children and families here in Fresno County.

I'm super honored to be a part of the council and to represent Fresno County in the Central Valley.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you and welcome and really happy to have you all joining here today. I did want to flag that Wendy Sims-Moten and Liz Simons had to send their regrets for today. They had prior obligations, but will be with us at our next meeting in August. So with that, we will launch into our meeting. We are really thankful to have such a diverse and thoughtful group with us, lending their insights and expertise to this council. And I know we're going to have a great meeting and a great year of the council.

I do also want to thank and acknowledge two council members whose six-year terms came to an end, and the new members who are replacing their positions on the council joined us today. So they're not with us unless they're in the public audience, which would be great, too. But I want to thank Robin Layton and Kay Ruhstaller for their sustained dedication to this council for the last six years. They were very active members and gave us a lot of their expertise and insights as we moved forward, and will miss their participation in the council.

I do want to note that there are still two vacancies on the council, and there will be additional opportunities as other members term out. We also want to flag, there are three vacancies right now on the ECPC Parent Advisory Committee. We were asked to make it more straightforward, like how somebody would apply if they're interested in being appointed. And so we did in response to that, put up the application process on the ECPC webpage, and there are hyperlinks explaining how to apply and where to go. And we both have governors appointees, and also legislative appointees and superintendent appointees. So, there are sort of different pathways and those are all represented on the ECPC website if you're interested in taking a look.

I know you're all on, but you may know people who would be good for the council or the parent advisory committee.

All right. And then I also want to mention that that information is going to go into the chat. We really appreciate Diana from WestEd helping us with some of the background tech pieces and the running of the meeting, so she's going to put the link in the chat. And then one other item I want to point out on the ECPC web page is that we have now posted the 2025 ECPC annual report. It's under the resources tab on that page. Invite you all to take a look at that report, and we'll also paste that link in the chat as well. Thank you, Diana. You're so on top of it. It's already there.

And the way that report will read to all of you who haven't seen one of our reports today is it's really walking through the meetings, talking about what each meeting was about, and what happened. So it's a readout of the meetings in report form.

All right. Well, I'm very impressed. Everybody was so timely with their introductions. We are ahead of schedule, which might be a first, but we're onto agenda review. Karin, if you don't mind putting up the slide.

Thank you. So as you can see, we've already done our agenda item number one, which is our welcome. We will then move on to agenda item two, which is our council May revise budget letter discussion.

Just so everyone knows what this is, we have a council subcommittee that drafted the letter, and basically they will walk through what they have drafted. Karin was able to send that out in advance, so hopefully people had a chance to take a look at it. We will then have discussion, and at the end, because we need to act within this council meeting, we will have a vote on the letter to see if it's approved to be submitted to legislative leaders and the governor's office. And then agenda items three and four are related to the work that we've been talking about over the last couple meetings where the council has now been charged with recommendations and putting those forth more clearly in our report at the end of the year. And so there was a lot of discussion at last quarter's meeting in February about how to make this work happen and how to lead it forward.

And so for all the new members, just for context, this is a new process for us. And so there's a little bit of our finding our way through the woods on this, and seeing if we've landed on something that works and is producing recommendations that reflect the council, or if we need to continue to work on that. But this will be our first work-through of recommendations from the Family Access and Federal Policy Subcommittee. And then after a break, our Workforce Needs Subcommittee discussion. And so we'll have time on each of those agenda items to really work through and have discussion on those pieces. But again, I'll provide more background when we get there. We will have that 10-minute break in between.

And then finally, we will have general public comment for the last 20-plus minutes. We really value the members of the public who are joining us today, and look forward to hearing from them at the end of the meeting. We will adjourn at noon, no later than, and that, I think, completes the agenda.

Karin, anything else you would add?

Karin Bloomer:

Just that Gabriela Gonzalez, we had a little bit of technical difficulty, but we're so pleased that she's been able to join us and I wonder, Chair, if she might introduce herself.

Claire Ramsey:

Oh, that would be great. Welcome, Gabriela, please.

Gabriela Gonzalez:

Good morning, everyone. Sorry, I had a little bit... Oh, let me... Am I unmuted?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes, you sound great.

Gabriela Gonzalez:

Okay, thank you. Good morning, everyone. As you know, I'm Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez, and I feel really, truly privileged to serve on this council. I'm a second grade teacher with Montebello Unified School District, as well as a member of the California State Board of Education. And I'm really excited to learn from all of you, and to bring a classroom and perspective, and a broader educational policy to these conversations as we continue to support young children, families, and educators across California.

Much of my work has been focused around multilingual learners, family engagement, and ensuring that students and families have access to equitable opportunities and support. So, really excited to be here with all of you this morning. Thank you.

Claire Ramsey:

Thanks. Welcome. And I'm glad we were able to figure out whatever tech problems and help you solve them.

Gabriela Gonzalez:

Thanks.

Claire Ramsey:

Karin, do we want to move... One other thing I'll add that we do at the end of every agenda item, open the chat for five minutes for public comment. And I realize I think this was my oversight. I think I had discussion about potentially us trying to open up for 10 minutes, and I hadn't relayed that to Karin. So, we will do... Karin, is it possible to just leave it open for 10 minutes today after each item?

Karin Bloomer:

Absolutely.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you so much.

Karin Bloomer:

So support team, just to note, we'll leave the chat open for 10 minutes during each public comment period. Thank you.

2. Council May Revise Letter Discussion

- [Presentation by the subcommittee](#)

Claire Ramsey:

Thanks, everyone. All right. We're now going to move on to agenda item number two, our budget letter discussion. So, as I mentioned, it has been a tradition to have the council submit its budget priorities to the legislative leaders and to the governor's office prior to the start of budget hearings each year, and then again during May revise.

So, how that works timing-wise is the governor's budget letter is discussed and voted on at the February meeting, and then the May revised letter is discussed and voted on at the May meeting. So, we do have, as I mentioned, time constraints on moving all of this forward. We've asked our council members at those meetings for volunteers to be on the subcommittee, and we do have a limit because of rules related to meetings that need to be noticed and public, that the subcommittees are two people.

But this time, we really have to thank Andrea Fernandez Mendoza because she was a mighty subcommittee of one drafting this letter this time, and we really appreciate she has done this, volunteered to do this numerous times, and we always really appreciate her work on these letters, and her thoughtfulness in trying to pull together so many disparate pieces of what is representative of the early childhood community. So, the draft letter has been posted to the ECP webpage, and emailed to the council members to review in advance. And then at the end of our discussion, we will be taking a roll call vote to endorse this letter. And there are a few things that I'll just go through quickly for our new council members to make sure everyone is clear on the process part.

So, Andrea will, as the subcommittee, will provide a brief overview of the letter. She'll ask council member if they have questions for clarifications. We'll then ask council members if they have any specific changes to request. We'll sort of talk through those changes in real time. We do ask that we try to not overly wordsmith, and more focus on concepts so that we can get to agreement. And we have found that it can be more impactful when we keep the letter to a reasonable length. I think last few times we've sent it, we've really tried to keep it to two pages. It's not a rule, but we're trying to make sure it doesn't get so long that it loses its impact. At the end of all that, we will ask if you can support or not. Just a reminder that the members of the council who are associated with either administration departments or with departments under independent elected leaders abstain from votes on the letter. So this is really all the council members who are non-government employees, basically. Some of us do have to abstain.

And also one other thing that's very helpful, if you do have proposed amendments, it's very helpful if you are providing specific language, that can be in the chat. Karin helps us in real time try to pull those pieces together, but you'll see it's a process that works, but it's a little bit of magic involved to get it all done in the time we have. And I said it clumsily, but it's the administration or constitutional offices abstained from the vote. So just to make sure I didn't... Stephen, I'm just thinking of the way I framed the superintendent's role.

So with that, I will turn it over to Andrea to walk us through the letter. And again, thank you so much for drafting it.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Good morning, everyone. And thank you, Claire, for the floor. You're going to recognize that our letter is very similar to the one that we put out in January because our issues are very similar to what they were back then. I, again, extend the invitation to anyone on the council to join me in my subcommittee to have input into the letter. I see that there are a couple comments already that are coming in that we could add to the letter.

So, basically, the letter was updated. We acknowledged that the state did not rest most of the budget woes on the backs of our programs, and pretty much sustained us where we are with flat funding under the understanding that even without an increase to our funding and implementing the rate reform, we are still facing cuts because of inflation, and all of the other variables that have affected our programs. But you're going to see that the letter is very similar.

We kept in the bullets that were included in the original letter. One of the changes that I do need to just highlight really quickly is in bullet number two. It is not an additional 44,000 slots. It is the remaining balance of 44,000 slots, because these were promised slots by Governor Newsom, and once he is gone out of office, we will not have the opportunity to hold the new governor to that promise because it was made by Governor Newsom. So, the bones and the structure of the letter are very similar to what we approved last time. Again, we highlight the issues that we're having. We updated it with the understanding that many of the issues we're still facing, the cuts to healthcare

systems, the safety and wellbeing issues that are facing our immigrant children and their families, all of the H.R. 1 cuts and changes to policies that are impacting our communities very severely.

So, this remained in the letter and I do open it up for discussion again, and I open the invitation to have any of you join me on drafting letters, and so forth, so that we can put your thoughts and input into the letter.

Karin, how do you want to begin?

- [Council discussion](#)

Karin Bloomer:

Sure. Andrea, up to you, but I can show you whose hands are raised, or if you see whose hands are raised, but maybe we should start there.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

That sounds good. Donna?

Donna Sneeringer:

Hey, everybody. I think we need to clarify in the slots section that the 44,000 was the allocated amount that was agreed to with the legislature for this fiscal year. There was an additional balance of slots slated for next fiscal year. It's not the total balance, and appreciate that this was a promise that Governor Newsom made, and this is kind of the last chance to work with him, but I think we want to make clear that there was the full 200,000 initially on the table, and this is only this year's allotment of that.

Karin Bloomer:

So Donna, I don't know if you can see, but so I'm changing-

Donna Sneeringer:

That's better. Or agreed upon with the legislature because I believe they had an agreement to do this.

Mary Ignatius:

It's in the statute.

Donna Sneeringer:

Yeah.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And it was negotiated. It was a negotiating piece that we used in budget negotiations.

Donna Sneeringer:

So this is not just that he made a promise, he has a statutory agreement with the legislature to do this, and I think it could be a stronger statement.

Mary Ignatius:

And Karin, can you just put including the 44,000 slots the governor and legislature also promised?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes. Thank you. It was Mary Ignatius. Thank you, Mary. Andrea, are you ready to hear Karla's-

Donna Sneeringer:

And Mary... Just one more thing. Mary did put in the chat the idea of also adding the 33,000 next year to get to the 77,000 total. It's in the chat. You might want to just take-

Mary Ignatius:

While he's still governor, he still has the opportunity.

Donna Sneeringer:

I mean, I think we need to spell out that this was an agreement, right?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

This was a negotiation piece. It wasn't just a promise. It was something that we bargained and bartered on.

Becky Beland McNaught:

So, also comment, can you just say the governor legislature agreed to be filled this fiscal year, right? Yeah.

Karin Bloomer:

So, before we move on and see Karla's hand, just quickly, Donna, Mary, Becky, others who have spoken up, I know we don't want to wordsmith too much, but any last fixes on this specific phrase that has been added?

Mary Ignatius:

I'm just going to add the footnote with the link to the statute because you have that footnoted here.

Karin Bloomer:

So, if I could have permission from the council, I'll note something that I would do after this meeting to put in the letter.

Mary Ignatius:

Do we also just need any language that says any agreed upon... Someone has to help me. Any slot. Any space that has been funded should remain, just not turned back. Any slots and spaces that have been funded have to remain... Oh my gosh, I haven't had any caffeine yet. I know there's language out there.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So, Mary, any contracted slots awarded?

Mary Ignatius:

Contracted slots or vouchers that have been funded and released remain reverted, remained. I don't... Remain funded.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

It must not be-

Claire Ramsey:

Excuse me for interrupting. Oh, I just wanted to remind people not to talk over each other because we do have interpretation going on. Sorry, thanks, everyone.

Mary Ignatius:

Apologize.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

How about rescinded? Must not be rescinded because they would pull those back, and that is something.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. I just want to honor other hands that are up if it's okay with you, Andrea, starting with Karla next.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you. Andrea, I also want to say thank you for taking the lead on this. On this bullet point for those that were sharing info, I thought the Senate plan asked for an additional 44,000 spaces. If that is accurate and what others have heard in the Senate plan, I think it would be helpful to add a line at the end.

Okay, I see Donna nodding. I'll add language on that to add on this one in a little bit, Karin.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Then Andrea, also you mentioned H.R. 1 and the impacts, and I know that the bullet points towards the end, maybe six through nine mention H.R. 1, and what it means for families in California. I do think it would be important to add language at the beginning mentioning that May revise still does not address some of these concerns and we'll put in language for consideration. It might need some editing, but I do think it would be important to name that these continue to be impacts that our families are seeing.

So, let me add some language on the chat.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you for adding the language. Is that your proposal the one you just put in the chat?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yes. And if it went, let's see, where would it logically... Maybe before as...

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

In between the public education and as you finalize?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yes, yes, yes, that's perfect.

Claire Ramsey:

Andrea, after we finish with this edit, I did want to flag that a little earlier in the chat, Tonia highlighted some of the changes she wanted to see, so I want to make sure we don't miss those suggestions. And then Tony also followed up on Tonia's comments.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Sounds good. Thank you. Karin, are we ready?

Maéva Renaud:

I added one more further down in the chat, so don't miss that one as well.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Is it possible for you to copy and paste those together at the bottom, so that they're fresh in the chat only because there is a lot of chat?

Karin Bloomer:

I think I did capture both Tonia and Tony, I know your hand is up. I'm going to copy and paste your initial feedback that was in the chat, and I know this is going to get messier before it gets cleaner, but I'm going to...

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Okay, perfect.

Karin Bloomer:

So, Andrea deferring to you whether Tonia goes next or Tony?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Let's take Tony's hand, and then pull Tonia in as they both might have input on this section. Tony?

Tony Jordan:

Yes, thank you. Appreciate the opportunity. So, the two elements that I think are important to bring forward, and I think the first bullet could be tweaked a little bit to

address the first piece that I'm bringing forward, which is there's a current disparity in adjustment factors between California State Preschool and other center-based contracts. I testified a few weeks ago to the Senate Budget Subcommittee about this. So where it says funding the rate reform to ensure compensation, yada, yada, my suggestion would be in the interim address the adjustment factor rate disparity between early childhood center-based contracts.

We did a little case study, and had we enrolled the same child, or the same children, group of children, 14 kids to be exact, in state preschool instead of general childcare, we would've earned an additional \$100,000. So, that's a real issue that contractors who are multi-funded are likely facing.

The other piece, I wasn't sure where to plug it in. I know there was a comment more towards the bottom about workforce and the challenges we're facing. The very last paragraph talks about must ensure equitable access, workforce. So, the specific piece that I think needs to be elevated in this letter if colleagues agree is the CTCs currently looking to do some wholesale changes to the child development permit matrix. And while I know there's been opportunity for public comment and different hearings, I still don't think it's well known in the field what these potential changes and impacts could be to an already struggling workforce when we look at early childhood programs.

So, not quite sure where to plug that in or how it gets incorporated, but that's a real challenge a lot of colleagues that I've spoken with, or worried about, and have some really big concerns with the proposed changes to workforce, entry pathways, career ladder. So, thank you.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

I think it might go under the right there where you are in that bullet, because it's not only retaining members of the early education workforce, but supporting those who are already there. So halting, as Tony mentioned, yes, that would be a good place to land that comment.

And Tony, was there anything else or did we capture that appropriately?

Tony Jordan:

Thank you. That looks well captured to me. I appreciate it.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you. Tonia?

Tonia McMillian:

Thank you, Tony, for sharing that. I also would like to highlight that we'd like to see those adjustment factors be fair for all providers, so include that. Yeah, I'm going to go back to it... That you're using the same factors, the same adjustment factors for all providers.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Subsidized providers. Oh.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay, thank you. And then for the three that I shared, implementing prospective pay. So, providers aren't getting paid way after the fact, after they've done the work, and that's how most jobs are paid anyway. Disaster relief needs to include all providers, and FFNs affected by the fires. It's my understanding that there are providers and FFN providers who have not received that relief yet. And the COLA that needs to equal what other educators are receiving in the May revise. And I added a little further down in the chat that family childcare early educators need to be included as part of the mixed delivery system.

Yeah. Excluding them from those conversations is a detriment to the workforce. That's my opinion.

Karin Bloomer:

Discussions and solutions. So I wonder if you and or others could help me find a place for these.

Maéva Renaud:

I'd like to add on to that.

Karin Bloomer:

Yeah, Maéva.

Maéva Renaud:

I don't know if you're done yet, Tonia.

Tonia McMillian:

I'm done.

Maéva Renaud:

Okay, great. Thank you so much. And I really appreciate all the work that has been done on this letter. I really agree with the specific asks. Based on what Tonia just mentioned specifically around making sure that providers, childcare, home providers are included in the mixed delivery system, one of the things that we noticed earlier on in January was cut to the... It was the 35 million that went into the county office's of Ed for UPK implementation. And so that's something that I would probably encourage us to include is for the governor to maintain that 35 million, so that County of Eds can continue to have the UPK coordinator or their early childhood director to be able to partner and work with CBOs and family childcare homes, and have that kind of mixed delivery system, so that families can have access to the different kind of care that they need that's still connected to their local LEA. So, that's something I would recommend, and happy to add language to that in the chat.

And then additionally, just my other thoughts on what added to this, specifically around the Senate's proposal to move non LEA CSPP under Prop 98, that's something I would recommend that if everyone in the council agrees with it, is what I would recommend. I don't know if this is going to be a second part of the conversation-

Karin Bloomer:

Maéva, you know what? I should ask you to pause, if you don't mind. Just so I can then look for it in the chat, can you just say again the concept that you just mentioned?

Maéva Renaud:

For the UPK implementation?

Karin Bloomer:

Sorry, just after that.

Maéva Renaud:

So to adopt the Senate proposal to non LEA California State Preschool under Prop 98. Also put that in the chat.

And my question for you, Karin, is, I know that you sent us the draft on, I believe it was a draft on the flex factor, but I noticed that the flex factor is not mentioned in this budget letter. So, I don't know if that's something that's going to be included or if we're going to have discussions on that, but definitely interested in that being part of the ask.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Maéva, for asking about that. The reference to the flex factor is in this...

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

The third bullet.

Karin Bloomer:

... bullet here? Third bullet in the letter, talking about the contract earning floor. So, that's where it's currently located and referenced that way. Okay. So, I've got this list going.

Claire Ramsey:

Yeah, Karin, I was just going to say, let's just take a minute to let you, and hopefully with council direction to start adding these pieces in to the letter. Tonia, I don't know if you had a thought about where you wanted, for example, the prospective pay information to go. Or do you think it needs to be a new?

Tonia McMillian:

I don't know if it would fall under the rate reform work, but it's not the same.

Claire Ramsey:

Yeah, let's see.

Tonia McMillian:

Yeah, probably...

Claire Ramsey:

I'll just mention, and again, the council can take this or leave this, all three items that Tonia mentioned are sort of live May revise issues. So in some ways, if you wanted to bundle them into a bullet point, like all three of them to sort of highlight May revised proposals that you're sort of as a council opining on whether you agree with them or disagree.

Karin Bloomer:

Let's see... Sorry, that just doesn't feel very eloquent.

Tonia McMillian:

Oh, you're doing great, Karin.

Karin Bloomer:

Aw, Tonia, you're sweet.

Tonia McMillian:

Better than I would.

Karin Bloomer:

I don't know. Perhaps I should just bring these all up.

Getting there.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And separate them by commas.

Karin Bloomer:

I don't know if the family childcare early educator involvement is considered part of this bundle or should go elsewhere?

Tonia McMillian:

It should go elsewhere.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Yeah, that one could probably fit somewhere else. I'll look while you're doing that.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. Now, would the \$35 million investment be considered for the UPK or this first bundle? This is the...

So, there's a request, I think it's from you, Donna, that the childcare slots be the first bullet. Again, I mean, all of these things are priorities, but unless there's objection, I'll move that up, Maéva. Thank you.

Tonia McMillian:

Quick question for Maéva. On your comment, do you know if the two-year-old sunset will go into effect?

Maéva Renaud:

2027.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay, we're looking for a place for the ensuring the family childcare early educators are included in the discussions and solutions. I mean, it could be its own bullet for just...

Tonia McMillian:

Unified... Maybe the providing support for policy changes that promote regulatory clarity and development of unified program definition... Maybe there, to reduce burnout. No.

Mary Ignatius:

Well, what about more at the top, in the up up up, in the main packet right here where it says... I can't remember what the first sentence in the black... We keep going up just a little. We want to acknowledge the state's preservation of investments. And then just at the end of that paragraph, and we want to remind the state that our mixed delivery system must include... And I think we can name everybody.

Tonia McMillian:

Yeah, true, Mary.

Tony Jordan:

True.

Karin Bloomer:

We want to do a list or...

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah, probably. So nobody is confused.

Claire Ramsey:

Karin, once you finished that bullet, I do want to flag that, Matilda had a proposal in the chat, so I just want to make sure we don't miss that.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Claire. And I see that Council Member Stephen Propeter has his hand up as well. So, I welcome any changes to or additions to this sentence other... Perhaps just keep it short and direct.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Karin, how many pages are we at for the letter?

Karin Bloomer:

Well, we still have some things to add in here that have already been raised and we are just over onto a third page.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Okay.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. So, I do still want to acknowledge that we have these two items I'm highlighting that don't have a home, or again, they could just be their own bullets

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

For the adopt the sentence proposal, that could be in the May revised, because that is a May revised proposal.

Karin Bloomer:

And then this investment, UPK. Maéva, did you have specific language in chat that you wanted me to use?

Maéva Renaud:

Yes, I did put it in the chat for you. It says, "Maintain the 35 million in funding statewide to enable county offices of ed to sustain and enhance-"

Karin Bloomer:

I'm sorry. I'm either going to have to...

Maéva Renaud:

It's in the chat at 9:42.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Appreciate the timestamp.

Maéva Renaud:

Yes. And since I'm still speaking, I wanted to make a comment that I noticed after reading that there's specific themes in this letter, and there's three of them that I noticed. A theme on just access, then workforce and safety nets. I'm wondering if we could categorize our bullet points based on those themes, so it's an easier read.

Karin Bloomer:

So perhaps, and I'm appreciating, as I'm sure the chair is, that we're closing in on our time, so perhaps we could, again, still seeking help on, again, maybe this is its own bullet.

Claire Ramsey:

I think one question, maybe Karin, for that one is, is that maintaining \$35 million for UPK? Is that an active proposal right now? Or is it simply a please don't cut something that's already happening? I'm just not familiar with that one because it's on the ed side.

Maéva Renaud:

It was cut in January, and then it was not brought up in the May revise.

Claire Ramsey:

I see. So, that seems like it could then go, Karin, under the May revise. And maybe it needs to say restore. But I defer to you all if that's accurate. Like I said, I'm not as familiar with that particular item.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

I would agree with you, Claire. That makes sense, restoring the funding. And Stephen, I recognize that you've had your hand up. Before we pivot, I would like to invite you on.

Stephen Propeter:

Thanks, Andrea. Just in the area of some technical assistance, I would say just on the funding for rate reform, the adjustment factor, I think what we're trying to say is to raise the adjustment factor for essentially every program that's not state preschool, because state preschool is 1.8. So I would just be more specific and suggest if we don't...

Because an alternative, like unintended consequence, you could see a reduction in the state preschool, and then we've addressed it. That's one way to address it. So, if we want to raise it, raise it for everyone. I think the letter should say that.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you. That's a good point.

Karin Bloomer:

Equitably raise?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

I think that's a good edit of it. Thank you, Karin. I don't know how you do that live time and get this all to make sense. So I just wanted to elevate that thanks to you as well.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. And I do recall that, Claire, you mentioned Matilda had a suggestion here.

Claire Ramsey:

Yeah. And Matilda, do you want to speak to that at all? Karin, it's in the chat at 9:42. Appreciate that timestamp being a good way to find it.

Matilda Soria:

Sure. So in the chat, I included some potential language there, but just a proposed change to, I believe it's bullet point five, which talks to providing ongoing financial support to attract and retain members of the workforce. And if we could maybe add an additional sentence or two that basically includes providing ongoing financial support, excuse me, to add dollars to attract and retain members of the workforce and include an investment in entry level professional development, especially as the workforce transitions to other positions, if we could include funding to support professional development for those entry level positions. And again, there's some potential language in the chat box.

Karin Bloomer:

And so Matilda, I've just taken verbatim what I understand to be from your chat. I've added it to the bullet you mentioned. It starts with the verb invest.

Matilda Soria:

Yes. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

And so is that Andrea and others, unless you have additional edits to that suggestion, I wonder if we could very quickly entertain the organizing of the bullets as Maéva suggested. And Maéva, could you once again name those three?

Maéva Renaud:

Yes. So access, workforce, safety nets. And I believe Mary mentioned strengthening safety nets, because we could provide descriptors to the others as well.

Karin Bloomer:

Right. It'd be great to have. So ensure access, support the workforce. So, if council members are open to that, I wonder if for the sake of time we could just quickly, I could indicate with just the keywords here, what would go under each one. I mean, how we would organize the bullets accordingly.

Claire Ramsey:

Karin, could I suggest on that part that maybe you highlight the bullet points, like ensure access is like yellow, workforce is green? I apologize for anyone who's colorblind. And then the idea being that Karin will go back and rearrange the letter with the understanding that the ask is to ensure access would be the first one, and the slots, I know that's something Donna asked for, the slot stays the number one item. Is that workable for everyone? And feel free, for those, especially on Zoom, if you want to use thumbs up or Zoom functions to indicate approval on that. Not on the letter yet, but just on that idea of the sorting part.

Karin Bloomer:

Or even sometimes I suggest if anyone has concerns about that-

Claire Ramsey:

Oh, very good, Karin. Yes. Thank you. Karin is smart, concerns instead of 10 or 15 thumbs up that you can't see.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. So, if I could ask someone to give me these color coding, so I believe the slots would be blue, ensure access.

Claire Ramsey:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

And we've got to remember these colors. So May revise bundle, that'd be trickier.

Claire Ramsey:

Do you think we could say for everyone the May revise items are generally access related? I realize they could support the workforce as well, but...

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And be a safety net as well.

Karin Bloomer:

So the only other idea might be to put this bullet first and the slot second, with the slots would begin the categorizing, but we'd start with a bullet about the bundle of May revise items. Would that be acceptable?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

It sounds like a logical progression.

Claire Ramsey:

And Karin, I put the color coding in the chat hopefully to make it easier for you so you don't have to keep scrolling back up.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. So, I'm just going to, another words we'd go like this... Then we'd go through these bundled areas. Okay. So rate reform, support the workforce, healthcare policy changes, looks like workforce... And then I think safety net thereafter?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Yes, that looks like it fits.

Karin Bloomer:

Which is our yellow. Okay. Perfectly clean and ready to go.

Claire Ramsey:

And Karin, just pointing out, Mary did provide a list for mixed delivery if we want to be more specific. We don't have to be, but she did provide the list.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Thank you. So in this, I appreciate that. So I do wonder if I could have permission after this meeting to say, add list of...

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Of mix delivery providers. And we do have a hand up for Tony and Tonia.

Karin Bloomer:

Please go ahead, Tonia.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay. So I know we're trying to get this finished, but I think we need to go back to my number three about the COLA. What I don't want to see happen is, for parity's sake, that if the COLA needs to be more definitive, I would like to add 4.31%, because if it gets lowered for everybody, then it will be lowered for everyone. And so, thank you. Yeah.

- [Council endorsement](#)

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. Appreciating the time, which we were hoping there'd be, I think, seeking an endorsement from council members using a roll call vote appreciating the abstention from members of the Newsom administration and constitutional offices, and anyone else who'd like to abstain. I think before the chair, again, just walks us through that, or I'm happy to, are there any other make or break requests for this letter?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

I think we captured the majority of them, so kudos.

Karin Bloomer:

Wonderful. And I appreciate the council's faith in me to, again, add the footnote, add the list of providers, types of providers, the mixed delivery system, categorizing with these big themes, and then ensuring there's sentence, structure, appropriateness and whatnot for grammar. If you're willing to let me do that, then I would do that post meeting. We would submit it to these legislative leaders in the governor's office, post it on our webpage, and alert you that it's been sent and posted. That's if the council, if there's a simple majority that passes this letter for endorsement. So with that, I wonder, Claire, maybe move to that piece of it?

Claire Ramsey:

Yeah, Karin, that sounds great. So, thank you all for the discussion and significant input. And again, thank you to Andrea for drafting the initial letter and working with all of you to create this final letter that we will now vote on.

Karin, could I ask you to call the role?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes. Okay. And so again, just if you support this letter, please say support, or aye, or yes. If you oppose submitting this letter, please say no. If you want to abstain, please say abstain. And with that, I will read off people's names. Claire Ramsey.

Claire Ramsey:

Abstain.

Karin Bloomer:

Karla Pleitéz Howel?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Ristyn Woolley.

Ristyn Woolley:

Abstain.

Karin Bloomer:

Stephen Propheter.

Stephen Propheter:

Abstain.

Karin Bloomer:

Diana Ramos.

Diana Ramos:

Abstain.

Karin Bloomer:

Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez

Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez:

Abstain.

Karin Bloomer:

Catherine Brozowski.

Catherine Brozowski:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Support? Mary Ann Hansen.

Mary Ann Hansen:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Wendy Sims Moten, just noting absent. Sonia Jaramillo.

Sonia Jaramillo:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Donna Sneeringer?

Donna Sneeringer:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Natali Gaxiola.

Natali Gaxiola:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Socorro Martin, noting absent. Tonia McMillian.

Tonia McMillian:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Miren Algorri.

Miren Algorri:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Lisette Frausto. Noting Lisette is absent. Mary Ignatius.

Mary Ignatius:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Tony Jordan.

Tony Jordan:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Gabriela Gonzalez.

Gabriela Gonzalez:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Maéva Renaud.

Maéva Renaud:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Matilda Soria.

Matilda Soria:

Support.

Karin Bloomer:

Ranae Amezquita.

Ranae Amezquita:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

And Becky Beland McNaught.

Becky Beland McNaught:

Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Noting Liz Simons is absent. So the letter passes overwhelmingly. Thank you all so much. We will finalize it based on those edits we just agreed to and get it submitted and post it and share it all with you. Thank you so much.

Claire Ramsey:

Karin, thank you so much for calling. I did see that we had one last recommended edit to the LA Fires related to a language around to ensure a fair and racially equitable recovery. That language right at the end, which was offered I think earlier by Mary and then by Tonia, and then lifted up by Maéva, I don't know if we could do, basically if anyone has concerns to that final amendment, lift that up. I don't know. Or do we have to do a full re-roll call if we add that?

Karin Bloomer:

And so if I could first ask if... So this would go next to the fires here?

Claire Ramsey:

And I can't remember, was there any other reference to the fires?

Karin Bloomer:

Up at-

Claire Ramsey:

I don't think so. Or Tonia and Mary, were you suggesting it more up at the top with devastating fire recovery?

Tonia McMillian:

With devastating fire recovery.

Claire Ramsey:

Okay, Karin, so in that top paragraph. One more paragraph up. I'm sorry. The one that starts "while we recognize that California faces significant budget challenges"

Karin Bloomer:

Not sure if I captured, I believe I did. Well, I think we'll do our best here just to follow the spirit of understanding whether there's support in an endorsement. So I wondered, chair, if you'd be amenable just to asking, is there anyone who changes their vote based on this edition?

Claire Ramsey:

That seems workable to me, yes. Does anyone change their vote based on this edition? Please either raise your hand or put in chat. Okay.

Seeing no changes, the letter passes. And then just quickly, I see Tonia had a question in the chat that I believe, Tonia, I don't think there is anything that says opposed, but some of the items basically are functionally opposing because for example, there's no proposal for slots in the May revise, but then there's an endorsement of the Senate plan, which isn't in alignment. So does that answer your question? I think that's how it's worded. Yeah.

Well, again, huge thank you to the council. Appreciate all the additional input. Karin, I'll turn it over to you because I know we're going to end agenda item two and open up the chat. And as all the new members can see, we have a full meeting agenda, so we are going to move right into our agenda item number three, which is the Family Access and Federal Policy Subcommittee discussion. After that discussion, we will have our break.

So I'm going to spend a few minutes going over a few things and then we'll launch into our discussion. Karin, anything else you need to do procedurally before I start that?

Karin Bloomer:

No, I do see that support staff acknowledging that the chat is now open for public comment, so please go ahead.

3. Family Access and Federal Policy Subcommittee Discussion

- Subcommittee shares draft content

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you so much. So as I mentioned at the top of the meeting, both agenda items three and four really reflect the new process for the council that we are piloting this year. So I'll recap a little bit of how we got there. So appreciate everyone bearing with me a little bit who's already heard this at February's meeting. First, over the course of the council's work, there had been a desire expressed to actively develop recommendations for the legislature and the governor to consider. Basically, we needed to find a way to focus and organize that work and a way to develop content outside of these quarterly council meetings without violating the Bagley Keen laws of public meetings.

These recommendations are also in alignment with newly enacted legislation that invites the council to provide proposals related to workforce needs, family access and facility needs. That was AB563 authored by Assembly Member Jackson. At our February meeting, the council gave the green light to achieve these ends through these following steps. First, the council decided to focus recommendations on topics from the council's budget letter. There was a strong sense that the early childhood community and many of you in particular have provided a lot of input over the last several years in different councils and committees and work groups and people felt strongly that we didn't want to start from scratch. There was no need to and certainly people didn't want to.

So the council thought that the topics in the budget letter basically provide a framework for ongoing policy issues for the early childhood education space and so that these recommendations will be relevant not just in this budget cycle, but likely over the longer term. Second, the council asked for members of this body to volunteer to serve on two person subcommittees to do some of the heavy lifting related to writing the draft content for the council to help shape and refine the recommendations and to be able to present them at these meetings. We were very lucky to have people volunteer for the committees and really appreciate it. So Karla Pleitéz Howell, and Sonia Jaramillo

formed the Family Access and Federal Policy Subcommittee and then Andrea Fernandez Mendoza and Natali Gaxiola. And Natali, if I'm pronouncing your last name wrong, let me know, formed the Workforce Needs Subcommittee.

So first we just want to start by thanking those subcommittees. And again, those were really formed to do a lot of that heavy lifting on the writing of recommendations because this is a council set of recommendations and not a Department of Social Services or administration set of recommendations. But as many of you know, we also have really active and appointed subcommittees to our council, the parent advisory subcommittee and the workforce subcommittee, which are chaired by Mary and Tonia respectively. So a lot of the content and conversation for these recommendations is also coming out of those advisory committees. I may have said subcommittees, excuse me, the advisory committees and their work that they've been doing over the last few years.

So these subcommittees basically are working in coordination with the advisory committees and our council to pull together these recommendations and to really vet them and discuss and get input. And so the advisory committees will have opportunities to give input and to shape these recommendations in their advisory committee meetings. And then the council will get a chance at our quarterly meetings to hear what is being pulled together and to discuss and continue to refine and shape those recommendations.

The goal of all of this, which I realize is complicated in how we're structuring this, is to have at the final meeting of this year for our council, which is in November, to vote to endorse the recommendations in the form of an annual report that we will submit to the legislature. Again, this is a new process and as you can hear, it's a little bit complex, but it is really trying to make sure that the recommendations are coming from the council, that they're informed by all the work that the advisory committees are doing, that it's informed by all of your voices and that the final report reflects that and feels in line just the way the letters do with what your input is and not a report written by the administration.

So basically what we're going to do is now I'm going to turn it over to Karla and Sonia to discuss their work so far on the family access and federal policy recommendations. And then after the break, then we'll have about a 30-minute council discussion, then after the break, we'll come back and talk about the workforce subcommittee. So with that, let me turn it over to Karla and Sonia and they can start presenting their recommendations and discussions they've had so far.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Claire. And I'll kick it off and then turn it to Sonia. So before we dive in, Sonia and I thought it would be really important to ground us on some shared values that are shaping what we will propose for you today. So first, we wanted to acknowledge and really respect the tremendous work that has already been led by families, by advocates, by providers, researchers, public systems. We wanted to make sure that we

are clear in our proposal to you all that there are a lot of recommendations in the field and our task is not to reinvent that wheel, but to thoughtfully build on what already exists. So the proposal we have for you today will really take that value into account.

The second and really, really critical for the recommendation we have for you is that we continue to see families with young children really navigating instability just given the times we are living in. We see federal policy shifts, we see threats to the safety net, housing insecurity, immigration concerns. And we believe that ECPC has a really critical role to play during these times to make sure that we elevate the needs of children and families during this moment. So while there are a lot of really good recommendations that exist, we know we are living in a time that there are gaps that we also have to address and require different recommendations in this annual report.

And lastly, we want to elevate the value of what we can actually build together and the expertise in this room really matters, your lived experience, the policy expertise that we were just sharing, the systems knowledge and really community perspective. So we have taken these three values and we'll offer the following process for our conversation today. Sonia will kick it off and provide context and overview for the task of the subcommittee.

Then we will move to a proposed process for the subcommittee. We do not have recommendations for you today for the annual report. Rather, we have a proposed process for building out those recommendations. And then lastly, we'll spend time gathering some input from you to figure out what recommendations should elevate to the top, knowing that we can't do it all, but at least as we look ahead for 2027, what would be really critical recommendations that would come from this group so that we could come back to you. So that's the conversation today context, proposed process, and then we'll ask some questions of all of you. So with that, let me turn it to Sonia for the context and background.

Sonia Jaramillo:

Thank you, Karla. That was a very welcoming introduction for the group. And like Karla mentioned, our goal is to get your input and be able to cover the priorities that we all have and it's a statewide recommendation. So each one of you has different needs and we want to make sure that when we take the final recommendations, that we are inclusive of all of the different needs. So I'm going to go down the recommendations, the information that we have right now. So as you recall, AB563 directs the policy council to develop an annual report and include the following items. They want at a minimum the successes, challenges, and gaps in the state's early childhood education, which we know we have quite a few and we have seen those lists grow every year. With this, the recommendations is to facilitate advancing the state's vision for children, families, and communities, keeping that in mind at all times.

And please remember this information as at the end we're going to be asking for your input and we want to make sure that we cover all of these components. This is an annual requirement and we need to submit the report as mentioned by introductions by

the annual report in December. So including with that, we have the policy proposal and the budget request as related to the family needs and the workforce needs and the family access. So with that in mind, the committee was developed, the subcommittee was developed and you saw the items on the letter and the letter is very inclusive of all the components we're going to be recommending, but we have to be able to prioritize and target some of those needs rather than all of them as mentioned in Andrea's letter.

With that then the two subcommittees and we're one of them will be covering the following topics to present and then select. So with the topics that we have is the funding of the promise and it was mentioned in the letter, the 200 or so is a little bit higher based on some of the comments, but let's say 200K childcare spaces, but it would be the addition to keeping and with the additional 44,000 slots originally promised. So increasing to be able to cover and not reduce. And one of the keywords and recommendations was to ensure that we move forward and not lose any of those numbers. The protection of the healthcare access for our families and children with medical coverage and policies and eligibility flexibility so that we're not limiting access to anyone. And number three is the protection of housing security as well with grant funding for those cities and programs that support and are trying to find ways to continue to provide those services to our families who, as we see, many are women and children from communities of color.

Number four is the protection and the safety and wellbeing of our immigrant families and children. And we have seen the negative things happening currently and our families, immigrant families are in desperate need of additional support. So having some legal services, access to legal services programs and reversing some of those proposals will definitely help our immigrant families and children. And number five is the strengthening of safety and policies to provide the long-term support and help reduce the poverty and promote economic stability. And this goes back to the safety net funds cut by HR1.
Karla?

Claire Ramsey:

Karla, if you're talking, we can't hear you. And Sonia, let's give us a second and see if... Wondering if she got bumped off the call.

I'm not seeing her on the panelist list.

Sonia Jaramillo:

Oh, she probably dropped. Okay.

Claire Ramsey:

She knew you had it and she was...

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I'm so sorry, Sonia. My computer just turned off.

Sonia Jaramillo:

Are you back?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I am back.

Sonia Jaramillo:

I was about to take over, but you're back on. So as discussed, you are next.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Sonia. Thank you folks. Apologies about that tech issue. So as mentioned, Sonia and I really led this process with the value of ensuring that we are honoring what has been created already. So at a really high level, there are five steps that we are proposing. First and foremost is critical input from the ECPC. Second is making sure that we are working with the subcommittees that Claire mentioned early on, workforce and parent advisory. And in between step three is reviewing the chats. There are folks listening in right now and have some recommendations for these subcommittees. And most importantly, making sure that we review reports that have been created in previous years. And then lastly, we want to come back to you all in August to make sure that we have taken your input into account and that's what's informing the recommendations that we would ultimately propose.

Those are the five critical steps and very a little bit more detail for timeline on those. So today is the very first step and we are seeking advice on content for the recommendations from you all that will be part of the discussion at the end. Secondly, we are seeking advice on historical sources that we must consult for relevant recommendations. This will be part of the question at the end as well for the group here. And then thirdly, we are encouraging an in person meeting for August 27th. That is always an option for any of us, but just given the critical recommendations that we will be discussing, we think it would be really helpful for those that can attend that we're in person on August 27th. Let me give you a little bit more detail if we go to the next slide of what would happen in between now and the August 27th meeting where we would bring back recommendations.

So as Claire mentioned at the beginning and she introduced this, we are deeply committed and think it is critical that we work with the Workforce Advisory Committee and the Parent Advisory Committee. So after we receive guidance from the ECPC, we would make sure to circle back with both those committees for a refining of recommendations that are coming to the ECPC. Between June and August, we would be reviewing a few historical documents that includes the chat for ECPC, any written comments that have been submitted to the ECPC and then annual reports. Between the June and August, we would also be reviewing literature that has been created around the field and again is within the five priority areas that Sonia covered. And then given that summer work, that's what we would bring back to this committee for more actionable recommendations that we could take on. And one more slide on process

before we open it up for questions after the August meeting, and we receive feedback from you all.

We want to make sure that we continue to work with the advisory committees to get final refinement. And the goal would be that by November 19th, you would get the final recommendations in advance and we would seek out endorsement for the annual report. So that is an overview of the process. If there are any questions on process, please let us know in the chat and we could address. But given time restrictions, we want to make sure that we are covering the three questions that we need input from you all today. But again, if there are any questions on process, please add them to the chat and we will make sure to address. So today we are seeking input on three questions. First is of the five topic priorities that this committee decided that this will be the boundary for recommendations this year. We want to know if there are key gaps, risks, or opportunities that you all think Sonia and I really need to pay attention to as we finalize some of the recommendations for you all.

Secondly, we have shared we're going to be looking at historical reports and documents. So we will seek guidance from you all in regards to what those reports should be. And then we will take a chat tally on who would be able to attend in person so that we could prepare accordingly. So with that, if we could dive into the first question. As Sonia mentioned, the task of the group has been, here is the top five priorities that came from the budget letter that we submitted earlier this year. The priorities focus on slots, healthcare, housing security, immigration, and the safety net. So given those priorities, we would love to hear from you all about what you think are really critical gaps, risks, and opportunities that we should consider. So we'll pause there to see if we could get some of your input.

- [Council discussion](#)

Claire Ramsey:

And Karla, I'm not sure you can easily see who has their hand up, but Mary has her hand up.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Okay. I cannot. My screen ends. So okay, thank you, Claire. And it would be helpful if someone that could see it can help navigate that. Mary, can we start with you?

Karin Bloomer:

She's looking for her mute button.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I see.

Mary Ignatius:

Sorry, I pressed the edit button and couldn't get out of it. I have a response to the second question, I think whichever is the one about the reports, so I can hold off until you finish.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Can we do that, Mary, to see if we get any input on this first one?

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah, yeah. You just call on me when you get to that one.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Okay. Thank you. And I see Donna.

Donna Sneeringer:

I really appreciate all the work that went into this. I know it takes a lot to try to set priorities. The one area that never seems to bubble up but I think could be really impactful for service delivery is better focus on coordination between all these systems. We look at them in individual silos, but families have to navigate them holistically. And one of the things we never prioritize is that connective tissue work. And I'm just wondering if there's a way to have just a lens of system coordination thinking woven in.

And it could be around safety net policies, but that's the one thing that I worry about having things in their usual silos and then we forget that all of these things interact with each other. And I just think about all of the families we serve who are being hit by so many of these policies coming out of the federal government, changes to HR1.

It's the same families who are trying to navigate all of this. So that's my one thought, but I just really appreciate the time it took to put this together.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Not keeping them in silo and making sure housing and safety net can become combined. So appreciate that feedback and then looking at changes related to HR1. Yep. Tonia.

Tonia McMillian:

Hey, Karla. Thank you, Karla, for this. This is phenomenal. Two questions. Does this include our special needs families?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

It did not, Tonia. Appreciate you lifting it up. So the five topic areas was meant to test out the upcoming year and recommendations, but I think what I hear in your question is there are more issues to be addressed. So part of the recommendations for this committee should at least have, I'm not going to have the right words, but a bike rack for some issues that are really, really critical but are not listed here.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay. Thank you for that. And yeah, that's exactly what I'm saying. Also, I don't know if this question would fit pertains to number three or number five, but our formerly incarcerated mothers and their childcare.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I'm also hearing making sure that there's a note on targeted populations, so we'll note that as part of considerations.

Tonia McMillian:

Thank you, Karla.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Tonia. Andrea?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Just to give a little two cents and provide some insight into where these came from, these are all pulled from our letters, our January budget letter and our May revise as our overarching issues. And looking at it, for example, children with special needs and formerly incarcerated youth and parents, that could probably fit under the safety net policies, not only regarding HR1, but just California's to make sure that those populations are supported. So framing it in that light, where do we fit them or where could they fit? How would they fit into these different subcategories?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

And Tonia and Andrea, can I just ask? The framing target populations and equity frame, frame focused on special need populations, wondering if you have any additional insight for what would be critical for recommendations that come back. I'm hearing targeted populations are crucial, but want to make sure that understanding that correctly.

Tonia McMillian:

I'd like to get back to you on that, Karla, because I know those two populations already, they've already fell through the cracks and so I just don't want to see them remain there.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Okay.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And if I just could share a little bit about families that have children with special needs, one of the things that we're seeing is there is a disconnect between the regional center services and the school district services and that continuity sometimes falls in the cracks. Because either families don't have the support system that they need to bridge one to the other. Also as a center-based and knowing that this is also facing family childcare homes as well is that when a child with an IEP or an IFSP is in our programs and then they are offered services at a school district, a lot of the times it's framed as

that's the only way they can get the services and then they are promptly transferred out of our programs.

So we lose that enrollment and the family may not have the true needs of the care that they need versus where they're going into a four or five-hour program where they need a wraparound full day different hours that a family childcare home or a center could provide. So that's another issue that a lot of the families are facing when they have to make a choice, do I keep my care and the hours I need so I can sustain my family or do I move them into where they're going to be provided services? And I think a lot of communication and information needs to be given to families so that they understand their rights.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Perfect. Thank you, Andrea. And noting, Donna, your note on Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission, so we'll make sure to lift that up. Tonia?

Tonia McMillian:

Yeah, thank you Andrea for lifting that up because I know firsthand that there are centers and family childcare homes that there are so many challenges between their environments and connecting with regional centers. It's almost absent. And so I'm really happy that Andrea brought that up.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yeah, appreciate it. Really helpful.

Claire Ramsey:

Karla? Oh, I'm sorry. I just wanted to do a little time check. I think about seven more minutes until the end of this section, so just wanted to make sure you had a chance for your other questions.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Perfect. Let me ask one more question on this one. Healthcare, safety net, immigration. I think we've gotten some feedback on the other ones, but anyone on the call for risks or opportunities that you want to make sure these recommendations address related to safety net, healthcare or immigration? Yes, Donna.

Donna Sneeringer:

I'm going to go back to my prior recommendation, which is I think because of the siloed nature of all this funding, we have families that are being served in our childcare system that aren't accessing services in healthcare and how do we start to do that actual referral process for families across systems? I know, I don't even want to say how many times I've heard one door, a single point of entry. The reality is, is they come through all the doors and it's our job to make sure families get connected to the rest of the system that they need, not theirs to go find it.

So I think there's technology that needs to be brought into this conversation that would do those types of referrals. There are actually best practices emerging in counties like Riverside where they are setting up those types of closed loop referral structures that we really need to look at and figure out at the state level what needs to be done so that we can better serve all of our families, whether it's housing or healthcare or behavioral health. There's all these pieces and regardless of what their entry point is, they should get connected to everything.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Donna. Noted. Andrea?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Sorry, one more time. A couple of issues, like Donna highlighted, families are having a hard time accessing services. We have noticed that they have a fear of accessing any type of subsidized service, because they're afraid of their information being shared with immigration or law enforcement or something. So there's that fear that needs to be really addressed.

But secondly, I think for at least center-based providers and people who are obligated to follow AB495, which is the Family Preparedness Plan Act, I think there is some confusion and some lack of awareness on what it entails. So I think that would be something to either use as a tool or communicate, highlight somehow to get that information not readily available, but more accessible for family childcare home providers and center-based providers to understand what those requirements are, what best practice could be, and what it would look like in their programs.

Because I think there's a little bit of disconnect between knowing what is the actual requirement and what they're required to do, for example, as a CSPP provider, versus a family childcare home, versus another type of program. So I think that would be a good point. May not be the most important, but something to highlight and appreciate.

Sonia Jaramillo:

Well-stated. Thank you, Andrea. I noted that as well.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Sonia. And last, Tony, on this one?

Tony Jordan:

Yeah, thank you. So I just noticed in the five recommendations here, two through five are obviously bigger, more general areas to look at going forward. And the first piece, the first one is very specific. It ties back to the previous agenda item. So I don't know if we want to look at anything that doesn't happen in the enacted budget for '26, '27 to be elevated back to our recommendations. We just did a whole bunch of work in that letter in the previous agenda item. So I would say anything that doesn't come to fruition in our recommendations from the previous agenda item be elevated back to, "Hey, don't

forget, we tried to address this last year, didn't happen." The pieces that don't come to fruition is what I would say we want to continue to elevate.

There's been conversation about which programs in the UPK umbrella, if you will, live under Prop 98 and which ones don't. I know there were some comments from the public as well, so that might be something to elevate as a recommendation to address going forward. And I think why that's important is when we look at rate reform and funding levels and really try to build out an equitable system, we should all be using some of those same baseline models.

For example, if an average TK-12 annual ADA for one student is \$20,000.00, when we look at that as a 6-hour day, 180-day on average per year, looking at that, if all programs were in Prop 98 funding, that would be a baseline that we could all then build off of. So if I'm not just doing a 6-hour a day, 180-day program, if I'm doing 10 or 12 hours a day and doing 248 days a year, using that baseline model of funding that schools get, I think would help really bring the whole UPK umbrella into a baseline that we could all understand and build off of. So just being cognizant of if that whole Prop 98, non-Prop 98 conversation comes to fruition at some point for all of the programs under that UPK umbrella, I think it affords itself some opportunities to continue to look at where we can align, where we can build off of, how we can all have some common baseline understanding as we move forward.

Oftentimes in ECE, we compare ourselves, and we are an important cog in the educational system, but we need to, I think, really be cognizant of the comparisons we're making aren't always apples to apples. A lot of our centers and family childcare home providers that we work with in our program are providing 10, 12-hour a day services, five, six, sometimes seven days a week when we're in peak agricultural seasons. And so, just keeping all that in mind on that Prop 98 piece, if that comes to fruition. I think it affords us some opportunities to look at better alignment and better understanding and different models to incorporate.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Tony. We will definitely look at Prop 98. We're going to move to the next question and start with Mary, then we'll turn it to Steve. I see you put in a comment. And Maéva, some of the-

Claire Ramsey:

Oh, Karla, I'm sorry. I just want to confirm we probably have about three more minutes, so I do want to hear from people, but we do need to wrap it up.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Perfect. Perfect. Thank you, Claire. And Maéva, noted the workforce is coming up next. So some of the workforce recommendations, I know Andrea is leading, so just want to name that. Folks, let me start with Mary on recommendations for report.

0Mary Ignatius:

Yeah, I'll be quick. We were working with a small group to start to already do a little bit of this crosswalk to get a sense of where we are today, what's been passed from these reports, what still remains. And Julia Frudden from the Childcare Law Center and Laura Pryor from the California Budget and Policy Center already have a chart and a crosswalk. I don't know that it includes all of the things here, but it includes a lot. So we will have them send it to you as a starting point so you don't have to do that work again.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

That's fantastic. Really, really appreciate it. Steve, noting the report you are recommending. And given time folks, if there are other reports for consideration, if we could add it to the chat and Sonia and I will monitor the chat to see what recommendations you lift up. And let us turn to the last question. We wanted to recommend an in-person possibility for folks that are available on August 27th, so that as recommendations are brought forward, we can make sure that we go through a charting prioritization process. So in the chat, if you're able to add your name and can attend in person, we'll make sure to note that so that we could plan accordingly. But with that, I am going to turn it over to Claire and really appreciate the feedback.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you, Karla, Sonia, for pulling all this together. Very helpful to walk through all of this and appreciate everyone's feedback and participation in this. We are going to take our 10-minute break right now that will have us back at 10:59. And then we'll jump right into agenda item number four.

And there was a question in the chat related to why there wasn't a facility subcommittee. Last meeting when we were doing volunteers for subcommittees, that was the one that didn't end up getting anyone. So if there are facilities issues that feel relevant to lift up right now, I think we can incorporate them into one of the other two subcommittees, and it's also not set in stone. So if we think going forward, we really do need a facilities subcommittee in years to come, then we can certainly accommodate that. And with that, Karin, we will be back at 10:59. Thanks, everyone.

Karin Bloomer:

That's right. And we welcome public comment during this period as well via chat. So please feel free members of the public to respond to the last agenda item.

MEETING BREAK

4. Workforce Needs Subcommittee Discussion

- Subcommittee shares draft content

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. I'm noting that it's 10:59. I'd like to welcome back council members and those who are participating remotely to turn their cameras back on. Thank you so much. And I will turn it back to Claire to introduce the next agenda item.

Claire Ramsey:

Thanks, Karin, and welcome back everyone. So our next agenda item is agenda item number four relating to our workforce needs subcommittee discussion. Natali and Andrea volunteered to lead this subcommittee. So I want to thank them for that work that they've already done. They did provide a couple of recommendations that got shared with you and Karin shared a couple days ago. But I'll turn it over to them so they can start walking us through these pieces and they can have the full time. And we have 35 minutes for this section.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So good morning, everyone again. And just to give you a little purview of where this came from. Again, these were drawn from our letter, our January letter, and our May revised letter. These are a starting point. We know that there are more issues surrounding workforce that we are welcome to take your thoughts and recommendations on adding to our draft recommendations. But we know that in the interest of time and in the interest of getting these put out to impact the May revise and the budget that is forthcoming, that we wanted to move on getting some of what we know are issues in our field forward in front of you today.

And so, our workforce needs subcommittee drafted two recommendations that we would like your feedback on. You did receive them in your email, so you have had a chance to read through the history, where they came from, why it's an issue. We have one on the Flex Factor, the contract earning floor, and one on rate reform. We are limited time. So know that time is ticking on these. And for background sections, please put your feedback in the chat.

For the draft recommendation sections, please focus on giving us feedback in the chat and verbally surrounding these questions. Do you support the recommendation? If not, what concerns you or what changes would you make? And if you could please add those changes into the chat, like something you would add or something that you would like removed. Is there something that you would like us to add on? And like I mentioned, we are going to be taking recommendations for other topics that we could draft for future meetings. But because we know the interest of time and we are on a timeline to get these before legislature, that we brought these forth to you today. And Natali and I are going to take turns. So next slide, please.

Natali Gaxiola:

So the draft recommendations that we want to adopt of the flex factor to stabilize contract earnings on the floor. So relevant to the ECPC priority from the '26, '27 budget letter is this part, which is providing support for childcare policy changes that build more resilient ECE ecosystem prioritizing provider-centered fiscal reform and ensure operational stability by moving towards enrollment-based funding models such as an 85% contract earning floor to protect providers from the fiscal shock of fluctuating attendance.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And so, the Flex Factor historically, childcare programs were often paid based on attendance, and that was pre-COVID. And so there was a pre-COVID attendance flex factor prior to the Hold Harmless, where if a child stayed home from childcare because they were sick or other reasons, the center lost money if they were unexcused absences. But we still have fixed costs. We still have to pay teachers' salaries, rent, utilities, and other overhead and operational expenses.

The state mitigated this fluctuation to some degree by instituting a 5% Flex Factor on attendance that enabled centers to be paid for the full contract amount if they met 95% of their attendance-based earnings. During COVID, the state implemented the Hold Harmless protections for childcare centers such that contractors could be paid the maximum amount of their contract regardless of attendance to account for the pandemic crisis. The Hold Harmless protections ends June 30th of this year. Beginning July 1st, 2026, the state will reimburse childcare centers based on enrollment rather than daily attendance, which is an improvement. However, the enrollment-based reimbursement structure is not accompanied by the Flex Factor policy to support the contract earning floor.

Natali Gaxiola:

So Flex Factor brief summary of progress due to the date. The state policy shifts to reimburse childcare centers based on enrollment rather than on daily attendance, a significant milestone in improving the sustainability of childcare provisions in California. Enrollment-based reimbursement provides a predictable revenue stream that doesn't fluctuate weekly. Reliable revenue allows directors to budget for entire school year and set realistic budgets that allow for guaranteed hours and salaried positions, which is essential for long-term workforce and professionalism.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So there are still some challenges to this Flex Factor and the gaps that remain. There are many factors that prevent full enrollment for various subsets of the ECE population, and we all know this. This is something we've been facing and discussing for the past few years. With competition with TK, declining birth rates, staffing issues, we can't get teachers to open classrooms, immigration enforcement, and related fear of accessing subsidized programs, all of these factors prevent contractors from achieving full enrollment.

As a result, a Flex Factor policy is still needed in the enrollment-based payment structure to support childcare sustainability and access. Without this policy change, childcare centers will continue to struggle with unpredictable budgets and loss of staff, which negatively impact families' access to childcare. Moreover, a large percentage of center contractors have only operated since the Hold Harmless protections were in effect. Many contractors are unfamiliar with the dynamics of operating in an environment which their earnings are subject to enrollment. For at least the next few years, contractors will be learning how to budget for fluctuating enrollment and related earnings. These contractors need a safety net to keep their centers open at least during this transition period.

Natali Gaxiola:

So the draft ECPC recommendations adopt Flex Factor for stability contract earning floor. We urge the legislator and the governor to enact a 15% Flex Factor policy that allows childcare providers who maintain at least 85% of their certified enrollment to be reimbursed at their full contract amount. This provides a reasonable and data informed approach to account for normal fluctuations in the enrollment while maintaining accountability. This approach will help bring us closer to the stable foundation for early learning programs, supporting consistent staffing, preserving access to care, and ensuring that children and families can rely on these services. This change would strengthen the system by providing clear expectations and pathways for programs that are working toward full enrollment, ensuring both stability and continuous improvement. The Flex Factor policy could be established via regulations and would not have a state budget impact as these funds are already allocated in contract funds.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So the draft ECPC recommendation... Next slide, please.

- [Council discussion](#)

Karin Bloomer:

Andrea and Natalie, would you like feedback from the council members on this before moving on to the rate reform topic?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Actually, that's exactly right. I was speeding on ahead, yes.

Karin Bloomer:

And just to recap in support of the subcommittee, I believe you're interested again in the limited time you have, do council members support this recommendation? If a council member does not, what concerns do they have? How would they change it? And is there something missing that's important that a council member wants to suggest adding?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Yes, please. And at the end of the next section, we'll go ahead and take recommendations for other topics that you would like to see included. Tonia?

Tonia McMillian:

Hi, Andrea. So you're urging the governor and legislator to enact the 15% Flex Factor policy that allows all childcare providers who maintain 85%, or is this strictly center-based?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

This is center-based, because I believe for family childcare, it works a little differently. And so, this was based on the Flex Factor that center-based providers had previous to COVID and previous to the hospital.

Tonia McMillian:

Already in place?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Yes.

Tonia McMillian:

Got it.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Tony? Tony?

Tony Jordan:

Yeah. So currently... Well, I should say as Hold Harmless sunsets, what those of us that have been around before COVID, we were anticipating going back to the one of three options structure, which was earnings, expenses, or MRA, the lesser of one of those three. So I guess what I was unclear of is, how does that play with what this proposal would be? Is it the earnings would be at least 85% of the contracted child days of enrollment in order to then be qualifying for one of those three maximum reimbursement amounts?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Yes.

Tony Jordan:

And I'm not trying to... Maximum funding that we get, I don't want to confuse by using MRA out of context.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

But in essence, yes, because it's either the most that you spend on your contract or what you've earned in your contract. That's what pre-COVID was. Your maximum expenditures or... Now what it would go back to is there was no Flex Factor because that was on attendance-based enrollment. So we want this to be added so that any contractor could at least maintain 85% of their certified enrollment to be able to get the maximum of their contract. And so, it would add a 15% flex to the enrollment, not an 85%. So it's that benchmark to be met. So, less than 85%, it would be the total contract amount, expenditures or enrollment based on the certified days plus the 15% Flex Factor.

Tony Jordan:

Thanks for clarifying.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And Tonia?

Tonia McMillian:

So just for clarity, and so that we don't have any misleading or miscommunications or any of that, I feel like this specifically pertains to centers, and it should say that. Misinformation runs rampant, especially in America right now. So anyway, we don't want that. We don't need that.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Yeah. And the Family Childcare Home Education Networks get the maximum certified hours. So it is a little bit similar, but it's not the same. This is specifically for center-based providers.

Tonia McMillian:

And I think it should say that.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And we can definitely add that in. Karla?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I agree with Tonia, because I had the same question. And if California is moving to a single rate structure as we're making this recommendation, being able to say how this will align to a single rate structure and include some of the populations that Tonia's lifting up would be really helpful.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And yes, it's specific to subsidized contracted centers. So this is a niche that, yes, needs to be called out, and it would be an interim solution to coming out of the hold harmless until the single rate reform was implemented. So this would not be a fix-all. This is a temporary solution until we can get that, that is specific to direct service contracts, yes.

Karin Bloomer:

And Andrea, you'll see in chat input from Donna and Maéva. So Donna mentioned specific to subsidized contracted centers.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Correct.

Karin Bloomer:

I think Title V centers.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And Tony?

Tonia McMillian:

Oh, sorry.

Tony Jordan:

That's okay. I guess the nuance, we run a really large Family Childcare Home Network using CCTR funding. So there's a nuance there that our Family Childcare Home providers are going to probably feel shortchanged by this. So I want to be cognizant of that. And if there's a way to somehow include language that would be supportive to Family Childcare Home providers in a center-based contract. I haven't thought this through well enough to what that language might look like, but I think... Yeah.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

That's what I was going to ask, if there was a way or if you had some upper posed language that we could look at. I do know-

Tony Jordan:

Not right now, but before the end of the meeting, I'll be thinking on the side and put something in chat.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So in essence, FCCHs are paid differently, but they would not be penalized under the way that we're trying to get this through. And we would make sure because not only are we the ECPC that looking to support this recommendation, but there are several sister organizations that are also uplifting this like Every Child California. And I know there are several who are keeping the family childcare homes in mind, but this is a specific sticking point that the LAO's office and the Department of Finance were trying to push back on saying that it would cost money, but these are already allocated funds. So it's not going to cost any more money to the budget. And like I said, there is work behind not only this aspect to it, but to make sure that family childcare homes were not penalized as well. Tonia?

Tonia McMillian:

Oh, I think you just answered my question. I was going to ask, is this going to change the budget? Is this going to change the funding?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

It's cost neutral.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

They're already contract... So the way that the contract works is that you are allocated a certain amount of money in your contract and you either earn the contract through certified enrollment or you don't earn it. And it's already promised money to contractors... It's already promised money, so it does not cost any more to implement this flex factor. Thank you. Those were great questions.

Karin Bloomer:

And Andrea and Natali, I know you have another even more lengthy set of recommendations in regard to rate reform. So unless there's any other immediate feedback or feedback that council members would prefer not to put into chat, I wonder if it's best to move on.

- Subcommittee shares draft content (continued)

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Well, unless anyone has any other concerns, please feel free to share any thoughts in the chat. We will look at those and make sure to take those into consideration as well. But if there's none, we will go ahead and move forward because we do have a lot to cover and I lost my slide, so give me one second. Okay. So the second draft ECPC recommendation is the rate reform, is to advance rate reform. And it is a budget priority from our letters funding the rate reform to ensure compensation for the true cost of care at the rate reflecting economic realities. We know that it is an issue. We wanted to drive this issue home in our advocacy. And so I'm going to hand it over to Natali.

Natali Gaxiola:

So here's a brief summary of the issue is that California's transitioning to a cost-based alternative methodology to set reimbursement rates for the state subsidized childcare system. A 2021 law ratified an agreement between the newly reformed childcare provider, United Union, and the state required a creation of a joint labor management committee, JLMC, to develop recommendations for a single rate structure and provide one-time funding to supplement reimbursement rates for both family childcare and center-based providers and address rates inequities. To support this transition, CDSS in partnership with the prenatal to five fiscal strategies developed a cost estimation model based on provider data and stakeholder input across all 58 counties. The model aims to estimate a true cost care by accounting for factors such as staffing program type, child age, and geographic variation.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

The JLMC recommendations released in December 2025 emphasized that the model should inform but not cap rate setting and should be regularly updated to reflect evolving costs. Under the proposed single rate structure, reimbursement rates would be determined using a consistent cost informed methodology across programs with base rates supporting general operations and enhanced rates for factors such as non-traditional hours and inclusion supports. Following federal approval of the alternative methodology through the Child Care and Development Fund, the CCDF state plan, CDSS is required to provide CCPU with an implementation plan and engage in further negotiations on rates and funding. CDSS is also required to provide quarterly updates to the legislature on implementation through July 1st, 2027. Because rates were not implemented by the statutory deadline of July 1st, 2025, CDSS is also required to provide a transition timeline, but the law does not specify when that timeline must be submitted.

According to CDSS's January 2026 rate reform update, full implementation of the SRS is expected to take at least two additional years and remains contingent on budget decisions, collective bargaining outcomes, and significant data system and administrative changes.

Natali Gaxiola:

So reform, continue. Childcare providers were given the right to unionize and collectively bargain with the state leading to the formation of the childcare providers united. The state has developed the alternative methodology cost model. The state is formally moving towards a single rate structure. The state has provided funding for implementation activities and automation infrastructure. The state extended and expanded cost of care plus payments a form of interim financial relief while the state works towards permanent cost-based reimbursement rates. The state extended policies allowing providers to be reimbursed based on certified enrollment rather than attendance alone.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So despite this progress, several key issues remain unsolved. There are delays in full implementation, the statewide rate schedule has not been finalized, there is uncertainty about long-term funding, there remain disagreements about geographic regions and cost assumptions, and there are concerns about data transparency and rate setting.

Natali Gaxiola:

To ensure accountability for the implementation timeline require CDSS to submit a timeline for transitioning to a new reimbursement rate by January 31st, 2027 and update it annually until the rate implementation is complete.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Number two, ensure consistent and equitable application across the mixed delivery system. To ensure the shift to a single rate structure delivers on its promise of consistency and equity, require the following elements to be included in implementation.

A, apply the same cost-based methodology uniformly across center-based and family childcare providers with appropriate adjustments for program type and structure.

B, ensure that rate setting processes explicitly account for the rates and income based in equities institutionalized by the regional market rate system as identified by the rate and quality work group.

C, meaningfully reflect geographic variation and rates so that providers in high cost regions are not disadvantaged by a structure that fails to account for local economic conditions.

D, update the cost estimation model on a regular and defined schedule to ensure rates remain responsive to evolving costs rather than becoming fixed and outdated.

And E, make interim rate increases available to providers to bridge the gap between current reimbursement levels and the cost of care while the full single rate system implementation proceeds.

Natali Gaxiola:

Require transparent reproducible and honest data in all rate setting decisions. Require all the data used to develop, justify, and communicate rate reform decisions meet the following standards.

A, rate and fiscal estimates must be based on actual verifiable cost data. No figures that have been adjusted, deflated, or selectively presented to make reform appear more affordable than it is.

B, methodology must be clearly documented as sufficiently detailed to allow independent review and reproduction.

C, all assumptions, limitations, and data gap must be disclosed explicitly.

D, when data projections or methodology change, those changes must be communicated transparently with clear explanation of what changed and why.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And so before we go into our next steps, I just kind of wanted to ask if there were any thoughts on these, any ahas, any concerns, any questions that we could address? We know that rate reform is an open sore. We've been working on rate reform, many of you in this group, many of you on the Zoom for many, many years now. And so our goal is to push this to the forefront to make sure that it remains at the front of their attention. Thoughts? Feedback? Tonia, thank you.

- [Council discussion \(continued\)](#)

Tonia McMillian:

Oh, is there an idea of how often these updates ... Oh, no, you said update annually. Nevermind. Read, Tonia. Open your eyes and read.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Well, we thank you for making a comment though. You started us off.

Karin Bloomer:

Yeah. And from Mary Ann Hansen, a council member in the chat, she appreciates these clear recommendations, "Very clearly articulated. Thank you for your work on these."

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Catherine?

Catherine Brozowski:

I'd just be interested in more definition on bullet 2A, apply the same cost-based methodology uniformly across center-based and family childcare providers with appropriate adjustments for program type and structure. I'd really want to see more detail on what that looks like.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

There are recommendations that the J... I always get that acronym wrong that have been proposed with administration's proposals. I believe we can share that information. I'm not sure how I would get that to you, but there are specific... And people who have gone through the rate and quality work group have also been working on how that would be addressed. And so there are some very specific charts with that information and how. That was one of the issues though in why the call-out for clear reproducible data was made because we wanted to know where those numbers came from. Can this be reproduced? Can we come to these same conclusions with the information? And so that's why we added three to make sure that there was a transparency. And if we can't afford it because it is a huge cost, then let us know. But we don't want it to be data to not be included because to make it more affordable. We want the clear data. We want it transparent. We want to see that process. I'm hoping I could share that chart with you, but it is in the JLMC recommendations.

Karin Bloomer:

And just real quick, sorry, just in a spirit of support from council member Catherine Brozowski, I wonder then if again, like other feedback from council members on your previous recommendations, that in the next iteration of this that you bring back that I'm hearing she would appreciate maybe a bit more detail, elaborate more on 2A. So we could share it at that time in advance of the next meeting and then in the draft that they'll see.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you. We definitely can add that in.

Claire Ramsey:

And I think we could, Karin, can't we send the link out to the JLMC report and the rate and quality work group page, which has I think all the information that was publicly shared at those meetings?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes, absolutely. Happy to send an email to council members on that. Thank you for the idea.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And I think that would help answer a lot of where this came from as well from the JLMC recommendations. Diana?

Diana Ramos:

Yeah, no, thank you very much for all of the work that you're doing. And I see that the focus here is on the rate reform, rate recommendations, but I do want to call out and share, earlier last week I was at the YMCA and just as a thought for a no cost increase in workforce, which is one of the areas that we're focusing on is to realize that as part of the Medi-Cal requirements now to maintain your coverage is the volunteering. And so what the YMCA is doing is that they are providing the opportunity for parents to be able to volunteer and that could qualify for their quote, unquote, "volunteering" requirement. So just sharing that best practice that I learned from them and something to consider as a no cost, that is now going to be something that folks are going to be looking for opportunities to be able to maintain their health insurance.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you for sharing that, Diana. That is an important highlight to support our families. I'm not sure who had their hand first, Tony or Karla.

Karin Bloomer:

I think it's in order of raising hands, so Tony would be first. Yeah.

Tony Jordan:

Thank you. Just to piggyback off the previous comment on bullet 2A, if we could just flesh that out a little bit. I think we're talking about hours and days of service and maybe target populations like DLL, special needs, at risk. So if we could specifically call that out, I think that would be important. And then on bullet 2E, just want to re-elevate one of the interim pieces that could be done is to, again, align and increase to match the adjustment factors. There's disparity right now between state preschool and other center-based contracts. So that might be a place to plug that back in, especially if it doesn't get handled through budget enactment.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you, Tony. I was just taking notes. Karla?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you. Agree with Tony. We'll add language on certain populations and ensuring that the base rate includes the cost of serving working families, certain populations. So we'll add that shortly to the chat. Andrea, I was wondering for 2A, adding family, friend, and neighbor, in language, if there was any consideration, yes or no to something like that?

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

That is something I could take back, that I will take back. I have not had conversations around that and I don't know where that would fit in here.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Okay. I would offer 2A, family, childcare providers, family, friend, and neighbor just for consideration.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

And it's on the rate. So family, friend, and... So I know that they're included in the structure, but I will look at more at how to highlight them or pull that in.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

And then would offer for 2B that we also add the voice of community educators. So it was more than the rate and quality work group that was offering some of this and I think it's important for legislatures to understand that. Thank you. And let me add language to chat right now for some of the things that Tony and I both agreed.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So to include them as thought partners, right, Karla?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

To include language in 2B that was, let's see, what would be... It would be, and the voices of early educators and families. Just additional language.

Claire Ramsey:

And excuse me for interrupting, Andrea and Natali. I just want to say I think we have about four or five more minutes and then we need to close up this item. So just wanted to give you a time check.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you. Were there any other... And I really appreciate the feedback. A lot of thought went into these to try and get them as concise and direct as possible. Are there any other thoughts on any of the other ones or number three that you feel need to be included, excluded, highlighted? Okay. So seeing as there are none, I appreciate... And are there any, and I'm going to actually ping to the chat for a second. I know that facilities were not addressed in either of these two work groups. Facilities could be a workforce issue and an access issue, so I'm not sure which one that would fit under, but I think we have to have some more discussions around... And I agree with the licensing hurdles that contractors are facing, myself included. And so I'm not sure where that would fit, but I will make sure that we look at that as well and see how we could have conversations with Karin and see how we can Natali to see how we can fit that in.

But the next steps we're going to bring this back to our June 9th joint meeting of the Workforce Advisory Committee and the Parent Advisory Committee to share our drafts. Then at the August 27th council meeting and September 10th joint meeting, we will share updates to our drafts and the content for your review. We will take your feedback and include that. And then the November 19th council meeting, seek council vote on the recommendations. So I appreciate your thought partnership in this and working together to get these moving. This is a first step in a long process that Natali and I were trying to get off the ground and moving. And so we appreciate your input and we thank you for your time and your thoughts on this.

Claire Ramsey:

Thank you, Andrea and Natali, this was really helpful. Thank you for everyone's input. Appreciate all the work that has already been put into these two subcommittees. Recognizing that issue again on licensing, I do just want to say again, this is the council's report. So just because we didn't end up with a licensing subcommittee does not mean that no facilities issues can be raised or that we're boxed out of doing that. So if you see a recommendation that you want to lift to either or both subcommittees to consider, that is totally fine.

I do just also want to remind people to be very careful about Bagley-Keene rules related to coming together as basically a council without us being formally noticed as a meeting, meaning that once three council members are together, you are now conducting a meeting of the Early Childhood Policy Council. So I know that can sometimes be complicated. And obviously if you're doing it and you just happen to be getting together with those people for other purposes, that doesn't run afoul because I know you all work together on lots of other issues, but for these purposes, please be very careful you're not accidentally convening a meeting of the ECPC unnoticed. Of course, that's one other reason for the Parent and Workforce Advisory Committee meetings to be a good place to hear additional feedback on all of this from those advisory committee members and that's a noticed meeting that's allowable.

Thank you, everyone. This was a very full meeting. Very good to hear all your conversation. Appreciate how much our new council members have already jumped right in and provided valuable feedback and input. Really looking forward to continuing to work with all of you and all of our existing members. With that, I am going to move it to Karin so we can open up for our final agenda item, which is general public comment.

5. General Public Comment

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. We are now welcoming public comment on this most recent agenda item four as well as general public comment. We are opening up the chat feature for written comment and we will invite verbal comment at this time from members of the public, whether they're in this room or on Zoom. For those of you on Zoom, if you would like to be in the queue to speak, please use the raised hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom screen or at the bottom of the attendee panel. I will call on you one at a time to unmute. We ask that speakers keep their comments to two minutes or less so that we can accommodate as many speakers as possible in the time we have. I will let you know when you have 30 seconds left and when your 10-minute mark has been reached. Please understand that public comments are statements submitted for the public record, council members are not in a position to respond to questions or comments at this time.

And with that, we will invite the first person in the queue. And I see it's Deborah Corley Marzett. Wonderful. Deborah, we're unmuting you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Thank you. And good morning, almost afternoon, everyone. I just want to say for Andrea and Natali, thank you for that report. But on that first page of the draft, ECPC recommendation adopt flex factor to stabilize contract earnings, you really need to, if you can, please include that first sentence, childcare providers, it needs to say centers because it's totally misleading when you read that it's as if all providers are included there.

And I also want to make a comment about the Hold Harmless and we talk about what's going to be expiring for July 1st. I am asking that the state make sure that the agencies understand that does not apply to family daycare providers. We do not want letters going out to providers scaring them in their boots already, what's going on and their funds not being able to receive the true cost of care for another two, three, four, whatever years, because something didn't say specific. I'm going to say that here, please make sure the agencies understand this does not end for family daycare providers because that's what's going to be happening. So please make sure that they have that understood. Providers cannot afford to lose any types of subsidized payments that they have earned. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Next, we're going to unmute Zoila Carolina Toma. Zoila, please go ahead.

Zoila Carolina Toma:

Yes. Thank you everyone. Pleasure to be here again. Let's see. Well, I will recommend ensuring that when it comes to stabilization policies, a reimbursement protection and implementation support with California mixed delivery system intentionally include licensed family childcare providers or non-licensed providers. Because family childcare operates differently from center-based programs, policy should account for the realities of a small-based program without unintentionally excluding them from support designed to preserve, provide sustainability, and family access to care. And this is because we are not part of the Department of Education. And because of this simple reason, it's affecting us to be part of the mixed delivery. If we lose one child, two children in our programs, this affect us tremendously because we work with up to 14 children in a large license or up to eight with small license. Programs that have access to more enrollment have a little bit more room. We have no room at all.

So we need to make sure that we are intentionally with the name until someone decides that we are part of the early education and take us away of the health and human services and put us intentionally under the education department because us who we are, we've been here forever. We are the foundation of early education and we've been left outside. And yes, our name is going in there, it's always there, somewhere in there, but the reality comes when we're losing children to the UPK, it's happening. Right now we have so many providers reaching out just discussing that now families are telling them, "My children is going to UPK."

0Karin Bloomer:

Two minutes.

Zoila Carolina Toma:

So that means that these families are losing children. So please let's be intentional. Please make sure that we are included fully with our full name in their display. Thank you very much.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Okay, looking for other raised hands from members of the public who would like to speak. And of course, the chat feature is open for written comment. If you'd like to raise your hand, please use the raise hand feature on your Zoom screen and we'd be happy to call on you.

Not seeing any raised hands. So with that, I will turn it back to the chair, Claire Ramsey.

Claire Ramsey:

Thanks, Karin. And first I want to thank members of the public for your public comments, both in writing and verbally. Appreciate hearing from you and for your participation in this meeting. Council members, again, thank you for your engagement throughout the meeting.

I want to make sure the public is aware that the Early Childhood Policy Council Advisory Committees will be meeting jointly. So that is the Workforce Committee and the Parent Advisory Committee are meeting jointly on June 9th from 10:00 to noon, and that will provide another space to receive feedback on the draft recommendations that were shared today by the two subcommittees. Our next full council meeting is on August 27th, so that will be our third quarter of the year and we look forward to seeing you all then. And with that, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you, everyone. I hope you have a nice rest of your day and a lovely summer when we see you all again in August.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT