



**Early Childhood Policy Council
Agenda and Transcripts**

Virtual Meeting

Monday, May 20, 2024
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
- Voices from the field
- Public comment

2. May Revise Overview

- Summary child care programs
- Council discussion and response
- Public comment

3. Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update

- Status update
- Council questions
- Public comment

4. Child Care Transition Quarterly Report

- Update from the California Department of Social Services on the transition of child care programs
- Council questions
- Public comment

5. Building a Comprehensive Early Learning and Care Mixed Delivery System that Integrates Universal Prekindergarten

- Presentations
- Council discussion
- Public comment

6. Adjourn

Attendance:

ECPC Council Members:

Dean Tagawa, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Lisette Frauto, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Mayra Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Natali Gaxiola, Paula Merrigan, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Sonia Jaramillo.

Parent Advisory Committee Members:

Deborah Corley-Marzett, Lisette Frausto, Patricia Lozano, Yenni Rivera

Workforce Advisory Committee:

AnnLouise Bonnitto, Miren Algorri, Zoila Toma.

Guest:

Adam North, Amanda Clarke, Dez Martinez, Maeva Marc, Shanna Birkholz Vasquez, Stephen Propheter.

Public Comment:

Alan Guttman, Isabella Gutierrez, Laura Demaree, Marcella Graves, Renee Jacobs, Sarina Lynn, Tessie Ragan.

Hosts:

Connie Chen (CN), Diana Orozco (SP), Diana Yactayo, Gina Morimoto, Giovanna Wormsbecker (SP), Jateri Willis, Karin Bloomer, Ramee Serwanga, Veronique Baumbach, Ya-Nan Chou (CN).

Meeting Transcripts:

Karin Bloomer:

Good morning everyone. Before we begin the meeting, I'd like to review a few Zoom features with you. We'll enable these features after providing the instruction. In a few moments, we'll be offering the closed captioning feature in Zoom. To access this feature, you'll 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 closed captions in English throughout the meeting. In a moment, we will also offer language interpretation services. I'll 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 use the interpretation function, you will see at the bottom of the screen. After I'm done providing these instructions, you will see the interpretation symbol in the meeting controls. You'll click on the language you would like to hear. We also have Spanish and Mandarin interpretation available for this meeting. To hear the interpreted language only click mute original audio to not hear the background. Thank you. [Foreign language]

Mandarin Interpreter:

[Foreign language]. Next slide please.

Karin Bloomer:

All right, we will now enable the language channels. Please select your language of choice at this time. And three more items of note. We will be opening up the chat feature to invite written public comment at the end of each agenda item today. And during the final comment period, we'll also invite verbal comment. We'll be asking those who give verbal testimony to limit their time to one minute in order to invite as many voices as possible to share. The slides today that we will share will be posted on the ECPC webpage within the week.

And finally, I mentioned at the last meeting that pursuant to new Bagley-Keene rules council members who are attending virtually are required to have their cameras on unless it is technologically unfeasible to do so. Council members, thank you in advance for having your cameras on if at all possible. And with that, I will turn it over to our chair today.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

Thank you and good morning everyone. I welcome everyone to the second quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Policy Council. I am Lupe Jaime-Mileham, and I am the Deputy Director of the Childhood and Development Division at the Department of Social Services and a member of the council. I'm stepping in today as the council's chair for Director Johnson who sends her apologies and is not able to attend today. I want to thank the council members for being here as well as the advisory committee members who could join us this morning. And for the many members of the public who also joined us this morning.

For roll call, we will still have our support team take notes for the council members who are in attendance like we've done previously. And we have a very full agenda today. So I will ask staff to share the agenda now with the allotted times next to each item. We will begin with voices from the field, then provide a summary of the relevant items of the budget May Revise. We will then hear an update on the work of the rate and quality advisory panel. Receive the quarterly update on the transition of child care programs to the Department of Social Services, and then address the topic of the day, which is building a comprehensive early learning and care mixed delivery system that integrates Universal Preschool known as UPK.

In order to have the sufficient time for this last agenda item, I will ask all presenters and council members to be mindful of the time during the presentations. I will also ask for Karin's help in noting how much time we have for questions during each segment. Without further ado, let's get grounded in today's meeting by listening to Voices of the field. So today we invite a member of our workforce advisory committee, Virginia Eigen, to share her voices as a TK teacher in the San Jose Unified School District. And previously a child development specialist for children ages two through kindergarten. Virginia has invited a parent, Amanda Clark, from her school community to share her perspective as well. Virginia and Amanda, good morning and thank you for joining us. Virginia. Will you also like to introduce Amanda too?

Virginia Eigen:

Good morning. Thank you for having us today. Amanda is actually one of the parents in my current class and has some history with child development as well. So, she's a perfect person to be here for a parent and an ECE professional.

Amanda Clarke:

Hi everyone. Thank you for having me today. I'm homesick today, but I'm happy to be here. I do work in San Jose Unified, not only as a coach but also an office manager for one of our middle schools. I've been a teacher in the past as well for toddlers, and it's been, this is an honor. So, thank you Ms. Eigen for inviting me.

Virginia Eigen:

You're welcome. So, would you like to start, Amanda?

Amanda Clarke:

Sure. Absolutely. So, from a parent perspective, I see the importance of not only our education, but the social-emotional impact that our students and our children have. It's been a pleasure having my daughter in your class. I know academically she's pretty bright, but I think she's been learning so much socially and emotionally, interacting with all the different children and different cultures as well. And I really enjoy all the multicultural events that we have that help our children to broaden their horizons. I've also had the benefit of being a volunteer in the classroom, not only for TK student, but also my second grade student doing Cornerstone and being able to speak in multiple languages at my daughter's school. But also teaching them a few aspects of filling each other's buckets and utilizing those values not only in our home, on our campuses, but also in our community. So, it's been a fabulous learning experience as a parent and as a coach. So, it's been a pleasure being in the classroom as well.

Virginia Eigen:

And Amanda, your daughter is also part of the after-school program. What is that called?

Amanda Clarke:

Yes, absolutely. It's called Ride at School, and they're actually going to be on campus at my son's school this summer too. It's actually been a fantastic program because she also is learning, they have curriculum, they have projects, they work together, they have quiet time. So, it's very structured. It's super beneficial, especially as a San Jose Unified employee, to have that program so that I can finish up my day at my school, I can still coach and my children feel safe. They also provide a security measure where you sign up all of your family members that are able to pick up and you have to provide a code. So, the fact that I know that my children are safe and they can call me or text me at any time, I feel very privileged to have those kind of programs for us and for the families in our community, especially our low SES families where they do provide either financial reimbursement for them or financial help. So, it's absolutely beneficial.

Virginia Eigen:

Thank you. So, I just thought I would share my journey to how I became a TK teacher. Way back when I first started having kids, I actually thought, "Oh, I think I want to be a home daycare provider so that I can spend some time with my children." But I thought people are going to feel more comfortable if I've gone to school, taken the classes. And that's how I started my journey. However, as a lot of you know, it's not so easy to live on the income of being a home provider or even a preschool teacher. And so, for several years I stayed in the corporate world doing other things. 22 years ago, I decided it was time and I became a pre-K teacher, the child development specialist role for Campbell School District. Being with the school district, it offered me benefits. It offered me a guaranteed salary, and those were things that I really needed as I supported my family.

When Covid hit, it became a very difficult time for all of us. The district had to make budget cuts. I lost a very large chunk of my salary just to keep my job, and I was already here on the advisory council for the ECPC. And so, I knew things that were coming that the TK change was happening, and I thought, wow, this is the time for me to go ahead and go back to school, finish my credential that I had started 20 years before, which is what I did. And so now I've been here teaching transitional kindergarten at San Jose Unified for the last two years. I feel very blessed and happy to be here. I have an amazing support system in my administration as well as just learning and knowing that this district is doing TK, right? It is a play-based, high-quality early childhood education program. And I know that that was the goal for transitional kindergarten, and I am really happy to be a part of it. It's been some time, but it's been a great, great journey to get here. Thank you.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

Well, thank you both for sharing. And I first want to just thank Virginia for sharing your personal journey on how you have both been part of the early care and education role through both direct service with the early care and education and now transition into TK and bringing that knowledge into a faith-based place-based activities for the children that you care for, as well as the supportive administration. We'd love to hear that too. And then of course, we want to thank Amanda for bringing her unique voice to this sector as a parent. And again, I really do hope that you feel better, Amanda, and appreciate that you made the time to join us this morning.

Amanda Clarke:

Thank you.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

I welcome the council members and others to show their appreciation in the chat.

Karin Bloomer:

And speaking of chat, we will open the chat feature now for members of the public as well for five minutes for written public comment. And again, Virginia and Amanda, thank you so much. We are going to turn now to agenda item two, which is the May Revise Summary, and Dr. Jaime-Mileham I think it's right back to you to set that for us.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

So, for this segment, I'm going to provide a high overview in regards to the proposed solutions of the May Revise to address the budget shortfalls that impacts our families and is specifically tied with the California Department of Social Services administrative programs. And again, these are impacts that are tied with families and children. So going through some of these highlights will include the child care slot expansion pause that is at current level. So approximately 119,000 slots have been added. A pause at the current level until fiscal conditions allow for resume of the expansion and results and savings of 489 million in '24 '25 and 951 million '25 '26.

For the alternative payment program, CAPP, the pause results in the reduction of 184.1 million general funds in fiscal year '24 '25, compared to the governor's budget estimate on '24 '25. So, for the CCTR for general child care programs, the pause results in a reduction of 277.8 million general funds for fiscal year '24 '25.

Now, there also includes a reduction to emergency child care bridge program. So that May Revise proposes to reduce, makes this reduction by 34.8 million general fund to move closer align with program expenditures and address the projected budget shortfall. The foster care permanent rate structure, which includes in the May Revise statutory language that would make the foster care rate structure proposal in the governor's January budget, subject to a trigger on, based on the availability of general funds and spring of 2026, it's also reductions to housing programs and it proposes a reduction of 80 million from the Bringing Families Home program.

CalWORKs home visitation program proposes a reduction of 47.1 million ongoing for the CalWORKs Home Visitation program. And the CalWORKs Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services proposes reducing 126.6 million ongoing CalWORKs mental health and substance abuse services. The May Revise also includes following solutions related to program operated by the Department of Health Services for the benefit of children and youth.

And those includes a proposed reduction of 72.3 million and one time '24 '25, 348.6 million, and '24 '25, and 5 million in '25 '26. For school-linked health partnerships and capacity grounds for higher education institutions, behavior health services and the support platform evidence-based and continuing community defined grants, public education and change in campaign and youth suicide reporting and crisis response

pilots. Without question, difficult decisions are required to balance the state budget. However, these decisions are necessary to stabilize California's finances, without then significant shortfalls are projected to be persist. And so, our key approach in regards to this budget is to really preserve as much as possible the programs. For further reading on these topics, please see the CDSS Foster Rate Reform website, which we'll put in the chat. And then we also have a 2024 May Revision executive summary for you. And of course, you can always send additional questions at the ECPC@dss.ca.gov. And with that I'm going to turn it over to the California Department of Education to also provide a high-level May Revise summary.

Stephen Propheter:

Good morning everyone. Steve Propheter, the director of the Early Education Division at the California Department of Education. So, I think we'd like to start by acknowledging and appreciating that since this administration has come into office, our governor has maintained historic investments and has prioritized, I don't know, many of us have probably been around, were around in the great recession where we did some truly awful things to early learning and care and really had to do a lot to build back. But we're happy to see, well, the bittersweet kind of situation we're in and taking an approach of maintaining investments as much as possible but understanding the need to make reductions or pause investments due to the multi-billion dollar shortfall in the budget. So I'm going to just cover a couple pieces for early education as well as a few technical adjustments.

So, I think the largest thing that's weighing on us is the proposed sweep of the \$250 million for the inclusive Early Education expansion program. The funding provides about 198 million for local educational agencies to support inclusion through professional development, adaptive equipment and other kind of modifications to ensure the full participation of children with disabilities in general. In the general education setting, there was a funding for an evaluation. And then I think the thing that we are... Another piece that's particularly painful is the 50 million that was set aside for statewide systems building, which in addition to supporting things like coaching and professional development, these funds would've reached community-based organizations and local educational agencies in the areas of inclusion. So, they're particularly painful. They also are slated to support implementation of the classroom assessment scoring system in those to ensure that they are fully inclusive of children with disabilities supporting effective instruction practices and inclusion. So, we are very disheartened to see these cuts.

As we know the state preschool programs need more support for inclusion. Thinking about the current set-aside for children with disabilities, that's set at 5%. We know a number of programs are not reaching it. And these funds really, really would support more programs meeting that set-aside. And speaking about the set-aside for children with disabilities in the state preschool program, you may know or may recall that the legislature, the governor in a prior budget included a policy decision to require 10% of enrollment in state preschool programs be set-aside for children with disabilities through a phased-in approach, where we'd start at 5% go to 7.5% and then 10% in successive years. That was paused or delayed somewhat in last years or the current year budget. And this year's May revised proposal proposes to pause it seemingly indefinitely and

holding it at 5%. So, we know that California lags the nation and in inclusive early education. So, this is one of those things that's also painful in the budget.

There's some other adjustments that would streamline enrollment for the California State Preschool Program, which is a good, good thing. And then just going to, just touching on Transitional Kindergarten, May Revise continues the administration's commitment to Transitional Kindergarten expansion. So, including making some... But then make some adjustments based on what kind of caseload looks like, what enrollment looks like in TK to date, as well as there's some technical adjustments to reflect the name of the new Preschool and TK learning Foundations that will be coming out this summer.

And then just I think the last thing I'd note here is there's the Preschool, TK and full day Kindergarten facilities grant program. The funds that were previously delayed has now been now proposed to be swept completely and the May Revise proposal notes that the investment could be included in the education facilities bond proposals that the legislature is considering. and I'll turn it back to you, Lupe.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Thank you. And Lupe, you asked me to keep time today just because it is such a full agenda. So, I just wanted to share that we probably have five minutes max for one or two questions from council members before we want to continue on with the segment hearing from Robin Layton and Donna Sneeringer regarding a May Revise letter from the council. So I think we can take one or two questions from a council member. I see Sonia has a real hand up.

Sonia Jaramillo:

I couldn't find the icon for that, so I'm still looking for it. But thank you for giving me the opportunity. On the area of TK, Stephen, one of the things that I'm wondering is if you... Because the implementation of TK full force in 2025 will really impact our implementation of whether or not we need to go down to serve three-year olds entirely and release our four-year olds so that the districts... That's the request and the conversations we are having with our local LEAs. So, with that in mind, is this funding delay also delaying the implementation for the districts not to be in 2025 but later? It really will help us with planning from my end.

Stephen Propheter:

Just to make sure that I'm hearing you right, Sonia, because I may not have understood... I may have not have been as clear. So, there's no proposed pause in the transitional kindergarten implementation. There's no adjustment in the phase, phase in, it's still slated for '25, '26. Just the administration has adjusted funding to right-size the funding for what enrollment is looking like, right? Because a voluntary program, and while you could say that a certain percent of four-year-old children will enroll in TK, what actually ends up happening in year three of the expansion is maybe somewhat less than that kind of higher estimate. I hope that that helps. There's no three-year-old kind of enrollment in TK

Sonia Jaramillo:

No, no, no. But if the districts fully implement their TK, they're taking four-year olds. So, for us preschools, I'm a county officer with preschools, it will impact me because my four-year olds are going to TK. So, see the impact and the ramification. So that's why I am wondering if this funding will delay the district's implementation because if there's no funding, they're not going to be able to implement fully. So that's what I have in my mind right now.

Stephen Propheter:

Yeah, the funding is just based on where enrollment is. No pause. I think are the numbers that CDE released last week around TK enrollment, it's about 59% of eligible four-year-old children are enrolling. And compare that with kindergarten. Kindergarten it's more like 82, 83% of eligible five year olds.

Sarah Neville-Morgan:

If I'm going to be clear, this is a proposed... May Revise is a proposed budget. So we don't know what the final will still be.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Sonia. Okay. At this time, I think we should turn to the next part of the segment. We'll turn it to Robin Layton and Donna Sneeringer.

Robin Layton:

Thank you everybody. If you recall at the February meeting, I suggested that we come today with a draft letter to be sent to the governor and the key legislator chairs and such. And I just want to remind everybody that, and I think this happened in December too, that we don't have a lot of time today to go over and detail of what we just heard about the May Revise. But we feel it's really important... Or I feel and Donna feels, and hopefully everybody feels that this is important to be on record and be on record so that they know we are still here and to remind them promises and so on. And so in December, it was a thank you, and we're still here. And a reminder, as we were thanking them for the last year's budget, which is the year that we're in. And this time Donna and I volunteered to draft a letter and we didn't really need to make many changes.

And the changes that Donna will go over; we believe are very strong. So instead of a thank you, it's a reminder that we're here, and a reminder that they've made commitments. And I think, well, Donna's going to go... I don't think. Donna's going to go over the minor changes. I don't want to call them minor because I believe that they're strong edits. But then we will have some time to hear from council members and we're... How can I say this? We really hope that this passes today in the short amount of time that we have.

And we also didn't make as many changes out of respect for the advisory groups because the May Revise just came out on May 10th. And so therefore we did not have time to bring this to the advisory groups like we've done in the past. And so we felt that if

we were to make too many changes, then that would be not respecting the approvals that we've gotten from them. And every time we've done these letters, we've based it on what we've heard from public comment and council members. So, you'll see that there's just nothing really new. And if it gets passed today, it can be sent today or tomorrow to the legislature. And if not, then we don't get to go on record. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Donna to go over the changes and then we'll hear from the council members. Thank you.

Donna Sneeringer:

Good morning everyone, and thank you Robin for giving the high level of our conversations last week with a very quick turnaround. What I'm going to focus on is where changes were made. This letter was, as Robin mentioned, already approved in December. So, we really focused on refining the letter to address the current proposal in front of the legislature and which will be negotiated with the administration for our final budget for next year. Largely, we did have to change, we have quite a few new committee members. Our budget chairs are both new and we have a new pro tem, so we did make those adjustments. In the second paragraph of the letter, we added a sentence that said,

"While we respect the challenges California is facing in the current budget, we believe it is important to maintain the administration and legislature's commitment to California's youngest members, their families, and early childhood care providers as demonstrated in the '23/24 budget." So just acknowledging that the state is in a difficult financial spot, but really reiterating that we believe that the state has a job to do in its commitment to kids, families, and child care providers.

We did not change anything as it relates to the Rate and Quality Advisory Panel. Our recommendations stand. We believe that this work needs to be completed and that it needs to move forward as designed. Where we did make some changes is in the state budget process conversation. Obviously we know that there are some pauses in place and what we said was that we believe they should maintain the promise of funding 200,000 child care slots by budget year '25/26.

So those were the very simple changes we made. I think, as I tell my board policy committee meeting on the regular, our goals are our goals, and they shouldn't change that much because our goals are our goals. So, I think that this letter does reflect that, and we are hoping that you all feel comfortable in adopting this so that we can submit it for consideration during the budget process.

Robin Layton:

Thank you Donna. And as you can see, not a lot. We did also bold in item one, the true cost of providing care. We wanted that to stand out. So, with that, Karin, do you want to help us with the next step?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes. Thank you Robin. We do just want to pause to see if there are any council members who looks like we have a hand with any questions for understanding so you feel prepared to either vote with your support or oppose or abstain. And again, I think as

Robin mentioned, any proposed edits, please just keep in mind that it's really a matter of trying to arrive at a decision by 9:50 this morning. And so, the more edits, the more that perhaps becomes at risk. So just appreciate your discernment on that.

Robin Layton:

I have one more thing to say that I'm noticing for the first time. A lot of hearts, thumbs ups, and celebration emojis popping up. Is that from the public or from the council? I don't recall seeing that. I love it. So, thank you. I'm just curious where that's coming from.

Karin Bloomer:

Yeah, I believe it's from council members. We can have our tech team sort of confirm that if they're able to, but ...okay with that, I see Kay Ruhstaller's hand first and then Janet Zamudio.

Kay Ruhstaller:

Yes. Good morning. I just wanted to thank Robin and Donna for quickly revising this letter and I am completely supportive. And I wanted to make one suggested edit and I can put it in the chat, but I just think we need to underscore in the last paragraph where it says, "With young children navigate the challenges." I would like to add the exponentially more complex post pandemic challenges. Because in all of our environments I just really believe that we're seeing social emotional behaviors as a result of COVID that we have not quite experienced in the past. And so, the environment has become tougher for our providers. And I can put that in the chat. It doesn't have to be those exact words, but I do think we need to underscore that.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks Kay. So just because we are going to have to get pretty efficient here, I'll look for your suggestion in the chat as we move on to Janet. Thank you so much.

Janet Zamudio:

Yeah. So, my only suggestion was CC to the state superintendent and public instruction, since we're also advising him. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Appreciate that. And Mayra?

Mayra Alvarez:

Hi. Thank you so much and huge thanks to the work on this letter. While I very much appreciate that the letter acknowledges the continuous coverage provision, I was curious if we could add, and forgive me if this already has been said, I've been in and out, a bullet that says it needs to be green lit. The funding needs to be green lit. Because while the policy was enacted, it cannot move forward without funding, and it actually has to be proactively included in the budget. So, we say thank you for putting in

continuous coverage in the second paragraph, but if we could put just one more bullet that says, "And green light funding for that provision."

Donna Sneeringer:

And actually Mayra, I think that's easy to add back in because we had it in there, but we weren't clear what the status was. So, if that is still accurate, that was in the prior letter. So, we can just add that back in. That's easy.

Mayra Alvarez:

Huge thanks Donna. That would make a huge difference. Thank you.

Donna Sneeringer:

No problem. We just weren't sure what the status was when we were doing this last week, but I think adding that bullet back is pretty easy.

Mayra Alvarez:

Awesome, thanks.

Karin Bloomer:

And that's continuous Medi-Cal for children?

Donna Sneeringer:

Correct. As written in the December, it would be exactly what was in the December letter.

Karin Bloomer:

Got it. So, forgive me, this is a paraphrase for now just so council members feel clear about what they're responding to. It would be verbatim from the previous letter, which we can grab.

All right, are there other hands from the council before you seek people's responses? I see children navigate, more complex. Okay, thank you. Okay. Challenges, post-pandemic challenges. Thank you. Okay.

Donna Sneeringer:

And Karin, I put the bullet in the chat as well from the December letter so you can just grab it.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. All formatting will be fixed before it's sent, I promise you. Is there any other feedback before, I just have to make one note before you seek support. Was there anything else? Okay, I just want to make a note that it's my understanding that council members who are part of the administration or constitutional office holder will need to abstain, which in this case in terms of who's present would be Lupe Jaime-Mileham and

Sarah Neville-Morgan. So please speak up, either council member that I've just named, if I've misunderstood. Otherwise, on the record, we'd note you're abstaining. And with that, I think I'll turn it to you, Robin and Donna, to ask for I think verbal support and then ask for anyone who is opposed.

Robin Layton:

Sure. Do you want us to go around and ask each person or do you want a thumbs up in their... How do we do this?

Karin Bloomer:

Why don't we do this, why don't we ask if anyone's opposed? And once we know that we'll know if it's unanimous or not.

Robin Layton:

Okay. Is anybody opposed to sending this letter with the edits that were just made? And thank you for those edits, I think they're great and I really again appreciate Donna's help on this as we rushed to get this done last week while I was actually in Sacramento only using my phone. So, she was able to do the track changes for us. So, thank you. Are there any members that are opposed?

Well great, thank you so much-

Karin Bloomer:

And perhaps because it feels good, you could ask for those who support, please say, yes. Sometimes it's nice just to hear it.

Robin Layton:

Well yes, and like I said, I'm loving the emojis. So, all those in favor of this letter going forward today or tomorrow, the date will be either dated today, probably needs to be dated today since the meeting is today. And signify by saying aye.

Kay Ruhstaller:

Aye.

Robin Layton:

All those in favor?

Janet Zamudio:

Aye.

Donna Sneeringer:

Aye.

Robin Layton:

Aye.

Mayra Alvarez:

Aye.

Karin Bloomer:

Wonderful. So, appreciating the extensions and then unanimity otherwise. Thank you both again Robin and Donna so much for your very quick work on that.

Donna Sneeringer:

I'd just like to say we brought it in 10 minutes early.

Robin Layton:

I was just going to say that 10 minutes early. That's record for us.

Karin Bloomer:

So that does conclude this agenda item. So, we will open the chat feature for written public comment for the next five minutes and then we'll turn to our next agenda item, number three, which is Rate and Quality Advisory Panel update.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

Yeah, happy to provide that. So, Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham and again, Deputy Director for the Child Care Development Division at CDSS and happy to provide this update. So I want to open up the presentation on Rate Reform by expressing first gratitude to the Rate and Quality Advisory panelists, the Child Care Provider United union and our broader child care and preschool community of interest who's demonstrated throughout this time their sincere commitment to this journey of Rate Reform. I'm grateful for our moments that we've shared and all the celebrations and milestones that we are achieving along the way. But I'm also grateful for the honest feedback in regards to this process. It is, I've heard it, I'm going to quote a previous member who said it's just too big for us not to care and this is historic. So, at our Rate and Quality Advisory Panel meeting on May 8th, we heard frustration to the state that in regards to not having the use of the MIT living wage tool to define the salary elements of the base rate as recommended by the Rate and Quality previous group.

So according to the Joint Labor Management Committee definitions, the salary elements depends on the selection points and the model can be run in various combinations, which the options are the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the BLS 2023, the MIT Living Wage Calculator of California of 2023, or the hybrid BLS plus approach that adjust BLS upward by a percentage that varies by geographical regions and using the MIT Living Wage Calculator to inform these adjustments.

So, we also heard the desire for clarifications about who are the decision makers in the alternative methodology process and then what is the timeline or settings and the implementation rates of these based on the true cost of care. So, during this presentation, I hope to be able to cover all those different questions that we heard, and I

want to acknowledge that it can also be difficult for the Rate Quality Advisory panelists to provide feedback constantly during these meetings and also wonder whether their voices are being heard.

You may wonder whether the feedback is being heard by anyone or whether it will impact the final outcome. And I know how frustrating that can be of not having that immediate answer and then months go by before you're able to see something then be able to come back to you that has some final results on that too. But I do want to assure you that your feedback continues to be heard and it's important to continue to share what you think in regards to not only what is in the conversations we have that we continue to make decisions that you're unfavorable to, but most importantly those decisions that we still have to consider your feedback in regards to that work. So please continue to provide that to us for their input on our state decision making.

And so, with that before we move up to the updates, I'll take a moment to share some celebrations of the review of some milestones of where we've achieved in this past year. So, for this particular slide in regards to the Rate Reform milestones achieved, there's a couple of moments that I want to call out here. And one is that a year ago we had not received yet pre-approval from ACF in regards to approve and in regards to even having as California moved to the true cost of care alternative methodology. So happy to say that we are there now. We also had in our welfare and institution code; it did not allow the state to pursue an alternative methodology in May of 2023. So, there was nothing written in. In September 2023 that is now reflected, where it not only has the language, but it also has the roadmap and the timeline for when we're doing this, and requires the state to continue to provide reports to the legislator on this progress itself. A year ago, we also did not have a successor labor agreement between CCPU and the state, which now we do have, and that includes not only historic investments, but it also includes a timeline to continue to serve as a roadmap and continues to be a place that we use as a checking back to see what we've achieved.

And then in May of 2023, we have not yet launched the data collection and yet alone built a cost estimation model. And so, from July, October, 2023, the state collected data for more than over 10,000 providers across the state throughout the mixed delivery system, which was used to formulate a cost estimation model that we have. And then a year ago the Joint Labor Management Committee had not yet defined the elements of the base as well as the enhancement rates to inform the state proposal single rate structure. And that has been achieved then as some definitions in our website, you can see those which reflect on March of 2023. So, lots to celebrate these milestones but know that our work is not done, we still have much more to do as we are continuing to do this work together. Let's go to the next slide.

So, with those milestones, let me transition to the Joint Labor Management Committee successor agreement that includes a representative CDE, CDSS, CCPU and its charged to using the information for the cost estimation model to define the elements of the base rate and enhancement rates to inform the state's proposed single rate structure and the rates to be subject to the mandated public engagement state plan process.

And in March, the JLMC arrived at this consensus of those elements. And at the Rate and Quality Advisory Panel meeting in April and May, the department gathered public

input for the Joint Labor Management Committee definitions for both home base and center base, and there was also additional opportunity for centers to provide input on those definitions, which I will describe in the upcoming slides on how that will look like.

Members of the public may send comments on the rate element definitions and other aspects of the single rate structure and the alternative methodology process at the mailbox of singlratestructure@dss.ca.gov. And the JLMC consensus on the definition was shared with the legislator in the progress update report that we submitted on March 22 of 2024. On May 15th, the department submitted a second report to the legislator with updates on the development of the CCDF plan and the progress made towards the single rate structure. Both reports are on our website so please feel free to visit our website and we'll also post that link in the chat there too. So, let's go to the next slide.

As part of the federal guidance for the Office of Child Care inquiry, the department to assess the intent to which payments have kept up with inflation, this is a new requirement from ACF that had not been required in the past. And our partners from P5 fiscal strategies recently completed this analysis for us. The analysis had three steps for it. First, P5 calculated the statewide average change in inflation for January 1st of 2022 to December 31st of 2023. This period was selected because it corresponds with the implementation date of the rates associated with the last CCDF's plan submission and the source of the data on the inflation came from the California Department of Industrial Relations.

Second, P5 calculated the corresponding increase to payments made to providers consistent with guidance from ACF and the analysis addressed payments, rates reported in California's last CCDF state plan, which were those affected by January 1st of 2022. The July of 2024 plan submission will include payments for fiscal year '23/24 and '25/26, may pursuant of Article 7.2 of the secession agreement between the state and CCPU and with the parity payments to the non-represented providers. So, no payments funded through the American Rescue Plan Act. So, the ARPA were included in this inflation rate, which was one of the questions that was raised previously.

And then finally, P5 compared the average statewide inflation to the January 1st of 2022 payment rates plus, additional payments were made to providers across all region types of providers and ages of children served. The analysis found that the statewide average inflation over the two-year period was 11% and that the state funded payments made to providers met or exceeded the statewide inflation rate for this period.

Now I'm going to pause there, because I know that caused a bit of reaction in regards to when we said this at the Rate and Quality Advisory committee where there was concerns about that this would allude to the perception of believing that we were already at rates and therefore no further increase was needed. I want to clarify that this is based on the regional market rate inflation rate as required through ACF. Very different when we're talking about the true cost of care alternative methodology. We'll continue to make sure we have language and educate where we go to make sure that people can continue to understand the difference of the two. And so, the cost of care plus rate and the traditional transitional one-time payment were established in the successor agreement between the state and CCPU and codified as SB140 to address the parity. And the monthly cost of care rate is scheduled to sunset at the end of fiscal year '24/25.

At its May meeting, members from the Rate and Quality expressed concerns including of the temporary payment and the analysis that it could be misleading because they were temporary and total payments to providers would drop again on July 2024 absence for further action by the legislator. The administration acknowledges that the cost of care payments are temporary and believe that the inclusion and their analysis to be appropriate in a response to the questions as posed by ACF for that period of time, given that they reflect just current payments for providers. So, the monthly payments there. And then let's go to the next slide.

So this slide is going to highlight some milestones in regards to what is happening between now and July 1st of 2025, and then by July 1st of 2024 CDSS will submit the 2025-2027 CDSS State Plan, CCDF State Plan to ACF will also send a letter to ACF requesting the exercise of federal flexibilities related to the timeline for submitting the state plan information for those states that are transitioning to the cost-based alternative methodology and may be unable to complete the entire process, which is us, by July 1st of 2024. By August of 2024, we will complete the process of gathering input on the JLMC rate element definitions from the centers and through the focus groups. And throughout fiscal year '24/25 CDSS will lead implementation planning activities such as developing regulatory and policy guidance, updating contracts and developing trainings for contractors and reprogramming data systems as well as learning from contractors what they need from them in order to continue to implement the alternative methodology to cost of care rate setting.

And within 60 days of ACF approval of our state plan, CDSS will submit an outline of the implementation components for the approval of the single rate structure on the legislator to the legislator and CCPU. And then within 90 days of ACF approval, the state will reopen rate negotiations with CCPU to restructure the current subsidy reimbursement rates for family child care home providers. Through those rate negotiations, selection points for home-based providers will be finalized and input from center-based programs and other unrepresented stakeholders will be gathered through parallel public engagement process and will inform the state's decision on these selection points for centers. We have heard that stakeholders are eager to land these selection points, as we are too, and unfortunately we do not yet know the exact date by which selection points will be decided upon because it is part of the rate negotiation with CCPU for family child care home providers as well as license exempt home providers. For centers, the administration will determine the selection points informed by all the feedback that we continue to receive.

The final bullet on this slide notes that July 1st of 2025 is the date by which CDSS must set payment rates based on the alternative methodology. And so, as I noted, rate for family providers will be set through rate negotiations leading up to the state. Rate setting for non-represented centers will take place through the budget process concurrently with CCPU rate negotiations. So, funding for reimbursement rates must be approved by the legislator through the budget process. And so, let's go to the next slide.

And so just to wrap up the milestones then from fiscal year '25/26, rates will take effect when any other activities reasonably necessary to implement has occurred such as regulatory and policy guidance, training for contractors and update to contracts as necessary, and also data systems. The current elements include a recognition of quality

standards and additional conversations on competencies, skills and abilities will continue into phase two of rate reform, which will take place starting in this calendar year of 2025.

More information is forthcoming in regards to that. Let's go to the next slide. So as we progress through the upcoming milestones, CDSS remains committed to a transparent process with multiple opportunities for public input. So CDSS examples of that is that we're going to continue to convene a quarterly public meeting on rate reform for fiscal year '24/25. And some of those meetings may include Rate and Quality Advisory meetings, which I think there was some confusion at the end of the meeting. I'm going to pause for a moment and just add that where members thought are we done with our charter, the Rate Quality Advisory committee? And I will say, no, you're not. We have some work to do this upcoming year and so we will continue to have those type of engagements. And then of course providing updates and continuing to collect input during the early childhood policy meetings too.

CDSS in partnership with Department of Education is convening two focus groups. The focus groups will be one, focused on the Title 5 centers, the other focus groups focusing on the private centers. The purpose of the focus groups is to continue to inform not only across all these different elements that we are discussing now, but also on the implementation in regards to how to operationalize these there too. And so, one, time limited focus groups will be convened as needed by the department throughout '24/25. Gather input from the subject matter experts on this too and then we'll continue to report out to these greater meetings in regards to what we're hearing in regards to that work too. And so next, as a reminder that the public comment related to the alternate methodology and single rate structure may be submitted to CDSS at singleratestructure@dss.ca.gov.

And finally, I want to provide a brief update on the evaluation activities. As we shared previously, the department retained the service of Child Trends to develop a framework for evaluating the new rate structure. While the evaluation itself will not begin until after implementation of the new rates, Child Trends is starting to design the evaluation planning now. So just as a heads-up, in case you hear from Child Trends coming in the upcoming weeks to reaching out to providers and families to invite them to be interviewed and provide input through focus groups, types of activities of it there. And so lots of pieces. Let's go to the next slide.

That concludes then the Rates and Quality Advisory Panel presentation, and so we'll send it back to Karin.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. We have a few minutes to take questions from council members before we need to move on to the next agenda item. So, thank you in advance for using raised hands. And I do see Robin Layton with a hand. Please go ahead.

Robin Layton:

Thank you. Thank you Lupe for clarifying some of the things that came up at the Rate Panel. I'm also on the Rate Panel and I was on the Rate and Quality stakeholder work group, as well as back in 2018 a rates committee. One thing that came up strongly that I

thought in case there are people here in the public that don't attend the rates panel, and Lupe did allude to it, that the panel requested that no options be presented, that only the MIT be presented so that the true cost of care is what it goes into the report. That we do not want the legislature or the administration to have anything... We believe that our charge was to show the true cost and then it will be up to the legislature and the administration to decide what they can fund. So only showing the true cost is what we want in the report. We requested that and for the panel to support the report that's what we would expect.

The other issue that you brought up about the increase, still not satisfied with that, the increased slide. And then last but not least, I hope everybody noticed that with this report it would be that the funding, if there is any rate increase, it would go into effect the following year. And so next year's budget proposal for '25/26 needs to have rate increases even before the report is done. Because Hold Harmless and temporary funding ends July 30th, or excuse me, June 30th, 2025. So, we could end up with a whole year with a problem. So, I just want to point that out for the public. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Robin. Looking for any other raised hands from council members. And from one of our advisory committee members. Deborah, please go ahead.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Thank you so much for that and good morning to everyone. You know what? I'm sitting here and I've listened to so much and I feel like my opportunity to really speak on everything was taken away. I know that we are in a crunch time and the agenda is large and long, but I think it's important that our voices are fairly heard at the end of every segment because that's what we're here to represent and to speak. So I just really felt slighted. So I'm going to say this also on the budget revised, if I may, talking about feeling like the rug has been pulled from under you. All the cuts and the promises that were made but not kept. All the fight that providers have done, I feel like the rug is just being pulled from under us.

The slot issue is a major issue for all of us. Again, the rug being pulled from under us. I understand that it is a proposed budget, May Revise, but again, the rug being pulled from under us. It's not just being pulled from under us as providers, home-based educators and centers, early education. It's being pulled from under the families we serve. The rug is being pulled from under the most vulnerable people in California. Those who cannot afford it, those who have mental issues, those who have family, homelessness and all issues, our families we serve that are in homeless centers. And this is really sad. Again, the rug being pulled from under us, the very people we serve. There's no way I would imagine that our legislatures would allow this to happen. There's no way that I would imagine that our legislatures would have the thought to pull the rug. We can't let this happen. It's not right.

I also want to say something about stakeholders. When we're having stakeholders' meetings, these voices need to be heard fairly. I am one of many that are on those meetings with a lot of other and hundreds of providers. We're not there just to sit and listen. We are there to express ourselves. You want to know what the field, what the

experts are saying? Let them speak. Take the time to listen. Not 10 minutes, don't put 10 minutes on the side, don't put 15 minutes on the side. We like to speak because it's time for us to be heard and this platform and these platforms, and when you open the doors, the flood is coming in. There's a reason why there's a flood coming in because there was a wall built, a dam built, holding back everything that's been going on and that wall's been coming down. CCPU has been breaking it, and the walls, the water is ready to flow through.

You got to let that water through, let us speak. Stakeholders want to speak in these meetings fairly. They don't want to be rushed off and neither do I, when I'm here on this platform. When the young lady spoke, Virginia, Amanda, I believe was her name, and I have to apologize because she spoke at the beginning and now we're in the middle and I'm now speaking. She said something, both of the ladies did. I think it was Virginia who had mentioned about being a provider at one point and not being able to afford to continue to be a provider. That's where providers still are right now. She took that break, and she went on to do something different, but she still stayed in the field of serving children.

And when the parent had mentioned about family members, I had caught that, picking up her child, right? There are providers who would like to be a part of that UPK system to be able to pick up those children for those parents. So, I'm going to say this again. The voices cannot be shut down. They need to be fairly heard in every stakeholder meeting. The voices want to be heard. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Deborah. Before I turn it to Donna Sneeringer, I just want to take some responsibility for trying to figure out how to manage enough time for the May Revise and for this, the universal pre-kindergarten discussion that council members asked for as well. So trying to figure out how to do it all and just really appreciate you speaking up and of course, all council members and advisory committee members raising your hands and speaking as you want to and need to. Just appreciating we're just trying to figure out how to also have time for these conversations. It's so tricky but thank you so much for acknowledging that.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Thank you for that. And truly you know, I mean no disrespect.

Karin Bloomer:

I know, I know. We appreciate. Thank you so much. And Donna Sneeringer, I see your hand.

Donna Sneeringer:

And Karin, you already said part of what I was going to say, which is we are trying to juggle maybe putting too much in a meeting. And I think, particularly with the climate that we are in and the proposals on the table at the state budget, I think it's critical that we take time to listen to people. And I think we can be nimble about the UPK

conversation. We can spread that over multiple meetings, but the budget conversations are fairly time sensitive and have tremendous impact on people.

So, I just want to add that I share some of the concerns Robin raised, that we have to have some safeguards in place in this year's budget so that we don't face a cliff next June 30th. And it isn't just about having an agreement in place June 30th because if the care costs plus stipends are ending and Hold Harmless is ending, as an administrator of a voucher program, we have to give due notice. Which means mid-June next year, we will have to send notices to providers that their rates are going down if there is no agreement in place because we have to give timely notice of an adverse action. And this is really the window where we could have some of those safeguards protected. And just the urgency is really critical to me and to our organization.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Donna. Lisette, please go ahead. You're muted, Lisette, can you try to unmute one more time? Why aren't we hearing you? So, you're unmuted on Zoom, but we can't hear you. Maybe you could just make sure that your laptop audio is on. No, can't hear you. If you could unmute one more time and let's just leave it there. Try it one more-

Lisette Frausto:

Are you guys able to hear me now?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes.

Lisette Frausto:

Okay, thank you. I'm having technical difficulties this morning. It's a Monday. I just wanted to say thank you, Deborah for everything that you said. And I know there's a packed agenda and there's a lot of things on there that we need to go through, but as we said, the May Revise came out and we need to make sure that once the final budget is finalized, we have what our families deserve, especially also our providers and our teachers. I am speaking today myself as a parent and an advocate. I have a 14-month-old and I've gotten to the point where I'm frustrated and I'm frustrated, and I'm sure many other families are frustrated as well because we already have a difficult time finding child care for our children, and yet now we want to pause the slots and that's just going to make it even harder on working families.

I have the privilege and I'm very grateful for the job that I have that I'm able to kind of work around it, but not everyone has that opportunity. So I'm here today speaking on behalf of those families that are not able to have their voices heard, that we need to make sure that, one, we have what we deserve, which are slots for our children so that if the state values working families, especially mothers, we have a lot of single mothers out there, or like myself at the moment, I'm the only sole provider for my home and I need the child care, I need it. Everyone needs it. We need to make sure that we have that if we want our economy to go up or if we want to be able to bring in other things, we need to take care of our children, our families, and our providers first, and that should be our top priority. And then everything else should fall under.

So, like I said, I'm just here this morning just to express the frustration that I have because I'm not able to find child care for my 14-month-old. She's eager, she's ready for child care, but we just don't have it. And yet we're pausing it again. So, I just wanted to express that, and I hope that the governor and the legislature takes into consideration all of our working families that need all of this and really does what we need and we deserve. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Lisette. Robin, I see your hand?

Robin Layton:

Lisette, that was very compelling. And I guess I just want to say that voices like yours on what this really means is so important for the administration and the legislature to hear. When I was in Sacramento last week, one of the things, I, everybody's getting cut. There's a terrible budget crisis, but the reminder they need to hear is exactly what you said. They can cut other things, they can figure this out, but if they cause another, well, they didn't cause the crisis during Covid, but if another child care crisis happens like Covid, then we'll shut down again.

So, it's really important that they're reminded of what happened during Covid, which was, oh my gosh, people can't go to work unless they have child care. Oh my gosh, my elementary school was my child care. So really, Lisette, I just thank you for speaking up and keep that up. And it's really important that more people speak up because they can't cut child care. They absolutely can't because if they do, everything else will shut down and we have, everybody knows that's what happened. So, thank you for speaking up.

Lisette Frausto:

Thank you, Robin. Yeah, and just to add to what you just said, I was a part of that. I got laid off because I didn't have any child care during Covid. Everything had to close down, and I didn't have any child care. So, my employer said, well, you're going to be one of the people that is going to go on unemployment. And then after a while, they had to lay off people completely. And I was part of that, but I was blessed that I had another job on the side, which was my part-time, which is now thankfully, my full-time job that I didn't have to have that financial burden too much. But again, if we don't have this child care again for our families, our families are going to have to go on unemployment. They're going to have to be laid off and they need to work to provide for their families. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you all. Okay. At this time, we will open up the chat feature for public comment for this most recent agenda item as we turn to the statutorily required report out of the child care transition quarterly report. So, I'll turn it back to Lupe.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

So, thank you again. And we'll also be providing this child care and development transition report update. So pleased to be with everyone. If we can have the PowerPoint up. And I'm going to go to slide number two. So, all of the transfer programs continue to be firmly embedded within the mission and vision and organizational structure of CDSS. And the department will remain committed to effectively operationalize many of these programs with their achieved goals of the child care and development transition.

And so, with respect to operationalizing the transition, the CDE continues to manage the child care and management information system, CDMIS, and thank you for that. And on behalf of CDSS, while collaborating with CDSS to affect the full transfer of the child care state and federal data reporting to CDSS. As of November of 2023, CDSS has implemented the Child Development Program Enrollment Attendance and Reporting, CDPR, which allows contractors to submit their fiscal reports necessary to process payments for child care and development contractors. With respect to the policy goals associated with the transition, this report highlights some key efforts that are underway and includes reimbursement rate reform and efforts to further equity.

Let's go to the next slide. So, with that opening statement, I'm going to touch on a few things. Rate reform, which we have previously had a conversation on will just be mentioned. And then I'm also going to talk about the incentive, Brilliant Beginnings as well as the Child Care and Adult Care Food Program, CACFP as my updates, but of course the full report is on the website.

So, let's go to the next slide. As mentioned by the MOU and SB140 a rate and quality system structure review of the JLMC comprised of representatives from CDSS, CDE, and CalHR and CCPU was convened starting October of 2023. The purpose was to define the elements of the base rates and enhancement rates using information from the single cost estimation model to inform the single rate structure and subject to mandate public engagement state plan process.

And so on March of 6 of 2024, consensus was reached and the agreement was finalized on March 11th of 2024. CDSS submitted a required report to the legislator on March 27th of 2024, and the cover letter definitions of the elements and the report to the legislator are all available to the public on the Rate Reform and Quality website. We will be sharing like we did; we already shared a presentation of a deeper dive into rate and quality work on this coming up.

And so, the next one that I'm going to go is the next slide on the Brilliant Beginnings work. On July of 2021, CDSS launched the Brilliant Beginnings initiative to support and improve upon the child care data landscape. It includes the CalSPARKS project and the MyChildCarePlan.org and the ChildCareConnect. And during this quarter, the CalSPARKS project made progress in two areas when it conducted internal engagement to fully conduct business and technical processes. And it also conducted disciplinary market rate research with the vendor community. CDSS also continues its ongoing collaboration with the California Child Care Resource and Referral network and the hosting and maintaining at the MyChildCarePlan.org, which was launched on October of 2022.

During the quarter, work was finished pertaining to an update to the website that will add all licensed child care providers in California. CDSS made progress following the state IT approval process for the ChildCareConnect, which will replace the

MyChildCarePlan.org after June of 2025. And the ChildCareConnect will meet all the federal child care consumer education requirements, which MyChildCarePlan.org does not meet as is right now. And state mandates assembly bill 2960 statute of 2018 and finalized the draft report informed by parent listening sessions hosted by the Child Care Resource and Referral.

So, let's go to the next slide. So now I'm going to turn to give some highlights on the Child Care Adult Care Food Program. And so, the CDSS added 16 new online courses available in both English and Spanish to provide the CACFP policy guidance, promote technical skills and support professional growth opportunities. Some examples include best practices for improving workforce culture as well as addressing health equity. CDSS began the CACFP State Connect Quarterly Webinar on July 31st of 2024 with over 300 attendees. And the agenda included the CDSS update, introducing state agency CACFP staff roles and functions. Subsequent webinars will quarterly fostering stakeholder engagement and gathering input by the operators of CACFP programs. And topics will cover state agency updates, policy support and best practices targeting CACFP authorized representatives, program contacts, as well as community partners.

So let's go to the next slide. This concludes my presentation. I want to thank again and just take a moment again to publicly continuing to thank the California Department of Education for allowing CDSS to continue to share the legacy programs. I know it's a lot to ask, and so we look forward to continuing to provide progress as we're moving away from those programs. But wanted to just provide that public thank you to the CDE partners. And with that, I'll turn it over to Karin for questions.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Council members, do you have any questions or comments for Lupe about that presentation? Or any other comments at this time before we move on? Again, back to Deborah's point, please do raise your hand if there's a comment, reflection or question you want to make. Okay, we've seen none. We will take written public comment again at the end of this agenda item now, we'll keep the chat open for five minutes as we move on to our final agenda item of the day, building a comprehensive early learning and care mixed delivery system that integrates universal pre-kindergarten. Lupe, you might just maybe say a few words and then pass it on to our council members.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

I'd love to. So, this topic was identified as one of the significant interests of the ECPC members during the survey that we did at the beginning of the year. And so I want to thank both Donna and Dean for graciously agreeing to co-design and facilitate this segment. With that opening, I'm going to already turn it over to Donna and Dean.

Donna Sneeringer:

Good morning again, everyone.

Dean Tagawa:

Good morning.

Donna Sneeringer:

Dean and I are going to do our best to shepherd this conversation. And I wanted to say a couple of things after reading some of the chat. I think that moving toward the mixed delivery system and integrating universal pre-kindergarten is complicated and there is pain being felt across the system. And I think that I am very aware that the way this is being implemented and rolled out is not a comfortable thing for many people. And I hope that what we're able to do today is have some honest conversation about how we can build a better system that works for families and that provides the best possible start for our very youngest children. And I also do want to acknowledge that the expansion of this system has not happened in a balanced way. And while TK implementation continues to roll forward, the child care matching investments have been put on pause or delayed in many ways. And the child care system that we depend on for our youngest children is really struggling. And I think that we have a lot of work to do.

So, our goal today, as I mentioned, is just to have a beginning discussion. This is a huge topic. It's a complicated topic, and I think I would like to start with the premise that everyone that is on this meeting and everyone that participates in this, shares the values of wanting what's best for our children and families. And if we can start from that place and understand that we're all coming from different perspectives, I think that that would be helpful. I think that as a council and as an industry, we really need to design a system that gives families options to meet their needs, so their kids are supported to thrive.

I heard someone in the state legislature say that the guiding philosophy behind our universal pre-kindergarten system is two fundamental things, local control and parent choice. And what that means is we are challenged to build a system that's not going to look exactly the same in every community, yet still offers families an array of choices. And it's going to take all kinds of programs to fulfill that vision. It isn't going to be a one size fits all for every family and every child. And we are going to have to step back from some of where we have been. We've become very entrenched in which side of the early education aisle you sit on, whether you're on the preschool TK side or you're on the child care side. We seem to have been doing a lot of parallel play, to throw some child development words out there, running on our own tracks, doing our own thing, but families don't see us as separate. They see us as a single continuum that they need to raise their families.

So, I really am going to encourage you all to listen closely to some of the presenters today and to start to think differently about how we can take journey together. Our goal at the end of this is going to be to make some policy recommendations to the state on what else needs to be done to create this comprehensive system and how do we work better together and what barriers do we need to bring down between our structures, between our pre-K, TK and child care structures so that we can collaborate, and we can create a stronger mixed delivery approach?

So, the last thing I will say, and then I'll let Dean throw in his 2 cents is this is going to take some time. This isn't something that's going to be fixed and fully implemented. I know we have a rollout date for TK to be done by '25, '26, but that's just one component of a very complex world, and this is a sea change for everything. And I really just

encourage you all to be part of the conversation, know that this is the first part of the conversation. We've invited some folks to come in and share some of their expertise so that we can begin to really start to unpack what else we need to be doing. So Dean, I'll pass it to you.

Dean Tagawa:

Thank you, Donna. As you were talking and you were just talking about the parallel play, in many ways within LA Unified I'm in this unique position because we both have TK programs, but then we also have slots for about 10,000 kids within our state preschool programs. And those include our part-day programs at the elementary schools, along with 86 early education centers. So, I have on one side, I have on my early education folks and my early education center principals and my state preschool program teachers who are all talking about, they didn't get the same number of four-year-olds to backfill into their programs this year. And then I have on the other side trying to get our elementary TK programs full and up and running because some schools didn't have this before. And so how do we get them up and running? So, it puts me in a unique situation with a very unique perspective because I am supporting both.

And so how do we make this, coming back to that initial idea that we want all of our kids and all of our families to be able to get into a program. And that was part of the goal of working on the California master plan, is to make sure that every four-year-old had an opportunity to go to school before kinder. And then even thinking about our three-year-olds, it talks about our three-year-olds that are income-eligible and making sure they have a way to get into a program. So yeah, here's the quote, "We recommend that California build one unified system for state-funded preschool for three and four-year-olds with the goals that all four-year-olds have access to a year of free universally available and fully inclusive preschool and that all three-year-olds in income-eligible households have access to an additional year of publicly funded full inclusion preschool with economic incentives for all families to enroll."

And I think as we kind of think about this is the goal for all of us, is to be able to make sure that every kid has a place to go in a district where 86% of our families are Title 1 families that are on free and reduced program meals. Access to a program is important. And I know I'm preaching to the choir when I talk about all the benefits that happen for kids when they get that opportunity to go to a year of school before starting in kinder. And kinder teachers can tell you, they can tell you which kids have been in a preschool program ahead of time. And as a former kindergarten teacher, I can tell you that I had this little guy who was standing in line on the first day of school and he was holding a copy of Newsweek under his armpit. And I said, "What are you looking at?" And he said, "Newsweek." And I said, "Really? You're looking at Newsweek and what does Newsweek have to say?"

And he actually opened it up and he said, "Well, this one says that Bobby Knight, who is an Indiana Hoosiers basketball coach, hasn't won a championship in 15 years, so is he really the greatest college coach alive?" And I said, "Really?" And he said, "What's your name?" And he said, "Joseph." And I said, "Joseph, did you read that?" And he said, "Yeah, I read it." And I share that story, because our kids have the opportunity to go to a preschool program now. Within our early ed center programs, we had about 1,700

families who didn't go to TK, because they needed that public choice. They needed the full day, full year, full program services. And so, for them that option to have that choice is really important. So as kind of Donna mentioned earlier, this is a tough conversation even for an LEA who's serving both groups. This is a tough conversation and as a former private school provider as well as a preschool and kindergarten teacher, this is a tough conversation and getting it going is important.

So, at the end of the day, we're really hoping that as we go through this we'll be able to have some really good discussions and come away with some policy recommendations to bring back to the ECPC at the next meeting and to review, endorse, make recommendations. So, I'm really looking forward to this and excited to be part of this. So, Donna.

Donna Sneeringer:

Yeah, so as Dean mentioned, our goal is to hear from a variety of different folks. We're actually going to start off by hearing from both state agencies. I think often when we talk about UPK, we hear from CDE, but we really felt it was important to also hear from CDSS as there are impacts and roles across many of the programs administered in social services now. And for many of us, we have contracts with both agencies, and we are working very hard to try to integrate and blend things together across those boundaries. So, we're going to start off with CDE talking about the highlights of where they are with Universal pre-K implementation. And then we will move to DSS to talk about the role that its programs can play in the delivery of universal pre-kindergarten, particularly mixed delivery, specifically around the General Child Care Voucher Programs, Head Start, collaborative office and resource and referral. So why don't we start off with the team at CDE?

Stephen Propheter:

Good morning. Thanks Donna. I think Sarah and I may be kind of co-presenting on this. I see myself spotlighted here.

Karin Bloomer:

Maybe we can unspotlight, if that's something we can do.

Stephen Propheter:

Actually.

Sarah Neville-Morgan:

Stephen, I think I'm totally fine for you to just take this.

Stephen Propheter:

Perfect. All right. Apologies for the mix-up Karin. All right, so hello everyone. Stephen, I'm back again. I'm the Early Education Division director at the California Department of Education, proudly serving under Sarah Neville-Morgan, who's our Deputy Superintendent in the Opportunities For All Branch. We are honored to share some

updates and some pieces as part of this conversation. And so as I mentioned, the proposed budget maintains many of the investments and our mixed delivery quality and access work group published the report just a couple of months back. So this is definitely a moment to appreciate how far we've come and as we think about, it's very topical as we think about the mixed delivery system. So UPK is updating California's existing system of pre-kindergarten programs to better fit the needs of families and dramatically expand access to high quality preschool for children's and family or children and families. And that's something that we are incredibly focused on.

As you know, Transitional Kindergarten will be available for free to four-year-old children of families who choose to enroll their children in TK by 2025/26. And even if a child is eligible for TK, families will maintain a choice of which program best meets the needs of their child and their family. I think as a shared earlier we'd see 59% of eligible four-year-old children are enrolling in TK. So that means 41% are enrolling somewhere else or nowhere else. Our state preschool program as part of California's Great Start. So, our Great Start state preschool programs has become a much more inclusive space with new requirements to serve children with disabilities, support multilingual learners and significantly reduced exclusionary practices. Head Start and private preschools will continue to be critical partners for ensuring that families have the choice that all children have access to the early learning opportunities they deserve. And also note that expanded learning programs provide opportunities to enrich the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of the whole child and provide a full day of programming that supports the needs of California's working families. Next slide please.

So as Donna and Dean mentioned, UPK follows a roadmap set out in Governor Newsom's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. And we're here to share how CDE is implementing that vision. So, when we got the legislative mandate for Universal Transitional Kindergarten expansion, we made an intentional decision to take a systemic approach through the launch of UPK rather than just focusing on TK. Our goal has always been to expand access across the system to ensure that all families have access to the early learning opportunities that help children to thrive in the long run. We see UPK as a bridge between the early learning and care system and Transitional Kindergarten through 12th grade or TK-12. We know a strong start in pre-K is only beneficial if it is sustained. We cannot deliver on the promise of UPK without the alignment and support of early grades reinforcing and building off of what children gain in their pre-K experiences.

So, our vision is to provide a strong and early start to inclusive education through high quality, joyful, rigorous, developmentally informed and coherent preschool through third grade learning opportunities to make sure that children can thrive, they're set up to thrive in school and in life in their college and career ready. Next slide. So UPK is that broader initiative to align learning experiences from preschool to third grade. We just wanted to note here that as we're also kind of implementing UPK, we are looking at as a part of preschool to third grade alignment, research consistently finds that long-term effects of interventions vary considerably in part because of what happens to children later as they enter elementary school. So, we just wanted to just mentioned it on the last slide. Preschool to third grade is UPK is kind of wrapped as part of that P-3 alignment. Next slide.

We also recognize that for UPK to succeed, multiple systems needed to shift, and new partnerships would need to be built. It's a major investment and it creates. When change happens, I mean I think we've heard the expression that nobody likes change except for a baby with a wet diaper. But there is a need for systems to shift to make sure that we are supporting our youngest learners. So, some of those pieces in there are facilities need to expand. There are connections between early learning and care and TK-12 system that either need to be built or need to be expanded. Teacher preparation and recruitment needs to expand and become more specialized. We need to provide guidance and support to UPK programs to ensure family engagement, culturally responsive programs, aligned curriculum and assessment and community outreach and partnerships happen there and are better supported. And finally, we recognize the need to work collaboratively to address the resulting shifts and impacts in California's early learning and care ecosystem. Next slide please.

All right, now there's a lot of talk about four-year-old enrollment and kind of where our four-year-old children are. And so, one of the things that you see on this side here, the overall height of the bar shows you California's population of four-year-olds. And you can see from 2019/20 to 2023/24, that population is declining. So, where are those children going? Birth rates net-negative migration in the state means there's fewer four-year-old children. As I've shared before, we see 59% of all four-year-old children entering TK in our current year. We also see that since the pandemic, our four-year-old enrollment in our state preschools is recovering, is continuing to recover. But as we'll see as we go to the... Oh, and actually just to celebrate here, between what we have in our data here between Transitional Kindergarten and state preschool, that blue bar of unserved four-year-old children is getting smaller and smaller. So, I think that's something that California should celebrate here. Next slide.

As we look at our three-year-old children, we look, this chart here shows the eligible three-year-old children as well as the percent of eligible three-year-olds in the state preschool program. It's another thing to celebrate here is as we see kind of more four-year-old children getting served either between Transitional Kindergarten or state preschool program, we're seeing more three-year-old children in state preschool. So that means that more children are having access to two years of pre-kindergarten, which is it's phenomenal and it's something that we really should be celebrating. Next slide.

In the California State Preschool Program, California's Great Start State Preschool recent investments have allowed us to make historic changes that impact program quality and equity as a result of granting categorical eligibility for children with disabilities and a new requirement for at least 5% of slots to be reserved for children with disabilities, our state preschool programs are becoming much more inclusive. On average, in just the first year of implementation, children with disabilities enrolled in state preschool increased from 4.3% in October 2021 to 5.6% in October 2022, there's an increased adjustment factor that's providing program with funds to increase capacity. I will note though that for my May Revise update, we still need those inclusive early education expansion program funds to help the programs that are not reaching that 5% get up to that requirement. Supporting our multilingual learners. We're entering the second year of implementation of a new identification and reporting requirements for multilingual learners.

The tools we've created are providing us with invaluable data and new ways to engage and build relationships with families. So, in the first quarter of this current year, 58% of children in state preschool were dual language learners mirroring that birth to age five population in California. You may be familiar with the stat or the statistic from the Migration Policy Institute that says about 59, 60% or so children birth to five are multilingual learners. So, we're happy to see our state preschool tracking with that number. In addition, 76% of the multilingual learners in our state preschools had a lead teacher that uses one or more of their home languages in the classroom. That's really exciting. These insights are really powerful for fostering that culturally inclusive and affirming state preschool programs for California's children and families as well as increasing support for home language development alongside English development. Next slide please.

Now to support the goal of ensuring that UPK is an educator-first system, in 2024/25 CDE will begin the rollout of the class second edition and the class environment. These are CLASS and I should say the CLASS stands for the Classroom Assessment Scoring System. And these are tools to improve adult-child interactions. We know how important those are and how much research shows how important those are. CLASS is widely used across the country by the office of Head Start and in more than 10 other states as a quality monitoring tool for their state-funded preschool programs. And we really think of this as a continuous improvement idea and that's kind of how California is taking the approach here at the California Department of Education. And there's a broad literature of more than 200 independent empirical research studies that's substantiate the positive effects the class tool and coaching has on early learning programs and outcomes for children.

I want to emphasize that coaching. One of the things that we've learned from a fellow implementer of CLASS that in Texas, the Dallas Independent School District's implementation of CLASS from their preschool through second grade in doing it and including that the coaching, they eliminated out-of-school suspensions and expulsions and 100% of third grade students who attended Dallas Independent School District preschool to second grade with teachers that use CLASS are at grade level in those third grade assessments. I mean, there's such a wonderful kind of proof of how helpful those adult to child reactions and supporting teachers in this educator-first approach. Next slide.

All right, thinking about, I touched on the mixed delivery quality and access report. We do have a few recommendations that we wanted to share with the council and attendees. The report contains a number of recommendations and we're really grateful for the partnership that we had with our state partners and the Department of Social Services, the State Board of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing as well as of all of our work group members. But just kind of looking at a few of these, the recommendations, the report's recommendations to modify portions of Title 5, focus on key quality elements including diversity, equity and inclusion, family engagement, child-centered learning environments, and a well-prepared and supported workforce. The report group's recommendations by the types of changes they would require to implement, including statutory changes, regulatory changes and administrative changes which affect how much control CDE has over the ultimate outcome of the

recommendation and the timeline within which changes can happen. Some things that we can do and there's some things that we need help from the legislature. Next slide.

I think I touched on, and I'm going a little fast, I think I'm running out of time here, but just we had 30 researchers, hundreds of parents and hundreds of preschool educators and administrators in, we've heard voice and informing the recommendations, modifying the recommendations. I can't tell you how many times we kind of looked at each recommendations and modified language based on worker group member feedback, but we included family child care homes as a critical part of this. Family child care homes are a critical part of the mixed delivery system. We had center-based programs, dual immersion programs, tribal programs, administrators from across the system in those that oversee programs in those groups. And now I'm going to go ahead and get into some of the key recommendations from the report. Next slide please.

So, in the quality recommendation section, we had several recommendations to ensure that UPK programs are fostering child-centered learning environments, including requiring state preschool programs to adopt an evidence-based curriculum that is aligned with the preschool and TK Learning Foundations and the desired results developmental profile as well as and best supports the children they serve in their programs. So really using those tools to kind of inform instruction and inform practice. Next slide please. In the access recommendation sections we section, we have a recommendation on encouraging community schools, serving elementary grades to focus on supporting expanded access to high quality UPK programs through a mixed delivery model by collaborating with local preschool programs and local early learning and care infrastructure to offer full day options to best meet the needs of children and families. Next slide.

In the intersection of quality and access section, providing pathways for family child care homes to join Family Child Care Home Education Networks through support such as providing best practice recommendations as well as technical assistance to our current state preschool program contract holders on how to offer services through a FCCHEN, ensuring that state preschool program contractors and applicants are aware of opportunities to apply for expansion funding as it becomes available and to provide services through a state preschool FCCHEN, working with early learning and care infrastructure partners to communicate with family child care homes about opportunities to join a FCCHEN and modifying the State Preschool Program Quality Rating and Improvement System Block Grant Request for Applications to include a stronger focus on Family Child Care Home Education Networks. Next slide.

This recommendation is from the other consideration section. So, if you haven't heard, it's going to talk about the work group and the recommendations. They were recommendations that had to be aligned with master plan for early learning and care and not create new local or state costs, not easy to do. So, there is another consideration section where we highlight recommendations that could be implemented should funding become available. So, one here we'd highlight for one thing here we'd highlight from that section is provide financial incentives and invest in effective models for professionals to achieve permits, credentials and degrees, and to progress along leadership pathways. Incentives could include scholarships or other financial aid, stipends and resources to pay substitutes. Effective models could include

apprenticeships or other earn and learn programs and models that offer online instruction or opportunities for evening and weekend coursework. And if we go to the next slide, we've got our QR code for where you can access the report on the California Educators Together website. There's many wonderful recommendations in there and I will draw my time here to an end.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Stephen. So, Donna, would we turn next to CDSS for a brief presentation? And my apologies again, just so we can try to carve out as much time for the council input Lupe, whatever you feel you can cover a short amount of time would be great.

Donna Sneeringer:

Yeah, we're going to try to hold people to five minutes on the presentations, so we have enough time for folks to weigh in.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

Thank you, Donna. I'm happy to jump in regards to how CDSS fits into the universal preschool system itself. And so, a couple pieces as a reminder is you can just jump to the second slide, is that CDSS oversees direct contracts of programs that serve children from zero to 13 years old and also includes the three and four-year-olds in various different studies. That includes private centers, preschools, as well as licensed family child care homes and family friends and neighbors. So that's both Voucher and Title 5 programs itself. Examples of Vouchers would be like the Alternative Payment Program. How it works, are examples of Title 5 will be General Child Care and Development Programs, General Migrant Child Care, and then the Family Child Care Home Educational Networks. Not limited to that, but just wanting to just give examples of that offer full-day, full-year type of programs for families to have those options. And then through the Voucher Program CDSS has instead that families can choose preferred child care provider, including those offering UPK and covering most of the cost based on family's income and need on those two.

Other highlights in regards to supports for families in general who are looking for care have to do just a highlight on that. We subcontract with child care resource and referrals who support many of the families seeking for care. That could include the universal preschool settings and they have the array of options in regards to based on family needs and what families feel is appropriate for them. A lot of times wrapping around couple programs depending on what families would like to that to provide for them too as far as the best options for that.

And then we also have under us, the California Head Start Collaboration Office, they work amongst supporting the Head Start agencies and entity security activities designed to benefit children and birth through school entry and their families who are qualified based on income with the primary purpose to partner and collaborate with other state and local agencies, ensuring alignment in the universal preschool goals and enhancing program quality as one of the many priorities that this office provides oversight.

And then finally the next slide is I have to touch on the workforce support. So under the Child Care Development grant, there is CCDF funds that highlight that we called out on

the slides, a few of those efforts, but because of time, I want to just touch on one, which is the California Preschool Instructional Network that provides high quality professional learning, technical assistance and support through a virtual learning network. And they have CPIN leads across the state to deliver professional development trainings and learning strategies to not only state preschools, but also CCDF-funded programs and pre-school Vouchers and Title 5s, just making sure that they are supportive in regards to supporting the development of three and four-year-olds. But we have many others that fall under that workforce category that we fund to make sure that the workforce is well-prepared to support the three and four-year-olds in their care settings. And so, with that, I will turn it back to Donna to continue to go through the panelists.

Donna Sneeringer:

Thank you Lupe, and I really appreciate what you were able to add to the conversation and I know when we get to recommendations piece, one of the things that I know I have been focusing on is how we can make sure that the resource and referral agencies get more comprehensive information about UPK and all the supporting components. So appreciate your input. We are now going to shift a little bit and actually hear from somebody in local community doing the work. We have asked Dez Martinez, who's the coordinator of Early Education Special Projects for the San Diego County Office of Education to talk about the work she's been doing as San Diego is working through these transitions and planning processes. And just excited to hear from you. Take it away, Dez.

Dez Martinez:

There we go. Hi, good morning. Thank you for having me here. As Donna said, I'm Dez Martinez. I work for the San Diego County Office of Education as a coordinator of Early Education Special Projects. I also serve as the Child Care and Development Planning Council coordinator. So, thank you for inviting me here today. I was asked to speak a bit about supporting connections between districts and child care providers. We're going to get right into it. Stay within our timeline here. All right, so starting with our role at the San Diego County Office of Education, when it comes to expanding universal pre-kindergarten known as UPK, generally speaking, we have three main roles under two separate grants, supporting the planning and implementation of UPK, specifically Transitional Kindergarten at LEAs local education agencies. Although this includes collaboration with community-based organizations, the focus truly is on LEAs and Transitional Kindergarten TK.

This work is funded by the UPK Planning and Implementation grant. However, since UPK is made up of a mixed delivery system beyond LEAs and TK, we were offered the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning grant, which then funded our ability to obtain input from mixed delivery providers. And once our mixed delivery providers helped us to understand what was missing from the original UPK plan, that one that was pulled together by the Planning and Implementation grant, well then we were able to draft together a UPK mixed delivery plan, which spoke to some of the inequities and the additional needs to expand UPK mixed delivery options to support all children and families using an equity lens that addresses various geographic locations for transportation needs preservation and revitalization of language for our native

community, multi-language learner needs, as well as cultural preferences for our families.

So, with both the UPK Planning and Implementation grant as well as the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning grant, we've had successful outcomes. But before I touch on those outcomes that we received through the two grants, I want to talk a bit about that organic collaboration, which occurred prior to SDCOE support, because I think we can learn a lot from this and start to duplicate it a bit more. So, through the Local Control Accountability Plan known as LCAP, known as the LCAP process, Vista Unified School District, parents, teachers, community members, they came together to develop a prenatal to third grade continuum. They call it P-3 Continuum, but in this case, P means prenatal. So, in all of our conversations about UPK, typically it's starting at three years old, but it's really important to consider the need of the continuum from including infants and toddlers prenatal to third grade.

It's a system to provide family supports, early foundational language, literacy and numeracy supports to children, educational enrichment systems EES, it's a key partner in this prenatal to three continuum, they've been able to help make positive multi-generational impacts in Vista. So EES is a community-based organization. They operate both part-day preschool and full-day child care for children ages zero to three. The Vista Unified prenatal to third grade continuum was developed under a visionary leader group of leaders led by Dr. Matt Doyle. Dr. Matt Doyle is Vista Unified's superintendent. And this partnership is a model in how districts can work with the local community-based organization that we can all learn from. We can replicate this with districts willing to support all children and families at a systems level. So, when we're talking at a systems level, it really is important that we have the attention and support of the superintendent using their LCAP process.

So, kudos to this wonderful partnership. I just wanted to highlight that something that was pulled together before our UPK grants became available. This just sort of happened organically and certainly something that we want to duplicate and continue to learn from. Now going back to our intentional and focused supports, moving on to our UPK Planning and Implementation grant. Through this grant, we were able to develop a preschool to third grade. So, we still call it P-3, but it's now preschool to third grade team. This team supports districts through P-3 networking and individualized technical assistance among many other things. They're doing wonderful work. However, it's the individualized technical assistance that I understand is really having some significant supports in helping districts learn which community-based organizations are nearby and how to best work with them. Now lastly, through the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning grant, a UPK mixed delivery team was developed at this point. The team has obtained feedback from mixed delivery partners and continues to do so. This led to a draft of a UPK mixed delivery plan, which outlines significant needs, barriers, possible solutions.

It's through this work that county-wide UPK expansion and enhancement can happen through family child care home providers, community-based organizations, districts, Head Starts, military providers, native providers. Again, the whole mixed delivery system can now come together considering everybody's needs, understandings, et cetera.

So, we've even started to work with colleges, universities, licensing, First Five, obviously Resource and Referral agency has been by our side the whole time, and they're a very close partner of ours. I don't think we could have done all this without them. Working with early education advocates locally, et cetera. So again, that mixed delivery approach is really what has helped us to expand our understanding of county needs. So, these are all successful, wonderful outcomes which have occurred organically, intentionally through focus need, but not all UPK expansion work has been easy-peasy. Not all of it has been successful. There's still work to be done. And so, I do want to touch on some things that we found challenging and things that we hope to move from challenges to goals.

Let me start with a couple challenges, hopefully soon to be goals, and I want to thank a couple of our ECPC members. I think it was Donna who helped us with this language here from parallel play to collaborative play, and I think it was Maeva from Kidango that brought up that from competition to cooperation. So, thank you all for your ideas here. First, I think we can put our early educator lens on to imagine the growth of young children when they're starting to play in parallel, that parallel play and then growing to develop collaborative play. Well, we as adults, we can use this growth too, both internally and externally. I think internally it makes a little bit more sense that we would continue to need collaborative work when it comes to different agencies outside of our own. But most surprising, the need for internal collaboration has come up in multiple ways by multiple people, multiple agencies, districts, and even our own county office of education.

What we see happening internally is that although we're all working towards that same goal, we're working in silos, we're hearing that even districts that have state preschool programs on campuses are not effectively collaborating with those preschools. Not all of them obviously, but we're hearing this out in the field and there's no shame or blame here. I also understand that schools were required to bring in TK a new grade level and ELOP for expanded learning, whether they were ready to or not. So, they also are grappling with a lot of needs and expansions and then it makes sense that they're wanting to understand what they need within that group first before starting to expand to state preschools, Head Starts, et cetera. That makes sense. However, it doesn't fully address that challenge. In fact, our own COE, our own county office of ed is grappling with this.

Honestly, the UPK grant, the two different grants truly are two different grants, and although we do a great job of collaborating, they're held at different departments within the County Office of Ed that are not even on the same level. One of us is upstairs, another one is downstairs. We work to collaborate, but it has been difficult and we're doing some great things and work is continuing to move on. But I do think that until we get to that full collaborative play, things will continue to be challenging. So, I do have hope that we'll get to that goal, but I want to bring up the fact that it's been difficult, it continues to be difficult and we continue to work towards it. I'm going to move on to from competition to cooperation.

So, the challenge being the competition and the goal being the cooperation. The biggest issue we're facing obviously is funding and salaries, services and quality. So when I say funding and salaries, what I'm talking about many things, but one of the top issues is our

workforce. What we're finding is that we have state preschool program teachers who are pretty even in qualifications to TK teachers that are making much less in terms of their annual salary. In fact, it's about half of what our TK teachers are making. And with this workforce issue, I'm not sure that we will see the workforce crisis come to an end until we can have equitable wages between both TK and our mixed delivery early educators. So, this is one of those big things that right now it's working in competition and I'm hoping eventually it'll work towards cooperation. And we're even seeing impacts in the classroom. If we have TK teachers working in the same classroom as a CSPP teacher, although that teacher holds a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a high level child development permit with the lower salary range.

And because they're not holding the actual credential that the TK teacher is holding, they're being seen now as assistants. An assistant who likely has much more background experience understanding of brain development than the new TK teacher coming in. Not to say that that's every case because sometimes we do have a mix, but for the majority this what we see happening. Going onto services and quality. What we're seeing is that our state preschool programs are offering some quality services that are not quite there at the TK side yet, hopefully one day we'll be cooperating in such a way that it's a bit more equitable. For example, at a CSPP program, we might see that the teacher is completing Desired Results Developmental Profile, DRDP is for all children. If they're engaged in Quality Counts California QRIS, we see that they're likely implementing Ages and Stages as a screening tool.

They're having to do CLASS assessments. So, we're also evaluating their teacher child interactions, which we know are key for brain development, for child development, but we're not seeing those same requirements or services on the TK side. So, another one of those competition hoping to go to cooperation side. The other big one that I really hope that we focus on at some point is the fact that we continue to say that this is family choice, family choice. However, when it comes to special education services and inclusion, we're not quite there yet. If a family prefers to be at a community-based organization, has a child with an identified special need and prefers not to go to TK because perhaps that's not quite meeting the need of the family, whatever that need might be, they would have to forego special education services because in many cases, the school district is only offering those services if the child is enrolled in TK.

But again, if it's truly family choice, that family wouldn't have to forego those special education services, that early intervention that's going to support the child all the way through their school career and beyond. So, there's some really wonderful things happening. I'm very excited about where we're headed and I think that we are on the right track, but in the next five, 10, even 20 years, I hope that we're able to move the mark on parallel play to collaborative play, on competition to cooperation. So, I think that's my time. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak through all of this.

Donna Sneeringer:

Thank you so much Dez, we really appreciate you lifting up those models and I reminding us that we've all got work to do to try to make such a monumental change. I'm next going to introduce Maeva Marc, she's the Vice President Advocacy at Kidango

and she's going to share with us some work they've been doing with school districts in their community in providing UPK options. So Maeva, go ahead.

Karin Bloomer:

And if I could just quickly ask Dez to stop sharing her screen as well. Thank you.

Maeva Marc:

Hello, good morning everyone. Thank you so much for having me. Can everyone hear me? Perfect. Great. So again, I'm Maeva Marc VP of Advocacy and Policy with Kidango. We're an early learning and care agency in the Bay Area and we serve about 5,000 children and families and we offer a blended variety of child and development programs, Early Head Start, Head Start, general child care, state preschool. We also have 72 providers who are part of our Fetch and Program. We are really excited about working with the zero to three population. We've seen on our wait list that there are a lot of families waiting to enroll their youngest children into care. And so, there is a huge need to serve younger children and we're really excited to be able to do that. However, I do want to mention that in the work that we're doing, we do acknowledge that as we look at the UPK system and the vision for it, which is a wonderful vision, but it's hard to achieve that vision right now.

I want to acknowledge that there has been harm done where we need to make sure we are addressing that harm and finding a way to attend to healing so that we can all start working together. And thank you for the shout-out, Dez to bringing up how we need to stop seeing ourselves as competitors, but as part of a United System for families, especially since Donna mentioned it, that families see us as one continuum and so we need to be able to cooperate together so that we can serve the children and families who need us, and I want us to make sure we are keeping that at top of the line. As a former teacher, one of the things I've always told myself is, "Don't put a children's life on a shelf to deal with the adult stuff. Focus on the kids."

So, at Kidango we've been very fortunate to have relationships with a variety of school districts. One school district in particular in Santa Clara County that we work with is Alum Rock School District. We've had a relationship with them for over 20 years and this year we actually were able to partner with them to implement a birth to five campus. So, we know that throughout our K-12 system, there's been some under-enrollment in schools. And instead of closing a school down, we were able to transform this school based on the need within that community for families who had children under five years old. And so as a partner with Alum Rock School District, we provide the infant toddler care as well as working with the three-year-olds, and we provide the wraparound services, the before and after care for their TK and K students.

And so that partnership has been something in the works. We've been working together based on our relationship and also Alum Rock School District's vision on early education and care was in alignment with ours. And so being able to find school districts who have the same mission or the same vision that you have, it's really great to be able to come together with them and offer a service that can help them grow their vision as well as yours. And so, it's been a wonderful opportunity to work with Alum Rock School District, but like I said at the beginning, this stuff is hard because we live in California

and it's a very expensive state and especially in Santa Clara County, families are struggling. Okay.

When I say families, I'm not just talking about families with children, I'm also talking about our ECE workforce. Okay, they are struggling as well. And so, we need to be able to stabilize our families as well as our ECE workforce. And I believe that this vision is a great solution to help with that stabilization and what we need to do is ensure that as we begin to implement, the UPK programs have the support that they need to establish meaningful foundational partnerships with their local LEA. There needs to be a way for them to have access to those kind of relationships. And I think it's important to show the way. Kidango is very fortunate to have the capacity to have different departments that work on developing partnerships, but that's not everybody's story. Not everyone is in the same boat. And so it is really important that we are providing the resources on how to partner with your local school district and what great partnership look like.

Also, I think it is very important to keep in mind what families want. They want full day care, here again, it's expensive to live in California, and so families are working very hard to keep a roof over their heads and to keep their children fed. And so full day care is something that they need. And I think that with this system, if we work together, we cooperate together, we move away from the parallel play and we go into more of that cooperative play, we can really build a system that serves children and families in the way that they need it. And it's important too to ensure that families are able to choose what is best for them throughout this system. I love the bridge that we have in the vision. It's not just a bridge for families. It also needs to be a bridge for our system for those behind the scenes we have to work together.

And I really appreciate how Donna said it earlier, that we need one unified system, if we can all really get that ingrained in our minds and how we can unify, it's really important. And listen, I'm from Haiti and it is Haitian Heritage month this month, and our motto is "L'union fait la force", there is strength and unity, and I stand by that in the work that I do, and I encourage you all, and I'm talking to my providers who are on the call right now, go find your local LEA, knock on those doors. I say, "Hey, I'm here. I know you need help. Let's do this together." So, thank you very much and if you have any questions you can ask.

Donna Sneeringer:

Thank you so much Maeva, and I love that. And I think we can all keep unity as a guiding principle along with local control and parent choice. I think Unity is a good one. The next piece, as Maeva mentioned is resources and the resources that are needed in the field. And my organization, the Child Care Resource Center, has been very excited to partner with EveryChild California on a new toolkit that is just being rolled out to support the early childhood community in engaging in these universal pre-kindergarten conversations. So, I am very excited to introduce Adam North from EveryChild California, and he's going to do a very quick walkthrough of what's out there and it's a work in progress and it's only as good as all the contributions from all of you. So go ahead Adam and show us what you got.

Adam North:

Awesome. Good morning everyone. Like Donna mentioned, Adam North, the Director of Professional Development with EveryChild California. And Maeva, so grateful for your comments because what a tremendous setup for what I'll be talking about today. As Donna mentioned, this UPK partnership. Guidebook is funded by Heising-Simons Foundation but is the work of the six partners that you see on the screen there. We are all stakeholders in this game, and all have a significant investment in seeing successful partnerships just like we just discussed. And so really quick, just so we have a foundational of understanding here, when we came to this work and when we were funded to build this, we stepped back and look at the vision just like we've been talking about a lot today. You envision UPK, well what is the goal? And as stakeholders, we have some flexibility where we go with this work.

As nonprofits, we always like to fill in the blanks. We think we do this very well. So we looked at where are the blanks in this at this moment and where can we help be a supporter of that vision? Because we think the vision is good, but where many things aren't totally clicking yet that we can start to set in and provide supports for much like was just spoken about, is those partnerships. Understanding that as you see on the screen here, the charge of UPK to be a holistic approach, to support the needs of the child first and foremost, and the delivery of UPK to be community first with supports for the diverse needs of our communities and our families. California, a tremendous, wonderful state, very diverse, very diverse in its needs, very diverse geographically, very diverse with its people. And all those things need to be represented and welcomed into this vision.

TK is only one component of UPK. I know I'm preaching the choir here. I'm saying it because publicly we need to keep reminding folks when I'm at a party and people ask me what I do, this is the number one topic of conversation. Can I explain these differences right here? What is TK? I've heard of UPK, what is that? And understanding those differences and understand that TK is a component of a successful UPK program. So, we put this in everything that we do. So, it serves as a constant reminder. Here as we had talked about, as Donna mentioned at the start of all of this with her comments about parental choice. So, we're talking about parental choice for the community and for the families themselves. So, there's tremendous flexibilities under UPK where we can design programs that are appropriate for your individual communities.

And so, this is always just a slide I like the reference that I'm sure we've all seen before, but understanding that the pathway for your child to be successful under UPK can look very different depending on both your cultural priorities as a family and your geographic availability to access to care and education and as well as depending on the age of your child is, because some of this is a phase in approach as we know. Community partnerships, examples, ability to provide full day services, IEP services, staff development, and so much more that you saw in that first slide. All of this foundation is to set up fully delivering on UPK is not possible, just like Maeva and Donna said, not possible without creating partnerships. And so that is where the niche that we saw that we needed to go as stakeholders. And so we built the UPK guidebook.

It is available at upkguidebook.org, it is live now. This guidebook is working to create a common understanding of the regulations and laws that govern it. Beyond that, now we're actually starting to create and share resources and tools and templates that help

facilitate the successful delivery of UPK. These tools and templates have been developed by the partners you see here on this screen, but there was also a shared resource site of all the tools that are already being used in the communities. We don't need to recreate the wheel. If you've already done the work and you're telling us this is working for you and you're willing to share with us, we will publicize it on this website and allow others to engage with that, download it, utilize it, whether it be a template, whether it be a case study, whether it be a presentation, and understand what's working for you in your communities might work in other communities across California.

And so, we hope that this work can expand beyond just a resource catch-all and also become a community of sharing. So, we're looking at training possibilities, webinar possibilities, event possibilities of how can we gather these folks? And just like was previously said, make sure that all the entities are talking. Everyone here at this meeting today is doing this work with a very similar personal or professional charge to serve the children and families of this wonderful state. And so, if we all have very similar goals, that means we have more in common than we do not. And so, we're just making sure we can provide pathways for these conversations.

So, the website, when you get on it, we'll be divided to family support, CBO support and local education agency support and understanding how those three columns, if you will, do not become silos, hopefully do not become silos and become more of an integrated approach to understanding how these resources can play with one another. And so again, I encourage you to go to upkguidebook.org and hopefully at a future opportunity I can walk you all through more of the website. But I know this is just a quick shout out and I had five minutes today, so I am happy to answer any questions beyond or please reach out to anyone, any of the partners, Donna, myself and other partners, and we're so happy to help support your work and publicize it on this website. So, thank you.

Donna Sneeringer:

Thanks so much Adam. And Dean, I think you wanted to add just a couple comments.

Dean Tagawa:

Yeah, before we just move on. First of all, I want to say that I took probably four or five pages of notes in this last group because there is so much good information and even for me, as we've been learning about this in our own challenges, but the idea for everything from hosting joint events, and I'm thinking of all the work that we've already done as far as like MOUs with different agencies to make sure that they have facility space on our campuses and different things. There's a lot of collaborative work that can be done. I think one of the things, and then I'll stop, that was really interesting was from Stephen around the data he shared about how many kids are accessing or not accessing services that are eligible to do that.

And that always brings me back to one of the places for collaboration is around a statewide effort to do something. And I've said it in the past, but I would love to see a bus or buses rolling around the city that just say, "We don't care where you enroll, but get your kid enrolled." Because the goal is, again, to get every child an opportunity to get to a preschool program. And then for our three-year olds who find themselves in a

really tough place, I think that's the other group that we want to reach. And then I'll just make a couple of quick shout-outs around inclusion.

I think there's opportunities to work with our regional centers around making sure we get kids included and then with our state agencies around public health to make sure our children that are experiencing homelessness or experiencing not having a permanent home, that we're able to work with them as well to make sure that they get the services they need. And it doesn't have to be through its school district, it could be through any agency or any organization that can help with that. So again, there's a lot of opportunities and a lot of challenges facing us. But Donna, thank you for giving me a couple seconds to share that.

Donna Sneeringer:

Well, and it's a nice segue. Thank you Dean. And I think where we are in this conversation is we know we're not going to solve all these issues today, but what we are really hoping is that we can take this next 20 minutes, maybe longer. Karin's going to keep us honest on time to have a discussion with council members, really exploring two questions. And the questions we would like to ask all of you who are members of the council are, what gaps and challenges are you experiencing in this UPK transition and what supports or policies are needed to address these challenges?

And then also, what are some successful strategies and collaborations we could shine a light on in models to replicate? I'm going to suggest that if you're a council member interested in speaking that you can raise your hand, we'll try to get through. But also, anything that gets put in the chat, we will also be synthesizing all of that. As Karin mentioned at the beginning, we are hoping to bring back all of this information in the form of some proposed policy recommendations to bring back to the Early Childhood Policy Council for consideration when we meet in August. So, with that, I'll hand it back to Karin to facilitate the discussion.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Donna. And I did put those two questions into the chat just so I could stop sharing my screen, but please do refer to those and we'll just take in the order of the hand. So, Natali, who's here physically in the room with us, please go ahead.

Natali Gaxiola:

First, I want to thank you guys for this presentation because so much of it is what is my lived experience as a state preschool teacher. I think it was really validating to hear all of these points because this is what I live day in and day out. The financial hardship is very real. For the past few years, I think I have considered, "Can I afford to keep my job?" And I've had to find other ways to supplement my income in other ways for me to be able to maintain that position. And it's because I truly have a passion for this age group. Again, looking at working at a school district, being part of a school district who's implementing the TK expansion, I do see very much that it isn't equitable. And I'm going to say in regards to the financial things, again, thank you for bringing that up, but I'm going to speak for those who can't advocate for themselves, which are my students.

And for parents and families who have gone into TK programs and it's a hit or miss, there's an amazing teacher at the school where I'm at and you walk into her classroom and you see the knowledge of child development throughout her class, but you walk into other classrooms and they're just doing demos. So, it definitely depends on the experience of every parent, every child. But yes, I come from a classroom where we do look at CLASS, where we look at the ECERS and where I'm constantly reflecting on my practice and making changes. And especially now that we are getting those very young three-year-olds that are starting at what is the end of the school year for us. My classroom dynamic changes and adapts. And because of the experience I've had previously, I'm able to do so. But I can see how challenging this can be for a brand new teacher.

I have over 20 years of experience and I feel this challenge. I feel like there's a lack of support. I think we need more positions outside of the classroom, supporting classrooms and supporting parents because after the pandemic, I feel like we see the effects of children and the high needs and not all needs, and now I'm going to the inclusion part, not all needs end up with an IEP. Not all needs can be documented that way. And just because of the nature of child development, sometimes the needs are very... It's just something that's developmentally appropriate at that time. But they need some support in, especially when it comes down to SEL and all the social, emotional and behavioral, because it's tied. And things that I do in my classroom that are just part of my daily classroom for all of my students, like visuals for STEM boards, priming, sand timers for those that need it, that's just part of my everyday class. The use of it changes depending on the child, but I am seeing that lacking in TK classrooms.

So again, I feel like I've had parents take one child and the next year, they're like, "No, I'm keeping them in your class." So, I think if we could support more of that collaboration, they can actually support families and getting what they need versus just providing a space because I feel like a lot of that is the checkoffs of I provided the space. And then I'm glad to hear about the LCAP. I'm very involved in regarding to the LCAP, but as far as my understanding was, is that there were a lot of limitations. So how do we support small school districts knowing about what's going on in different places so that they can see what can apply to their school district and what can support their community? So that was just my input. Thank you for the time.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Natali. Robin, I see your hand. And then Sonla.

Robin Layton:

Hi. Thank you for the opportunity. Jess, thanks for highlighting. I put it in the chat highlighting our program in Vista Unified, and I failed to mention the school board support as well. Super important. One thing as far as challenges and keeping in mind that this partnership really only works because of constant education. The K-12 world is trained in... They're not trained in ECE. They're becoming more trained, but it's constant training on our part to let them know and educate them on what happens in an ECE program. The other thing I want to point out is that the parental choice, when TK got approved, it's because of the advocates that parents were provided. Parent choice. If

you recall, four-year-olds were going to go to TK and get cut from CSPP. I've always had that advocacy hat on that parents need a choice, especially the parents in our full-day programs.

They're not leaving our programs once they realize that we're offering 12 hours, 250 days a year versus what happens in the elementary school, which is I think six hours for 180 days. So, our full-day programs, the children stay, and they do not go to TK. Maybe a few because of convenience or maybe they don't need the all-day... Well, obviously they don't need the all-day, full day care. Our part-day... This has to do with expansion. Part-day programs are still not full. We have not recovered from COVID, but the full-day programs, the birth through entrance to elementary school, we do go till age five, those have a waiting list. So, the full-day programs in Vista Unified, they're helping us expand by giving us space and then we renovate using grant money and state money to expand our full-day programs. That's why we went from one school thirty-some years ago to now 14 in the last 15 years.

And so, we did have the other thing that's interesting, the tie-in about education, that's a constant, not with this school district anymore. Vista really gets it now, especially since they formed the prenatal to third grade collaborative. But in another district, when they started their TK program next door to our preschool program, they talked about how some of the teachers went on leave because it was too stressful.

And I asked them, I said, "Well, how many teachers? How many adults are in the room?" And it was one adult versus our next door we had three adults. Same amount of children. And so, they didn't understand or get why the one-to-eight ratio is so necessary for the three and four year olds. So, it's a constant advocacy on all of our parts because TK is here to stay unfortunately. And hopefully with legislation and with advocacy, more and more of the TK teachers will become educated in early childhood education. And the ratios will change because it is about the children. We want the children to have a safe, developmentally appropriate program where they're not walking to the bathroom by themselves or they're not going to the principal's office because they pee their pants. Because we all know four-year-olds pee their pants. So, I guess that's it. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Robin. I'm just noting too, council member Paula Merrigan also put some challenges in the chat too. So please, council members, please feel free to use the chat to be making sure you're highlighting some challenges and spotlighting some successes. That will help. Again, Donna and Dean as they go back to formulate some draft policy recommendations to bring back that they have your input. Also welcome your verbal input too. And so, with that, we'll go to Sonya. Thank you.

Sonia Jaramillo:

Thank you for the opportunity. Thank you for the information presented. I really appreciate making everything more clear and easy to understand for all the different providers. So, whoever organized this, good job, thank you. For gaps and challenges from the partners and the community members that I represent in Monterey County, the collaboration components still being a challenge, one of the main factors. The lack of

inclusion and the urgency to implement the TK at the local LEAs is creating this conflict. And we need to find a system, a policy that somehow would require true partnership involvement, inclusion on the different levels so that the different providers are not left out and we end up losing those opportunities where we can provide better services to the families. I work at a county office of ed and I am not included. So when I heard this present, it felt the same here because we have conversations, collaborations, but still there's a gap in that true communication and we need to know what the right hand is doing and the left hand so that we can do a better job for the families.

The serving of the three-year-olds for us is also a challenge because as the districts are taking the four-year-olds, one of the things that we're seeing is that we are being forced to go down and serve three-year-olds if we want to continue to provide services. With that comes the challenge of providing the professional development to our staff, preparing them, adjusting our facilities, having all those different requirements that come in with the different developmental needs of our children as we go down in services.

The professional development though is a big challenge and having our teachers already prepared to work with preschool age children, I see our local districts actively recruiting our staff, which is a great thing and opportunity for our teachers, but it leaves us with the challenge of now I have to start all over. So, what I see is we're going to become the entry-level position and we're going to train, and then half will be going to TKs. Good job for our families, right? It's going to be a great opportunity, but we need to have more resources and more funding available because this is going to be our reality. And I need more explanation on the parent choice. It's one thing to say it, but when it comes to the actual, if the parents choose, is the funding going to continue to come to us fully or are we going to be sanctioned by getting less or not getting anything? So, what is the future mentality of that? So that's all I have. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Sonia. I see Deborah's hand and then Janet, and by that time we may need to probably turn to a very brief verbal public comment. So, I do also want to note that we should open up the chat feature now for written public comments. So please, please, please, if you're a member of the public and you want to provide testimony of any kind, please do use the chat now as we will have limited verbal public comment time. Okay with that, Deborah, please go ahead.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Thank you. Once again, I want to say, Donna when you opened up, you said about UPK that it's complicated and I just want to say it's more than complicated. It's outright scary. It's outright scary for home-based educators who are not in FCCHEN because they're losing their children three to four-year-olds, and especially for those home-based educators who are not a part of FCCHEN, who provide, who have a curriculum and provide UPK themselves already and provide a learning environment for kindergarten. I was happy to hear when Stephen had mentioned the section of quality and access for family child care homes to provide pathways for family child care homes to join FCCHEN. That really meant a lot to me. That really meant something because I thought

they're really listening to what providers are saying. Then I have to sit back, and I have to say, on those pathways that you're going to be hopefully creating and providing, does CDE have any data on how many family daycare providers, home-based educators who are not in FCCHEN, who want to be a part of and joining FCCHEN?

And what does that pathway really look like because we want to make it available to everyone, and how do we do this? We include everyone. And again, I was happy to see that making a pathway, but I like that to be not just on paper, but a reality. A reality to where home-based educators who are not in FCCHEN have a true chance to be a part of FCCHEN. Let's find out what is the data. Is there any data? So that you know how many providers want to join. And I know that there's thousands who want to be a part of this next delivery system, so we have to open that door and make it available. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Deborah. Okay, Janet, please go ahead and then we'll turn to verbal public comment, but we'll let Donna and Dean close. But Janet, please go ahead.

Janet Zamudio:

And I'll be super brief. Thank you for this very thoughtful conversation and for thoughtfully putting it together to invite different partners to share data and their experiences. My comment is really centered around the impact on programs with pulling four-year-olds into UPK, which is great. I think we all agree on the common goal of serving children in the state of California through a program like UPK. And I think what's really missing here too, among many other things, is ability to really support programs who are also enrolling younger-aged children such as infant, toddlers, two-year-olds, three-year-olds. I'll highlight an example that came out of one of the meetings that we've had in the past where, to Deborah's point FCCHEN providers in that data point, we're serving a higher number of infant and toddlers than any other programs, of course because of the age band that they're able to serve. But when we're really talking about the desire to serve families and help them, we have multiple conversations today where there was highlights of families struggling, especially with younger-aged children.

And I know we're talking about UPK, but there's a real impact to programs when we're really focused on preschoolers. So locally, what we're doing is looking at the number of four-year-olds in the city. And I sit because where I'm at with the university, we're looking at how many four-year-olds, three-year-olds are in the city of Palo Alto. We have a lot of programs expressing the potential of closing their doors because they cannot survive their preschool program. So, the question we're asking is, "Can you serve younger-aged children?" And with that question also comes, "Well, what do you need to be able to do that and shift to doing that?" Because we know we have younger-aged children and we know especially for programs have taken time to open their doors to serving families, that takes time to manage. And if there is the possibility, can we really make sure that we're also serving the needs of families who have younger-aged children as we're trying to or continue to roll out UPK? Because we can do it.

I know funding is... There's only a certain amount of dollars that we have. But we need to make sure that we're also asking the question of how to support programs through

UPK if they're able to survive and able to serve different ages of children over time because we want to be able to do that. I think that's also an agreement that we probably all have in terms of supporting families in our state where it's really, really hard to find care for infants, toddlers, two-year-olds especially care that's affordable. So, I just wanted to express that point. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Janet. Donna, Dean, just maybe quickly anything before we open it for public comment and then have Lupe close with a couple of quick announcements.

Donna Sneeringer:

I think just quickly thank you all for your candor and your comments, and I know you all have more to say. So, if you have other thoughts that come to mind after the meeting, if you could get those to Karin, that way we can include them as we start to synthesize all the information and just appreciate all of you and your willingness to have these hard conversations and look for solutions and better partnership going forward.

Dean Tagawa:

Yeah. And I just wanted to share for a couple of the people and Natali, thank you for sharing the reality of what a CSPP teacher goes through. I just want to say thank you for doing that and thank you for taking care of our kids because that's the same message that many CSPP teachers have. And so just know that your work is always appreciated.

Karin Bloomer:

And Donna and Dean, thank you so much for your co-design and co-facilitation of the segment as well. And for all our guests that were able to join us. We will open up verbal public comment for the next eight minutes. So again, please really encourage members of the public to provide comment in chat. And if you would like to comment verbally, please use the raised hand feature at this time. And if you could also keep your comments to a minute or less just so that we can please include at least a handful of voices verbally before we adjourn today. Okay. With that, we're going to unmute Serena Lin. Serena, you can unmute on your end.

Sarina Lynn:

Hi, thank you so much and thank you for this conversation. I think I'll be quick. I just want to highlight that I think even in the communications about UPK, and we're saying it's an inclusive system, but when we define something that starts at preschool and three-year-olds, it's not inclusive and it doesn't include all of the workforce that serves the zero to three population, which as I just highlighted is the most at need for services and support. So, I would advocate that and maybe it's a step backward just to reformat and think of us as a zero prenatal to third grade system. Redefine P as prenatal like Professor Heckman advocated when he created P3 and the Heckman equation. I cannot understand why we're not doing it, so do it now. There's no time like the present

and that will solve so much of our issues that we continue to discuss on this meeting and that we continue to feel undervalued, under-supported underfunded. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Isabella Gutierrez we'll unmute you on our end. Please go ahead and unmute.

Isabella Gutierrez:

Good morning. Thank you for giving me this time. I just want to say a little bit early on in this conversations, there were some talk about coaching and the CLASS two. And one thing that has really been in my mind and giving me butterflies in my stomach really is the new requirements that we are going to have in regards to providing coaching and providing evidence of the assessment of CLASS assessment to the Department of Ed. And I know that there's been supports that are in the making and there was some official bids that got to apply for the Inspire Grant to provide access for training for people to become coaches and all that. But I'm still thinking about who are going to be these coaches. Who can I send from my center? Am I going to take a teacher out of the classroom to go attend these trainings? And then if I'm doing that, then who's going to be the teacher in the classroom?

Maybe TK through upper grades, maybe they can afford these. Maybe they have these systems in place. I know Head Start do. I get a lot of work in Head Start for many years and they have an amazing coaching system and people that gets... I was a coaching trainer in a Head Start program. But they have all these federal monies that allows them to do that. And so, I'm very concerned for the CSPP programs and how we're going to be able to do that. And I know that right now we're in limbo waiting to hear more about how we can do that, but I sure hope that there's some thought put into that, into the funding for staffing.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Thank you so much. Okay, we're going to turn to the next raised hand, Marcella Graves. If you could speak for a minute or less, we'd appreciate it so we can also include others. Please go ahead.

Marcella Graves:

Yes. Hi. Can everyone hear me this morning?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes.

Marcella Graves:

Yes. Hi. Yeah. I'm also opposing that the child care cut is going to hurt a lot of providers, parents, the children, and I'm also praying that they would not make cuts in that. And then also I'm piggybacking on what Deborah was talking about. Yeah, we also in the

meetings make more room and more time for providers to speak and be included, not just to listen in. Thank you so much. Have a good day.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Renee Jacobs, we're going to unmute you on our end. Please go ahead and unmute.

Renee Jacobs:

Thank you very much. I wanted to just go over three things real quick. I will try to keep it under one minute. One, I want to thank CDSS and CDE for all of your work over the years. I've been a contractor for probably 28 years. I've also been through a transition as a deputy director of a child welfare. I know it's very difficult, so please know that the field does recognize that. And we do thank you for all of the wonderful things that you've implemented. I can't believe that I'm saying this, but I will say it. I manage on average about 40 million a year, federal and state money. My thought is should we be pushing for more slots and encumbering the California budget, or should we be focusing on the cost of care, stabilizing staffing, stabilizing CSPP, the birth through five system? I understand we always want more money; we always want more things for families, but I think we need to take this time to look at stabilizing our system before encumbering funds. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Alan Gutman, we're going to unmute you on our end. Please go ahead and unmute.

Alan Guttman:

Hi. I just want to echo the comment relating to prenatal through three. I like to say that the early brain research was a no-brainer. We know that 80%, 90% of brain development happens prenatal through age three. We also have sayings out there about the children can't wait, but we make them wait. Of all the places that we make children wait, it's in our own field of early childhood education. It's amongst our own early childhood specialists at Departments of Education and in Washington DC across this nation, we continue to make the children wait. Why don't we insist that it happens prenatal to three, that that's where the universal is? Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you so much. We're going to take two more verbal commentors. Tessie, please go ahead now and then Laura, and then we'll adjourn the meeting. Tessie, please go ahead.

Tessie Ragan:

Hello, my name is Tessie Ragan. I have a large family child care home, and I'm actually on the commission for the Unified framework. I'm wondering why we are [inaudible] to use them as a frame of reference for large family child care homes. Mostly because if we... None of this is equitable for family child care. Actions are not available in all

counties. I already do preschool pre-K, and I've been doing it for 12 years in two different states, two countries. And California has to be one of the hardest states in order for large family child care homes or family child care homes in general to be recognized. I'm just wondering why we are not using the recommendations to make sure that we're actually delivering a mixed delivery system that is equitable. Because right now, none of this is equitable. It's striving for equal, which means that people are going to be left out.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Tessie. And now finally we'll take, Laura. We're going to unmute on our end. Please go ahead and unmute.

Laura Demaree:

Okay, great. Thank you. My name is Laura Demaree. I'm the coordinator of student services at our local school district. As an LEA, we oversee, I oversee our ACES and expanded learning program. I was a former program officer at First Five and was highly involved in the development of the implementation of QRIS, Impact Grants, CSPP IT, and all of the support services that were available to family, child care home providers. Our local Santa Clara County Office of Ed has been doing a wonderful job with the UPK implementation and implementing communities of practice. But what I want to remind everyone is that we had a wonderful high quality system that was built with all the stakeholders under Impact with the efforts of Power Preschool, QRIS, block grants, and everything else. With UPK, I see that there are a lot of parents that are moving to choose a full day model with TK and the expanded day program without having to do extensive paperwork, contracts, subsidy forms, or paying for parent fees.

I'm on our local child care planning council, and I've heard that the TK expansion has significantly impact our local family, child care home providers and destabilize their enrollment, which is a group group of providers that were already significantly impacted by COVID. And now as an LEA, we are required to serve TK after school with our expanded learning. Expanded learning does have quality standards, but there's nothing in there about developmentally appropriate practice, developmentally appropriate environments, staff training in ECE or anything. And I want to be honest about this in expanded learning. The majority of LEAs across the state are subcontracting with CBOs to operate their extended day programs. I have not observed the same quality that families will be getting in full day CSPP, Head Start, family check at home providers. And the ones that are being presented in expanded learning and UPK conferences and workshops are wonderful.

The programs they're highlighting are ones that are partnering already with their existing providers on campuses that are CSPP programs or CCTR programs. So as a district and an LEA as being a former provider, somebody who worked at First Five and an after school, we appreciate the investments in the TK-12 system of support, but there needs to be a policy and considerations and the investments made in professional for expanded learning program workforce. So, if we're going to take this model of people that were after school program providers and expect them to serve four-year-olds, we need to train them and provide them with the support to do so. All of our providers and

our CBOs are wonderful partners, but they are not experts in the field of early learning. So, I can train my people and my community as much as I can, but the state needs... We need help. The whole entire state needs help for this program to be. If you want equality vision of input implementation of UPK, we need to make investments in the PD or develop something to meet the needs of our youngest learners. Thank you so much.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Laura. That concludes verbal public comment. I will turn it to Lupe for some final announcements.

Lupe Jaime-Mileham:

Yeah, thank you. And as we mentioned, we had again a packed agenda and know that this is a continuing conversation as we continue to move forward. So I want to thank first all the guests, all the panelists, the council members, and the public who continue to work alongside us as we think about our system. I have two reminders before we adjourn. One is that the workforce and parent advisory committee will be meeting on June 27th from 10:00 to 12:00. And then the second is the next quarterly ECPC meeting will be held on August 13th from 9:00 to noon. Again, thank you for this meeting everyone, and the meeting is adjourned.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you.

ENDS [03:02:48]