



Early Childhood Policy Council Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees

Agenda and Transcript Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, June 9, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Physical Meeting

1000 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
WestEd, 5th floor, Capitol Room

Agenda

1. Introduction

- Welcome
- Review of agenda

2. Provide Input to Draft Council Recommendations

- Share draft Council recommendations under development
- Seek input from Advisory Committee members

3. General Public Comment

4. Adjourn

Attendance:

Parent Advisory Committee Members:

Deborah Corley-Marzett, Mary Ignatius, Patrick MacFarlane, Patricia Lozano

Workforce Advisory Committee:

AnnLouise Bonnitto, Tonia McMillian, Zoila Toma

ECPC Council Members:

Andrea Fernandez, Karla Pleitéz Howell

Hosts:

Diana Yactayo, Jateri Willis, Karin Bloomer, Kim Sato, Ramee Serwanga, Amanda McCaskey (SP), Martha Schmitz (SP), Xiangyao Bowler (CN), Yan Chen (CN)

Meeting Transcript:

1. Introduction

- Welcome

Karin Bloomer:

Good morning and welcome to the joint meeting of the Early Childhood Policy Council Workforce Advisory Committee and Parent Advisory Committee. I'm just looking here for the slides that are being shared amongst my other ones here. Okay. I'm going to go ahead and with the help of others, review some Zoom features for today. And once we've explained the instructions, we will offer those features. 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 the closed captions in English throughout the meeting. In a moment, we'll 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. To access language services in English, you can click the interpretation symbol in the meeting controls. Click the language that you would like to hear. We have Spanish and Mandarin interpretation available for this meeting. Optionally, to hear the interpreter language only, you can click mute original audio.

[foreign language 00:01:32]. Mute original audio. Thank you.

Mandarin Interpreter:

[foreign language 00:02:10]. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

We will now activate the interpretation feature. Please select your preferred language channel at this time. And a few more items of note, we will be opening up the chat feature for 10 minutes at the end of each agenda item to invite written public comment. During the final comment period, we will also invite verbal public comment from those here in the room if any join us and as well as those on Zoom. Additionally, the slides we share today will be posted on the ECPC webpage within the next week. And finally, committee members who are on Zoom, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Law requires you to keep your cameras on at all times during the meeting. If you are unable to use your camera due to technical difficulties, please let us know. And now I will turn the meeting over to the chair of the ECPC Parent Advisory Committee, Mary Ignatius.

- Review Agenda

Mary Ignatius:

Hi everyone and welcome. I'm Mary Ignatius, Chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council's Parent Advisory Committee, and I'm joined by my very esteemed colleague, Tonia McMillian, chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee. And I want to just thank all of the members of both committees here today and members of the public who have joined us. There is a lot going on in this world right now and we really appreciate you being here with us. Before Tonia provides an overview of the agenda today, I wanted to make an announcement. There are three vacancies on the ECPC Parent Advisory Committee. Members of the committees get appointed by one of three bodies, the governor's office, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Speaker of the Assembly. Right now, we have a vacancy from each of these three appointing bodies. And in order to be considered for an appointment, you need to submit an application. And if you'd like to apply for one of these appointments, please go to the ECPC webpage and at the top is a hyperlink on how to apply.

And Karin, maybe somebody can also put it in the chat, a link. And yeah, I just really want to encourage, especially parents, if you know parents who are part of the subsidized childcare program, are waiting for childcare, we really want to get their input on how to make this system work better for them, so please encourage all parents to apply. And Tonia, I'm turning it back to you to explain the focus of today's meeting.

Karin Bloomer:

Tonia, you're muted. There you go.

Tonia McMillian:

Yeah, I saw that.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay.

Tonia McMillian:

Thank you. Okay. So today our advisory committee members are being asked to give input to draft recommendations that the council is formulating. So we have representatives from the council here today to explain the background and process for developing the council recommendations, to show you the topics that the recommendations will cover, to ask you what you see as important issues to highlight within those topics and ask for your feedback on some draft recommendations that are under development. This is dedicated time for our two advisory committees to weigh in and, as always, for members of the public to weigh in. So on that note, let's open the chat feature for, Karin, for 10 minutes?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes, perfect.

Tonia McMillian:

So the public can comment on this welcome agenda item. And at this time, I would like to welcome... Thank you, Karin. I would like to welcome council members Karla Pleitéz

Howell and Sonia Jaramillo to share their slides and ask for feedback from our committee members.

2. Provide Input to Draft Council Recommendations

- Share draft Council recommendations under development

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Tonia. And Sonia might be having tech issues, so if she jumps in, we will tag team. If not, I will cover information today. Really, really excited to be here. Members, Mary and Tonia, were really clear that there should be no recommendations from the whole ECPC body without coming to this group first, so I really want to thank them for inviting us today. Before diving in, I wanted to share some of the values that are guiding this work. So first, we have been asked to provide recommendations at the end of the year, ECPC, and I'll provide more context for them. Before providing policy recommendations, we wanted to make sure that we acknowledge the tremendous work that has already been led by families, advocates, researchers, community organizers, public systems, leaders in California. Our field does not lack public policy recommendations. We have decades of really, really good work on recommendations.

So our task really is not to reinvent the wheel, but to thoughtfully build on what already exists and lift up those recommendations. So that's a really, really critical value in the recommendations that we hope to provide at the end of the year. Second, we recognize that young children and families are navigating systems at an increasingly unstable time. We have had several discussions in these meetings with other partners about federal policy shifts and just the threat that they have to our safety net, to housing insecurity, to immigrant concerns, just to additional pressures on childcare and healthcare systems. So we believe that the ECPC and this advisory council have really, really important and critical leadership that's needed at this time to lift up what children and families really need. So while there is the history of really great recommendations, we understand that there's going to be a gap with some of those recommendations given how much change we have seen in recent years due to federal administration decisions.

And lastly, we believe there's a value in what we could actually build together. All of us spend so much time on this committee work and we want to make sure that the lived experience that lives here, the public policy expertise, the systems knowledge, the community perspective, we want to make sure that that's actually informing the report that we hope to pull together as ECPC. So these are the values that are guiding us in the recommendations and the process we will recommend today. For the discussion, we have outlined it in three different components. First, we will give you an overview and context of the report that we are being asked to pull together, including a summary of some of the ECPC conversations. So we'll give you context first. Secondly, we'll give you an overview of the proposed process for developing the annual report recommendations. And then lastly, we hope to really have a robust discussion on recommendations and issues that all of you would lift up.

So with that, if we turn to the first slide, we wanted to provide you context of where this came from. Last year, AB563 passed, and it directs our body, the ECPC, to pull together an annual report. And the language really states that the annual report should be recommendations from the ECPC committee on potential recommendations for public policy in 2027. It asks us to look at opportunities, challenges, and gaps for making those recommendations. If we go to the next slide, please.

Based on that task for the ECPC, here's the background on how some of us came together to offer recommendations. So earlier this year, the ECPC pulled together a budget letter. In that budget letter, there were several priorities, and the ECPC decided that since this is the first annual report that we will be providing to the legislature, that we should take those priorities and try not to take on everything under the sun for recommendations, but rather focus it within the budget priorities. Out of that, we then had two subcommittees divvied up. Sonya and I volunteered for this subcommittee that is leading the family access and federal public policy. There's another subcommittee that's working on workforce. And then for the group here to know, there have been folks that have lifted up facilities as another aspect that would like to be explored, but just want to share that these two subcommittees are not focused on that at this time. We'll get input from you all on that. But that's how the two subcommittees came to be. If we go to the next slide, please.

The five priorities... I will not read this, but will summarize for you all. The Family Access and Federal Public Policy Subcommittee for the ECPC is focused on these five priorities. These come directly from the first budget letter that the ECPC submitted back in February, March. The five issues we will be discussing and we hope to get input from you are one on childcare slots. Two is healthcare and really protecting healthcare access given what we're seeing from the federal administration. Third is protecting housing security. Fourth is protecting the safety and wellbeing of immigrant children and families. And then lastly, there was a lot of discussion on the safety net. So really, this is the task of this subcommittee, these five priorities for making recommendations. If we go to the next slide, please.

Now I'll give you an overview of the process we're recommending for building these recommendations. Sonia and I felt really strongly that we did not want to come with, "Here's the 10 recommendations we will make to the ECPC," or whatever number. We wanted to make sure that those values of the history of recommendations that we have done really getting community input drive the recommendations that you will ultimately see in November. In order to develop the recommendations, there's five steps that we're proposing. The first one is really engagement of ECPC and all of you. The second is review of recommendations and reports and the recommendations that those reports have made for the early care system so that we are not reinventing the wheel. The third is we think it's really important to have an in-person conversation with all of you and the ECPC on August 27th to summarize, "Here's what we have found. Based on what we have heard over the summer and from those reports, here's what the recommendation would be."

And then the fourth is really to have all of us prioritize those recommendations and use this as a learning opportunity because we believe this annual report can be really helpful. So going through those steps, this slide and the next slide will give you a quick overview of the dates and timelines, and then we'll get into discussion. So again, the first step was connecting with the ECPC. From that meeting, we will summarize some of the things we heard a little later. We are now here meeting with you all to make sure that we get guidance on what you think are some of the critical components. If we go to the next slide, here are the steps in the summer. In the summer, the subcommittee would review input from all of you from chats of the ECPC annual reports that we have previously submitted. We would also review literature.

Mary has shared that there's already some of that summary, so we'll be reviewing that by some of the folks that she shared have done some of that summary work already. And then before August 27th, we would share the draft recommendations with the council to make sure that August 27th is really used for refinement. We would come back to all of you here on September 10th to share, here is where we are with the draft recommendations, and the hope is that we will have a final draft, not the hope, we will have a final draft November 19th for the annual report. So before I jump into the discussion, I wanted to see if there are, folks, any questions on process

Mary and Tonia, I know you all were there at the last meeting. If I missed anything that's critical for folks who understand, please let us know, but want to check in and see if there's any questions on process.

Tonia McMillian:

I don't have any questions right now, Karla, because I mean, this is process, so we're going to go jump into discussion soon.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yes, yes. Okay. Thank you, Tonia. So before diving into discussion, let me give you a summary of what ECPC discussed and some of the things that came up for them as priorities. So first, there was a suggestion that we do not just think of one system at a time, like housing on its own and the healthcare system on its own, but rather think about coordinating between all systems because our families should not experience these systems in silos. The second thing that was lifted up, and this was something that Tonia also really elevated and others seconded, was adding targeted populations such as inclusion of children with special needs. Broadly, this includes the unique needs of special populations. ECPC members mentioned the 2019 California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission report on early childhood education that did a really nice job of naming some of these unique needs that our recommendation should consider.

And then lastly, there was making sure that families navigate and access services. Sometimes it gets complicated for families that are navigating issues on their own on basic needs and how do we just make it easier for families to navigate? A big overlay that I would mention in all of this, there were folks that mentioned, let's think about the

bigger picture. We understand that these will be recommendations for 2027, but we should really strategize about not just one year, but what the bigger picture would look like. So really encouraging us to balance between the 2027 recommendations and what's the bigger picture of what we want to see in our early care and education system. So with that, if we go to the next slide please. There will be two overarching themes for the questions and discussions. One is, we really want your insight and input on what should priorities be within those five areas that were listed.

And then we will be working on a literature review of reports that have made these really tremendous recommendations in the past. So any reports that you all would recommend, those would be the two overarching themes. And then very concretely, if we go to the next slide, we will go through each of the priority areas of the letter and have specific questions for you all. So we will start with this one. Priority area number one for our subcommittee is the 200,000 childcare spaces. Here, the ECPC mentioned that we should look at these spaces, but we really have to think beyond the 200,000 spaces was a general theme. This was a promise made by our current governor. We will have a new governor coming in. And the ECPC mentioned this particular recommendations here. We have to think about addressing unique needs of special populations. They mentioned we have to think... And this was in the chat, so folks didn't articulate this during the meeting, but we reviewed the chat and they mentioned that tribal families need to have access to culturally affirming early childhood programs.

Childcare facilities came up, and assistance in navigating really complicated systems was lifted up because paperwork barriers, fragmented eligibility, multilingual communication difficulties, but those were some of the things that your ECPC colleagues mentioned. And here I would love to open it up with the first question of, we are going to have a new governor and this concept of looking at a broader ask for some of this or targeting what we're asking for the slots. Would love to hear that input. And then any equity insights as we think about childcare spaces and important considerations for this. So we'll open it up for folks that want to provide input on this particular recommendation.

- [Seek input from Advisory Committee members](#)

Tonia McMillian:

Okay. Karla, so according to the Budget and Policy Center, only 16% of eligible children are actually enrolled. What are the numbers... Yeah, I'm going to jump on TK right now. So what role does TK play in there? Because I feel like the state took care of the TK folks first when we had all these open slots in family childcare home centers. Am I wrong? Am I thinking?

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I think it is nuanced, Tonia, but we do have funding for TK that's different funding source here.

Tonia McMillian:

Not a good look.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yeah. So you would recommend looking at some of the TK enrollment and then, it sounds like, mixed delivery and looking at how we prioritize some of these populations as well. Is that...

Tonia McMillian:

Yeah. And now you just said another... When you said mixed delivery, red flag, because family childcare is not considered in that whole mixed delivery compound. So we cannot ignore these things. They are major red flags and it's not like folks have been silent about it at all. It's not like educators have been quiet. We've been talking about this for a very, very long time. And I think whoever our new governor will be, yeah, they need to understand the imbalance when these decisions are being made. You cannot exclude a loud voice as family childcare in the mixed delivery system.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

And family childcare. So I'm hearing family childcare, looking at slots and considering some of the TK enrollment. We'll do some of that overview as well, Tonia, for the next meeting, but let me check if anyone has anything to add on mixed deliver...

Anyone has anything to add on mixed delivery or family childcare homes before moving to another topic? And if you do, if you come off mute just to make sure we're covering this. Okay. Seeing none. Thank you, Tonia.

Patrick MacFarlane:

Yeah, I think my comments are a little bit related to mixed delivery.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Okay.

Patrick MacFarlane:

And I think it's in the context of the childcare spaces. For one compared to the other priorities, this one is very focused on a specific number and I think maybe making it broader and focusing on whether it's universal or broadly expanding access, I think thinking much bigger than the 200,000 is important for us to do, especially looking at a new governor. And then I think within that, addressing the various issues around governance and the different programs and departments in which young children receive services I think is a big part of the state being able to effectively expand well beyond the 200,000 spaces that were promised.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yeah. And we definitely heard that at the ECPC as well for future years. Let me go to Mary.

Mary Ignatius:

Thank you, Karla. Yeah, similar to Patrick, I feel focusing on the 44,000 slots or the 33,000 that are owed in '27, '28, and this 200,000 is a very specific budget ask and the statute that speaks to meeting this need is with appropriation in the budget. So I think if we're talking about legislative priorities and recommendations, I agree with Patrick, we have to go broader. And as Tonia was mentioning, the saturation for TK and the state preschool for four-year-olds, we need legislative priority around zero to three infants and toddlers across the impacted and targeted communities that we were discussing earlier.

So I'd like to see some kind of recommendation or maybe it's like if we're meeting the needs of 16% of eligible children now, let's set some targets over the next governor's term of increasing that from 16% to 20%, from 20% to 25%. I don't know. We need Laura Pryor in the California Budget and Policy Center to give us what increments look like, but I think we should set some targets of what we want to see. This number of infants and toddlers or this number of.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

And getting some analysis for why those increments. Got it. Thank you, Mary.

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Mary, one follow-up on the equity and targeted populations. You and Patrick and Tonia mentioned targeted populations. Any insights on that for this recommendation?

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah. I've always been in favor of on the road to universal. You're making sure that communities with the greatest barriers, the greatest obstacles that they are served first in order for everybody else to be served more easily and access programs more easily. I appreciate the focus on universal and I want to get there, I just don't want to leave anybody behind on that road. So sometimes you have to just be really specific. 86% of the children who are eligible are children of color. And oftentimes, when programs are universal, it doesn't mean that all those children of color are first ones in the door.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Got it.

Mary Ignatius:

A lot of words. I don't know how to put that into legislative recommendation.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Okay. And you've talked about targeted universalism in other spaces, so appreciate that. Before going to Zoila, anything on equity or the number of slots and broadening it?

Patrick MacFarlane:

I just wanted to add one thing to what Mary just said about the targeted universalism and the road to universal is that now we're fortunate to have a few other states that are on that road ahead of us and there are a lot of lessons learned. And I think over the course of this year, maybe even more that we learn. So I think including that in those recommendations could be valuable.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Got it. And, Patrick, if you could share those states in the chat, now would be really helpful as we go on to Zoila.

Patrick MacFarlane:

I would say New Mexico and New York, and I'm sure other folks have others as well.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Perfect. Thank you. Zoila?

Zoila Toma:

Hi, good morning, everyone. I really appreciate that family childcare providers are acknowledging many reports and discussions, but mention it's not the same as being considered. As California works toward funding the promise of 200,000 childcare spaces and the addition of 44,000 slot, we must ensure that family childcare providers are not just counted as part of the capacity, but are meaningfully included in the policy in funding decision making. It is true what Tonia just mentioned, we are not part of the mixed delivery, we're just mentioned. We are not part of the Department of Education. We are part of the Department of Health and Human Services. We are educators.

The approach that UPK is taking is the setting that family childcare providers set since the 1800s. We are a new concept, we are not beginners, we've been here, we remain here, and now we're fighting for a livelihood for our work, for our industry. We are creating a system that is a one-size-fit-all approach to education, and that is not how education works. That's not how children develop. That's not how it is. And when we fight as family childcare, we're not just fighting because we're only losing our jobs, it's because we are passionate about what we do. We love to work with families and children and we understand that not all children develop the same and we need to deliver a system that work for all.

And for that centers, family, childcare, schools needs to be part of it. I love when I see these reports because I know that so many families are going to be blessed with a UPK because it's another daycare. If the child's under three years old in a public school, that means that you're serving a childcare program. You're putting a childcare program. If you're opening schools from 6:00 in the morning to 6:00 PM, families are going to be grateful because they can go to work. The only problem that comes is how the child is going to react to that. And we are not going to see this today, tomorrow, we are going to see it when they become teens, when they become adults, how all this has affected them.

The true cost of care, the AB 1981, all this is huge and important and we need to make sure we pass it, but needs to work alongside of everything else. We cannot just fight for one thing and forget that everything is connected. We are forgetting that. That's my comment for right now.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Zoila, and definitely considering how family childcare is incorporated into all of this. Patricia?

Patricia Lozano:

Hi, good morning. I just wanted to add that I agree that the ask should be not limited to the slots and also clarify the 16%, is it zero to five? Which population are we talking about? Because I know it's very different by age. I know that for zero to three is higher than three and fours, and I do agree that the ask should be targeted to those who need it the most.

So start where there are less availability that we know infant and toddlers and then work towards universal. And those percentages, we should really understand by age and probably location. Yeah. So we definitely need to clarify what we're talking about and then decide, "Okay, should we start really prioritizing those who need it the most?" And then move to a strategy that will serve all because we know that every age group has different options now. Anyhow, so that would be my recommendation. Yeah.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

So definitely hearing the theme of data-informed from a few folks. So thank you, Patricia. AnnLouise?

AnnLouise Bonnitto:

Just to add to what everyone else is saying, right now it says 16% and I saw on the comments Mary said for those under 13, because I have to do community assessment every year for tribes, I have to look at all this. So I use the California Resource and Referral and on average between all the different counties I serve for childcare for children from three to five-year-olds, which is really where most of our population sits in early education, about 71% to 74% of children are not being served that are eligible. I use that number in reverse because it's bigger. You see 16, you're like, "Oh, that's not enough that we're serving." But think of all the other populations we're not serving. One of the things on this ask, why it should be broader? One, definitely find out, as mentioned previously, what's the age group, what's the percentage?

And I believe the percentages are usually between 25%, 26%, 28% of eligible children in that age group for the different counties. Still, not a lot. For the 200 slots that were promised, we need to make sure that we tie in how that workforce will come in, what kind of funding will help family, childcare homes, centers, head starts even. Will there be sufficient funding for the staff to have those slots? You can have all these slots, but if you don't have people and you're not paying them accordingly, that makes it really difficult. I put some of my recommendations in the chat so that way I don't take too

much time, but really looking at that part too. We need to work with the foundation. The foundation are the individuals that give their heart, their sweat, and their love to the children so that they can get those results later in life.

So we need to step back and say, "Okay, with that 200,000 slots, what's the money and how is it going to be allocated and will it be allocated across the board to the different settings?" And for me, the tribal childcare settings, that's very important because we really are outside of the system. In one of your slides, you mentioned some of the committees and work groups that have been asked to give input. I would like to see if Tribal Child Care Association of California can also be that.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I agree with you.

AnnLouise Bonnitto:

I sit on that as well, but that's a great place to get that data that you don't have access to through the state because the state doesn't collect any information on the tribes. It's also an underserved population.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

That's a great idea. Thank you. And we'll have Deborah give last comment on this one. I think we have 10 more minutes and I have 50 more questions. So let's have this one and then we'll move to the next one.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Thank you, Karla. And good morning, everyone. This will be really, really quick. I just want to say for what everyone has said, I totally agree and thank you for the comments so I won't go back on those, but I just want to say is that here we are once again in a public meeting. Conversations only go so far. Recommendations are good to be heard, but implementation is still waiting to be seen because here we go again. And I do mean that, and I'll say it again, conversations only go so far. Recommendations are good to be heard, but implementation of everything we've always said in all these meetings are still waiting to be seen.

I want to say for family daycare providers, as Zoila was expressing, policies and regulations that are created and implemented right now also break down family daycare providers because there's so many different policies and regulations that are not meant for that space that need to be removed, that are hurtful to what we are doing. I want to say there's a lot of cleanup that needs to be made in this space and we have to be heard in order to get this space cleaned up properly for family daycare providers and especially for the families and the children that we serve. And with that, thank you, Karla.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Deborah, and completely agree on implementation. And the hope on these recommendations is what is doable 2027, but that we could actually think beyond that,

so appreciate you calling that challenge. If we go to the next slide, the questions are around immigration. I'm going to combine slide eight and nine. So if we go to slide nine, here's the four areas, immigration, healthcare, housing, and the safety net. And really, these four areas, the reason we lifted these up in the first budget letter is because of the impacts of federal decision-making that is happening right now, impacts of HR1. From this group, we wanted to get two different areas of recommendation.

One, what do we do to break down silos to really serve the whole child? And in particular, these are some of the areas that are complicating the lives of children and families right now. And then two, given HR1 federal administration issues, what can California be doing about dealing with what we see coming down the line, rapid response opportunities that we might have as recommendations for the upcoming year because this will continue next year. So if there's any rapid response thinking. Breaking down silos, rapid response, and then, of course, if there's specific recommendations, immigration, healthcare, housing, or safety net, would love to hear those.

Mary Ignatius:

Not seeing any hands. One of the things that we've been talking about is how access to childcare can be a way to mitigate the harmful cuts that are coming and to talk about it as a solution without ignoring that these funding cuts are real around food security and healthcare. So I don't know if there's a way to put forth a protecting families' legislative agenda from an ECPC framework in that food security, healthcare, childcare, housing, these all impact families in multiple ways and to have multiple cuts or also lack of investment of sitting on waiting lists and languishing there, it hits some families harder. So I think putting us in the same boat in many ways instead of siloing us and pitting our needs against one another would be a way to mitigate that.

But in terms of recommendations, I know we've also talked about the need for the data systems to speak to each other. So if you are eligible for one program, you have continuous eligibility across all programs. If you signed up for WIC and you've been proven eligible there, then you don't need to provide your income verification and all of those things to this other system. We've heard the responses, "Well, we're trying to protect people's data," but I think families want the data to serve them the easiest and most efficient and without them having to fall through cracks of different systems that aren't speaking together. So being able to streamline administrative and technological and data systems across all of these issues would help families.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

That's very helpful and really addresses the ECPC of don't separate in silos. So thank you, Mary. Patrick?

Patrick MacFarlane:

I'm glad I waited in that silence because Mary said whatever was on my mind much better than I could, but I think the technology support, especially in the world of AI, I think there's a lot of opportunity to streamline different things to make it easier for

families to access the supports that they're eligible for, to know what they're eligible for, to re-certify if they need to re-certify, to know when they need to re-certify.

You think of all the examples in our daily life, you can go to a restaurant and put your name on a list and they'll send you a text message that will tell you you're fifth in line, but we don't have that for these programs that people rely on. And I think it's great that these programs exist with community-based organizations and they're in community and they're there to best serve local communities, but the state as a whole could do a lot to enhance the technological infrastructure so that these community-based organizations can best serve families in the modern context.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Yeah. Really appreciate that, Patrick, and should be doable. Zoila?

Zoila Toma:

Sorry, here. Trying to read my notes that I'm taking. Okay. One gap I see is that while we talk about coordinating services, much of that responsibility falls to the local level where family actually receive support, which family childcare providers, again, resources and referral agencies. School, health providers and community organizations often work together to help families navigate complex systems. However, that same level of coordination is not always modeled at the state level. And I think that's what it is. We know already if families receive these cuts and food and all that. The first meal, sometimes children receive in their schools and their childcare programs.

The children don't have housing, childcare becomes their home. So preserving and working really hard. I know expanding access to childcare is very, very important and crucial as we know that the numbers are high. There are a lot of families, especially in this economy, to be part of the subsidy services, but preserving what we have already is crucial because on top of that, we're going to lose what we have and what we have built, that creates a bigger hold. So let's make sure that we preserve what we have and then work toward fighting for what is coming toward us because it's a continued battle when it comes to all this. Thank you.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Thank you, Zoila. And last comment, Tonia?

Tonia Mcmillian:

Oh, thank you, Karla. When I had my family childcare at home, I always referred to it as the Grand Central Station for everything. It was the hub for parents, for myself. When I look at these recommendations, I would like to see these early learning environments that are serving as hubs already and not being recognized for the roles that they're playing, that needs to be seen. Also just acknowledging the fact that there are many early educators who qualify and are using these safety net programs themselves speaks volumes.

When we're talking about reducing poverty and promoting economic stability, that is one area that really needs to be addressed. And it will be, I'm going to put it out there, I'm

being optimistic, it will be with rate reform. But I want to remind folks, and I'll go back, I want to remind folks something that Mary said, and it's in the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations too, the complexity of qualifying for these programs, there should be no wrong door when folks are seeking assistance, seeking support and seeking help. Those are my comments.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

Really, really appreciate it. This was so enlightening. Appreciate it, folks sharing their best thinking. I'll close with we will be reviewing reports that have really strong recommendations. Zoela and Tonia, I know you brought up family childcare. If there are reports that you think, "Here's the recommendations that have been shared but would be really helpful in implementing," please share the name of any report you would recommend.

We'll take a look at the chat for recommendations that folks give us on the report, and we'll be part of what is reviewed. So I know that Karin and team are looking to see whether or not folks here will be joining the August 27th meeting, but at the August 27th meeting, we will be discussing some of the first initial drafts of this. Really, really appreciate the time. Thank you, Tonia. And we'll turn it back to you.

Mary Ignatius:

Maybe turn it back to me, I think.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I'm so sorry, Karin.

Mary Ignatius:

No worries. It's okay.

Karla Pleitéz Howell:

I'll turn it back to you.

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah, it's okay. No, thank you so much, Karla and Tonia. We're going to open up the chat feature now so members of the public can give your feedback on this segment. And now I want to invite Council Member Andrea Fernandez Mendoza to share the draft recommendations that the council has asked her subcommittee to lead, so she can get everybody's feedback.

- [Share draft Council recommendations under development \(continued\)](#)

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Good morning, everyone. Oh, I don't see my slides. There they go. There they go. So, for some of you, this may be a little repetitive, but I would like to just thank you all for being here. And Deborah, I really hear you when you say that we're waiting for the implementation. And when I agreed to be one of the chairs for this subcommittee, that

was one of the intentions that I brought into this is how do we make our recommendations and what we're telling people into reality? How do we make it happen?

So I share that. I hear you. That's my intention for this work, but let's make that happen. I'm still optimistic. So I'm going to go over the slides that you see. If you were in attendance at our last ECPC meeting, you've heard most of this, and so it is going to be a little repetitive for you. But we do have two draft recommendations today for your feedback that this subcommittee had developed. And it was myself and Natalie, and sorry, the FlexFactor, the contract earning floor, and the rate reform.

And so, what we are going to cover, if you have any questions or thoughts about the background, please put your feedback in the chat. For the draft recommendations, please focus on whether or not you support what our recommendation is. If not, what concerns you, and how would you change it, or is there something you would like to add? And just to highlight some of the things that you won't see included yet are some of the recommendations from the full council, and I'm just going to briefly cover them so you know that it was raised and that we have it on our agenda to work into the draft.

So one of them was clarifying that for the FlexFactor contract earning floor, it would be for center-based, because family childcare homes are already eligible for the maximum certified hours. So this FlexFactor would be specific to center-based programs. Another item that was brought up was ensuring that the base rate covers the cost of working families in non-traditional hours. So that was for the rate reform.

Another gap that was noticed overall in all of our discussions was the facilities. That facilities is a significant barrier to all of us, homes, centers, and that there are limited facility resources. And that's a significant barrier. And not only that though, but competing with TK and having to deal with licensing to get these processes going is another significant barrier. So that is something else that is on our radar that we are going to be taking into consideration. But I wanted to front load you with that information so that you already know if you had heard the conversations from the last meeting that we are taking it into considerations. Next slide, please.

So the first draft ECPC recommendation is to adopt the FlexFactor to stabilize the contract earning floor. And both of these are taken from the ECPC budget letter, and providing support for childcare policies changes that build a more resilient ECE ecosystem, prioritizing provider-centered fiscal reforms that ensure operational stability by moving towards enrollment-based funding models, such as an 85 contract earning floor to protect providers from the fiscal shocks of fluctuating attendance.

So in the past pre-COVID, our contracts had to be earned on an attendance base. With the shift, they are now enrollment-based, but it still makes a significant difference. And a brief summary of the issue. Historically again, they were paid on attendance. And if a child stayed home from childcare because they were sick or they were having issues getting to the center, issues with immigration, and they were afraid and stayed in their

home, pre-COVID, I guess, centers lost money, but we still have to pay fixed costs. That is a norm.

We still have to pay teachers, we still have to pay utilities, all of the operational expenses, rents, those don't change when our enrollment is low. Those are fixed costs that we need to budget for. And the state had mitigated this fluctuation to some degree by instituting the 5% FlexFactor prior to COVID and prior to the old harmless that enabled centers to be paid for their entire contract amount if they earned and met 95% of their attendance-based earnings.

During COVID, that changed. We were given the Hold Harmless to protect centers so that we could be paid the maximum amount of the contract regardless of attendance to account for the pandemic crisis. And this whole harmless protection, as you know, will end at the end of this month, June 30th. So beginning July 1st, we're all going to be facing this new way of earning and earning our contracts and the state will reimburse childcare centers based on enrollment rather than attendance.

However, the enrollment-based reimbursement structure is not accompanied by a FlexFactor or a FlexFactor policy to support the contract earning floor. And so next slide, please. So the state's shift to reimbursing childcare centers on enrollment is a positive thing. That is a significant positive milestone for programs and improving the sustainability of the childcare infrastructure. But at the same time, because this is going to be a new way to earn, because of all of the issues that contractors are facing with TK and being able to recruit children because of continued immigration fears, most contractors are not going to be able to earn their full enrollment because they're not able to recruit those children.

Whereas some have waiting lists, and there are some that are still not able to do that. And so the enrollment-based reimbursement policies provide a more predictable revenue stream that don't fluctuate weekly, and it provides a reliable revenue to allow directors to budget for the entire year and set a realistic budget that allows for guaranteed hours and salaried positions, which is essential for long-term workforce professionalism.

Next slide, please. There are many factors that prevent us from being fully enrolled, and I had discussed them briefly, declining birth rates, staffing issues. We're not able to hire staff to open classrooms. All of those related fears of accessing subsidized systems. These are all barriers to us enrolling children. There are real fears in the communities that we serve of giving their information out because they're going to be targeted because that information isn't going to be shared.

So as a result, a FlexFactor policy is still needed in the enrollment-based payment structure to support the sustainability of the entire system and to support access. Without this policy change, childcare centers will continue to struggle with unpredictable budgets and loss of staff, which negatively impact families' access to childcare. When we are not able to enroll children, we have to budget for closed classrooms, which

means there's less access, which means we're not able to open those doors and that access to families. And moreover, a large percentage of contractors have only operated since the Hold Harmless.

We have a lot of new contractors in the field who not only who have never worked in a non-Hold Harmless time, but they don't understand how to project and earn for the non-Hold Harmless system. These protections have been in effect for a long time. So the contractors are unfamiliar with the dynamics of operating in an environment where earnings are subject to enrollment. And for at least the next few years, contractors are going to be learning, and there's going to be a learning curve of how to budget for it and the fluctuating enrollment and earnings.

So contractors need a safety net to keep their centers open at least during this transition period. And this is a transition period until the rate reform happens because that's supposed to help and support during this time. Next slide, please. So the recommendation is that we adopt a FlexFactor to stabilize the contract earning floor. And that we're urging the governor and legislator to enact a 15% FlexFactor policy that allows childcare providers who maintain and earn at least 85% of their contract, their certified enrollment to be reimbursed at the full contract amount.

And this provides a reasonable and data informed approach to account for normal fluctuation and enrollment while maintaining accountability. So you can't just run with five children and be paid for your whole contract. You need to be running at least 85% of the enrollment for your contract. And so this approach will help us bring us closer to a stable foundation for the early learning programs, support consistent staffing, because we'll be able to give raises and pay people based on a budget that we know we will have, which is at least the 85%.

And this approach will help us bring us closer to preserving access to this care and ensuring that children and families can rely on the services. This change would strengthen the system by providing clear expectations and pathways for programs that are working towards full enrollment, ensuring both stability and continuous improvement. The FlexFactor policy could be established via regulations and would not have a state budget impact, as these funds are already allocated in contract funds. So that's kind of the crux of the FlexFactor. Going back to our questions, do you have any thoughts? Do you see anything missing? Is there anything that you think needs to be included? Please feel free to raise your hand. Come on unmute. I will go ahead, and I can see raise hand. Okay. Zoila.

- [Seek input from Advisory Committee members \(continued\)](#)

Zoila Toma:

Yes. When you mentioned right there that through cost of care, I don't know if it's possible to support, because I support the 50% FlexFactor recommendation. I think we also have... Because this is a short-term stabilization strategy that will help centers, but I think we also have to consider supporting the AB 1981 as a long-term solution, because like I mentioned, it's just a temporary solution, while then AB 1981 will support all of us

centers, in general, early education with a true cost of care. So maybe if you can work it around that, that'd be perfect. Thank you.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

To add some of that language in?

Zoila Toma:

Yes.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you. Thank you for your... I'm taking notes, and I know Karin is as well, so we will definitely work on that. Deborah, I saw your hand and now this here.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Okay. Yes. Yes. Thank you. Thank you for that. I appreciate that. Sitting here as a family childcare provider and knowing that there's so many providers that are listening in right now, and they're sitting there saying to themselves, "FlexFactor." First, never heard of it before. Can never assume that everyone knows what a FlexFactor is, how it works, et cetera. So listening to this as a provider, now knowing that there's something called a FlexFactor out there, 15%, 85% before COVID or after COVID, providers before home harmless were totally affected by being paid by attendance, struggling and still continue to struggle, even though we get paid by enrollment right now for providers, family childcare providers.

This struggle continues no matter what. But I want to say this, you have to be consistent by putting the word center in there and not childcare providers. It is totally, again, misleading. Some places it said centers, but it should continue... We urge legislature and governor to enact a 15% FlexFactor policy that allow childcare providers that still makes it sound like family daycare providers. It has to say centers as some places it said centers and some places it doesn't. It needs to be that completely where there's never any question at all.

But again, I'll say I'm listening and as I listened in the last meeting publicly, it's really hard to sit here and listen and to know that it was okay far as the state legislatures were concerned. It was okay for family daycare providers to struggle all that time and not be paid based or reimbursed based on enrollment or have a FlexFactor. What's good for one is good for the other. Let's just keep it real. Where was it? But I'm glad it's here to know that this is here, and that the fight continues for all. But I just want to put that out there. Thank you.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

No, thank you, Deborah. And yes, that was one of the takeaways from the last meeting was to make sure that was clear. We did not edit this because we wanted to get everybody's feedback and that's why I brought up at the beginning of the conversation some of those highlights so that they are recognized. I hear you. I'm with you, I feel you, and I appreciate your feedback.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Thank you.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Any other thoughts? Okay. I'm not sure how much time I have, so I will go onto the next one just to keep us moving. And if we do need to circle back, that's perfectly okay. You're always welcome as panelists to put your comments and your thoughts and your additions in the chat. So the next item was the advanced rate reform. The relevant ECPC priority from the budget letter was funding the reform to ensure compensation for the true cost of care at rates reflecting economic realities.

Now, like I had said, this is a struggle that we've been fighting. There were many people who were on the council and subcommittees that were part of the conversation to make it happen. Brief summary of the issue, California is transitioning to a cost-based alternative methodologies to set reimbursement rates for the state subsidized childcare system. A 2021 law ratified an agreement between the newly formed CCPU, not new anymore, and the state required the creation of a joint labor management committee to develop recommendations for a single rate structure and provide one-time funding to supplement reimbursement rates for both family childcare and center-based providers to address rate inequities.

To support the transition, CDSS, in partnership with prenatal to five fiscal strategies developed a cost estimation model based on provider data and stakeholder input across all 58 counties. The model aims to support and estimate the true cost of care by accounting for factors such as staffing, program type, child age, and geographic visitation variation. So a brief summary of the issue continued. The JLMC recommendations released in December of 2025 emphasized that the model should inform but not cap rate setting and should be regularly updated to reflect evolving costs.

Under the proposed single rate structure, reimbursement rates would be determined using a consistent cost informed methodology across programs with base rates supporting general operations and enhanced rates for factors such as non-traditional hours and inclusion supports. That was another item brought up in the last conversation was to make sure we included and made sure that non-traditional hours and inclusion was included in this conversation, just highlighting it.

Following federal approval of the alternative methodology through this childcare and development fund state plan, CDSS is required to provide CCPU with an implementation plan and engage in further negotiations on rates and funding. CDSS is also required to provide quarterly updates to legislature on implementation through July 1st, 2027. Because the rates were not implemented by the deadline of July 1st, 2025, CDSS is also required to provide a transition timeline and implementation plan and engage... Hold on. I lost my spot.

Yes. But the law does not specify when the timeline must be submitted. So according to CDSS January 2026 rate reform update, full implementation of the SRS is expected to

at least take two additional years and remains contingent on budget decisions, collective bargaining outcomes and significant data system and administrative changes. So progress to date, family childcare providers were given the right to unionize, that's considered a win, and can collectively bargain with the state leading to the formation of the CCPU. The state has developed an alternative methodology cost model.

The state is formally moving towards a single rate structure. The state has provided funding for implementation activities and automation infrastructure. The state extended and expanded the cost of care payments a form of interim financial relief while the state works towards permanent cost-based reimbursement rates, and the state extended policies allowing providers to be reimbursed based on certified enrollment rather than attendance.

Okay. Next slide, please. The brief summary of challenges and gaps that still remain. Despite this progress, there are still some major issues that we need to overcome. There are delays in full implementation. The statewide rate schedule has not been finalized. There is uncertainty about long-term funding, and there remains agreements about geographic regions and cost assumptions. There are concerns about data transparency and rate setting. Next slide. So the draft recommendation that we put forth on advancing the rate reform was to require... It has several parts, and I'll go through them. It requires CDSS to submit a timeline for transitioning to the new reimbursement rates by January 31st, 2027 and update it annually until rate implementation is complete.

The second figure shift is ensure consistent and equitable application across the mixed delivery system to ensure the shift to a single rate structure delivers on its promise of consistency and equity, requiring the following elements to be included in the implementation. Apply the same cost-based methodology uniformly across center-based and family childcare providers with appropriate adjustments for program type and structure. B, ensure that the rate setting process is explicitly accounts for race and income-based inequities institutionalized by the regional market rate system as identified by the Rate and Quality Work Group.

C, meaningfully reflect geographic variation in rates so that providers in high cost regions are not disadvantaged by a structure that fails to account for their local economic conditions. Update the cost estimation model on a regular and defined schedule to ensure rates remain responsive to evolving costs rather than becoming fixed and outdated. Make interim rates increases available to providers to bridge the gap between current reimbursement levels and the cost of care while the full single rate system implementation proceeds.

And last but not least, require transparent, reproducible, and honest data in all rate settings decisions. Require that data that is used to develop, justify, or communicate rate reform decisions meets the following standards. Rates and fiscal estimates must be based on actual verifiable cost, not figures that have been adjusted, deflated, or selectively presented to make reform appear more affordable than it is. Methodology

must be clearly documented and sufficiently detailed to allow independent review and reproduction. All assumptions, limitations, and data gaps must be disclosed explicitly and D, when data projections or methodology change, those changes must be communicated transparently with clear explanations of why they changed and what was changed. So these are some of our asks.

I'm just highlighting again in the last conversation there. The highlight was to ensure that the base rate covers the cost of non-traditional families, children who have special needs in all forms of care, and to address the facility gap, which will be again in a separate item, but just wanted to highlight that back up so that you already knew we were aware of those issues. Is there anything that you see that is missing that you want to elevate that... Again, we did not change these from the last meeting because we wanted you to see them as they were presented.

And then with your feedback, we will go ahead and make those changes and integrate them into the new drafts. Is there anything, any thoughts, any questions? And just a little minor soapbox for me. One of my issues is the transparency of the information and the data being used to tell the story that they would like to tell or rather than what is. And so that was one of the issues behind any data that's used should be clean data and should be reproducible by someone else who's looking at this methodology. So it's a call for transparency. So Deborah, I see your hand up.

Deborah Corley-Marzett:

Okay. Yeah. First, I want to say let's just keep it real for me, is that thank you CCPU, thank you California providers for coming out because these changes would've never happened without us. That's how I see it through my lens.

If providers hadn't have spoke up, wanted to organize, wanted to make changes, we wouldn't be in this spot in this position and accomplished the things we have accomplished. So I just want to put that out there and say thank you to California providers.

You have put out a lot of information, but I also want to add about the struggle with this true cost of care. I filled up with gas on a Sunday at \$130. Then I filled up with gas that following Friday with \$125. Do the math in five days. That's me in Kern County, imagine what others are going through. That's why we need to get this true cost of care implemented and let's meet our deadlines. I'm going to let Zoila take it in. Thank you, Zoila.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

Thank you, Deborah.

Zoila Toma:

Thank you. Thank you. I do support the principles transparency. I think that's very important and it should not include not only on the methodology and database but

established rates, but also clear communication regarding implementation and timelines. That's I think very important.

But I think it's also important to acknowledge that there was not an agreement between the state and CCPU and other stakeholder regarding the state's proposed alternative implementation move forwards. It is critical that stakeholder concerns continue to be addressed and that meaningful engagement remains part of the process.

I am also concerned that many of the condition that the state has identified as prerequisites for implementation are being viewed as providers and stakeholders as barriers rather than supporting a step forward achieving that single rate structure.

I think so that's very important. I think it sounds like problems, but what we are doing is trying to give solutions to everything that is happening. So that's my take on all this. Thank you.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:

So I'm taking notes and I'll make sure that we highlight the meaningful collaboration. We're all on the same team to try and make this better. And hopefully this implemented. Any other thoughts?

Okay. So my last slide just to, and if you do, please feel free to add them in the chat. It's just some of our next steps. At the August 27th council meeting, we're going to bring back our recommendations for review and feedback with all of your information and thoughts and information synthesized into them.

Then in September on the 10th, the joint meeting of both committees will share an updated draft for the content and review and feedback. And then the November 19th council meeting, we will ask for a vote on the recommendation.

So we do have our work cut out before us. In the meantime, if you think of anything or something, light bulbs in the back of your head, please feel free to share those thoughts or that information with Karin or myself or Natalie, and we will take them and synthesize them.

So thank you for your time and I appreciate your feedback and your thoughtfulness. A lot of what we're working towards is something that many of you have spent many hours doing and I feel it. I understand and I hear you and hopefully we can get something done. Thank you.

Mary Ignatius:

Thank you, Andrea. And thank you committee members for your input. And I believe now we are going to go to hear from the public. Is that right, Karin?

3. General Public Comment

Karin Bloomer:

Yes. Thank you, Mary. Yeah, we can now take a verbal public comment on any and all items from the meeting as well as continue to take written public comment by opening up the chat feature.

I'll be looking for whether there's interest in the room here to provide verbal public comment and online. If you'd like to be in the queue online to speak, please use the raised hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom screen or at the bottom of the participant panel and I will call on you to unmute.

We ask that speakers keep their comments to two minutes so that we can accommodate as many speakers as possible in the time we have. I will let you know gently when there's 30 seconds left to your two minutes and then when you have reached the two-minute mark.

And with that, I do believe we have someone here in the meeting room that may wish to provide public comment, please.

Moises Watson Hernandez:

Hopefully you guys are able to hear me. Yeah?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes. Is he clear? Yes, you see nods. Thank you.

Moises Watson Hernandez:

So my name is Moises Watson Hernandez. I'm the program administrator of Yolo County Office of Education, the ECE department. My job is I work with grants that support early educators in Yolo, so through the QCC QRS grants.

And so this past year I have spent a lot of times with the UPK teachers. I have spent a lot of times with family childcare providers in Yolo. In different formats we meet every month or every other month in some parts and then just looking to see what some of the struggles and looking at the priority when it comes to the 200,000 slots that you guys are recommending.

And just like I was listening to many of the members that were talking to make sure that's going to be equitable when it comes to making sure the family charter providers are on those talks when the process are done, just because we have lost about four providers this past year due to the increase of preschools going into the UPK. And so that has created a factor, an immediate factor for many providers on how to sustain their businesses.

So this is my first time coming to this meeting format. We typically, we have the LPC in Yolo County that we meet and we're trying to figure out ways in which we can support

all parts of the mixed delivery system in Yolo County. We're looking some more at strategizing ways in which that could happen.

So I do appreciate some of what you guys are doing and I do appreciate that there's thoughts put into creating ways in which all parts of early education are addressed, not only the center base but also the family childcare providers, the increase of infant covers from family childcare providers and how that doesn't really level to having the space, but also the money that they get. So many of them are struggling with that aspect of it.

Karin Bloomer:

30 seconds.

Moises Watson Hernandez:

Yeah. So thank you so much for... I wanted to continue this conversation. I'm going to bring it to my director and hopefully she can be here next time.

We're also allowing all the family sectors in Yolo County to participate in these talks are going to be essential. So thank you again.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Okay. Looking online to members of the public who have raised hands, we're going to call on Rebecca Grasty. Rebecca, we'll unmute you now. Please unmute on your end.

Rebecca Grasty:

Can you hear me?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes, we can.

Rebecca Grasty:

Perfect. So I want to add some extras per se to what has been said. It's hypocritical for the state to say there's funding for four-year-olds in TK that costs more of our tax dollars to fund and is only open part of the year, but not for a four-year-old to be placed in a family childcare that costs less of our tax dollars to fund.

Also, please, when you're speaking about the children and the groups that you're grouping them in, try to use their ages. Toddlers do not exist in family childcare. The word is not in the regulations at all.

It's a relative term and it spans two different age ranges that are not aligned across childcare avenues in the state or federally. So if you could please refer to the age ranges of children and not use toddler because toddlers do not exist.

I also want to speak to other times that it's been said that family childcare is included in UPK. It is absolutely not because until our tax dollars fund a four-year-old to attend a family childcare just like they fund any four-year-old to attend UPK, only then will family childcare actually be part of UPK.

A family childcare can be part of a fetching, but they don't even reach or cover 50% of California. So no, a family childcare cannot. Until any four-year-old can attend a family childcare free to them, only then will it be part of UPK.

When UPK is the free one and family childcare costs, "that choice", quote unquote, forces them to choose between being able to feed their families or a choice to send their child to family childcare versus the TK they would prefer. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Next, Tessie Ragan. We're unmuting you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

Tessie Ragan:

Hello. Can you hear me?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes, we can.

Tessie Ragan:

All right. So my name is Tessie Ragan. I'm located in Kern County. I'm a family childcare educator and I am a practitioner researcher. I just want to let you know that I want to offer these comments.

As a family childcare educator and practitioner, I'm currently conducting a family childcare landscape survey and I have educators from 27 states that have already told us that the data is ambiguous on this issue.

We're asked what structural change and what positively impacts the sustainability of their programs. 58.4% of respondents identified increased subsidy reimbursement rates at this top right priority and nearly half of them identified improved infant and toddler funding structures specifically.

So this is not a perception problem. This is an issue with how the state looks at family childcare and uses us as an afterthought in ECE. So rate reform recommendations need to account for the disparity and how we function within our programs. Because just because it looks like it functions one way on paper doesn't mean it functions that way in reality.

I also want to push back on mixed delivery and how it exists on paper again, because if you keep saying that family childcare is a part of mixed delivery and it's not in the state and we don't have access around the state, then it's not really accessible.

Equity is an action word, not just a word you say. If I can't join FCCHEN in my area, then I'm not part of the mixed delivery system and I can't join a FCCHEN in my area.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Next, Crystal Jones. We're going to unmute you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

Crystal Jones:

Can you hear me? Good afternoon, everybody. Crystal Jones here. Just wanted to advocate and say we cannot truly embrace a whole child perspective without committing to a whole system transformation.

That means bringing together providers, families, educators, legislators, workforce leaders, community organizations, and funding partners to strengthen what is already working while investing in innovative solutions that can move priorities forward.

As providers, we are often viewed only through the lens of capacity and enrollment. The reality is that not every provider wants to increase in enrollment.

What providers consistently need is sustainable compensation, equitable funding, professional respect, and meaningful investments in their expertise. Childcare professionals are the bridge connecting children, families, education systems, workforce development, and community wellbeing.

Imagine what could happen if we partnered intentionally with legislative leaders, local governments, businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations to maximize resources, expand partnerships, and align funding streams.

Together, we could create pathways that connect early childhood education, alternative education models, youth leadership development, workforce training, family stabilization, and community wellness into on coordinated ecosystem of support.

The solution is already in this room right here, right now. The expertise is already in our communities. The need is already urgent. Now is the time to invest in the people doing the work. Trust the voices closest to the challenges and turn recommendations into action.

Let's build a system where providers are not simply participants in the conversation, but partners in the decisions, investments, and innovations that shape our future.

Because when we strengthen providers, we strengthen families. When we strengthen families, we strengthen communities. And when we strengthen communities, we create lasting opportunities for every child to thrive. Thank you. Appreciate it.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Sarina Lynn, we're unmuting you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

Sarina Lynn:

Thank you. Yes, Sarina Lynn. Just have a couple comments. I first want to thank everyone on the council for your work and thank you also for allowing and encouraging public participation and really demonstrating what a transparent holistic work group looks like.

I want to raise up continuing to fund the ECE system on the backs of early educators in all ECE programs, subsidized, unsubsidized family childcare home, center-based, Head Start, really I think should be the priority. And thinking about it a lot, increased slots does nothing about the systemic poverty that the state forces upon early educators. I'm slightly concerned the multiple letters and priorities are confusing. For example, today discussion about rate reform came last and I would encourage council agreement on the top priority and moving from there.

Second, is there an opportunity in terms of advocacy to redefine or encourage redefinition of UPK to be zero to five or zero to third grade rather than starting at age three? Actions, grants, funding are severely limited by defining UPK as quote unquote, "preschool age", as we discuss, we should say, starting at three years old. And you're hearing it on this call how it limits participation by family childcare homes. I think also redefining the P as prenatal aligns with Professor Heckman's work and makes it more clear that CDE and CDSS serve and support children starting at birth, not only CSPP programs. There are many more programs other than that.

And then on a side note, just as an advocate, as an ally, as a friend, as an ECE, lover of all children and families, I refer to mixed delivery system and I don't want to misspeak. So when I am talking about all programs that serve our children and families, I'd like just more information or more awareness about how I should speak about those programs. If we shouldn't be using the word mixed delivery, what should we be using if we're all talking about the same thing, we all have the interest and wellbeing of children and families throughout California at the center of our goals, what should we use? And I think this council has an opportunity to define that. If we don't want to use mixed delivery, that's fine with me, but I really want to find a word or a phrase that includes all of our programs so it's all children and families and all providers. Thank you so much.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Jacqueline Beltran, we see your hand. We're unmuting on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

Jaqueline Beltran:

Hi, everybody. My name is Jacqueline Beltran. I'm a family childcare provider in San Francisco and also board member of the Family Childcare Association in San Francisco. As I am here and we're listening about how the UPK and the Universal Transitional Garten, it's supposed to be used for all the children's and family have the choice of deciding which program they want to enroll their child, meaning that they can select the family childcare provider at a center or the school district.

That's what is being written on the paper. But then when we see those agencies that provide the pay for the subsidy childrens, whenever the children are four years old, three to four years old, they're directing those children to the unified school district instead of what it should be, give the choice to the parents and let them know there is programs that they can enroll their children. I feel that family healthcare providers are dump, not being seen as for the children doing. The childcare providers, including myself, we have BAs, master degree, so that we provide a in-home service it doesn't mean that we do not have the education to provide a good education for those childrens.

So I will love to see the inclusion of all the programs mentioned when it comes to offering that Universal Transitional Kindergarten to all. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Marcella Graves, we are unmuting you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

Marcella Graves:

Hi, everyone. Can you hear me?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes.

Marcella Graves:

Yes. Hi, my name is Marcella Graves. I'm out of Fresno, California, large childcare provider over 29 years. I put it in the chat, but also going to reiterate that the schools, they're not giving the parents the option, they can have home childcare providers or school. The agencies who are subsidized aren't.

They'll say they make them think that they're not going to pay for the childcare provider if they choose a home daycare provider and it's just not fair. It's not right. They need to have more inclusion for home daycare providers.

Like the lady said, we're educated. We're always doing continuing hours. We put a lot into our work, a lot of effort. We have a lot of passion for it and we're treated like we're not enough and we are enough. And so I just want to reiterate that there needs to be more inclusion in that area and we're ready. So, thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Anne Foley, I see your hand. We're unmuting you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead. Anne Foley, are you able to unmute on your end? We've allowed you to unmute, but I see that you're still muted on Zoom. Are you able to unmute your mic?

Darn. I'm so sorry. There's nothing more we can do on our end. I do encourage you to put your comment into chat. I also want to note to our chairs and to Tonia, who I believe

will close us out that I see no other raised hands and there's no other members of the public here in the physical room to provide comment. So that concludes general public comment.

Tonia McMillian:

Wow. Wow, what a good meeting. So members of the public, thank you for all of your written and verbal input today. It will all be taken into account. Your participation is so important to this process and to my fellow members of the advisory committees, thank you.

Thank you, thank you for your insights today and your continued dedication to this cause. Please note that our next advisory committee's meeting is on September 10th, September 10th from 10:00 to 12:00 and I hope to see you all there. And with that, this meeting is adjourned.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you.

AnnLouise Bonnitto:

Have a lovely summer, everyone.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, AnnLouise, you too.

END OF TRANSCRIPT