



Early Childhood Policy Council Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees

Agenda and Transcript Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, October 22, 2025
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. Ensuring an Equity-Centered Quality Rating Improvement System in California

- Presentation
- Committee discussion

3. Impacts of the Federal Government Shutdown on Children and Families

- Presentation
- Committee discussion

4. General Public Comment

5. Adjourn

Attendance:

Parent Advisory Committee Members:

Cherie Schroeder, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Lissete Frausto, Mary Ignatius, Patrick MacFarlane, Patricia Lozano, Yenni Rivera.

Workforce Advisory Committee:

Debra Ward, Tonia McMillian, Zoila Toma.

Guest:

Rachel Wilensky (The Center for Law and Social Policy - CLASP)

ECPC Council Members:

Andrea Fernandez, Dean Tagawa, Janet Zamudio, Mary Ann Hansen.

Hosts:

Diana Yactayo, Jateri Willis, Karin Bloomer, Ramee Serwanga.
Estefânia Buitrago (SP), Martha Schmitz (SP), Junling Gao (CN), Lulu Lun (CN).

Meeting Transcript:

1. Introduction

Karin Bloomer:

Welcome to the meeting of the Early Childhood Policy Council, parent Advisory Committee and Workforce Advisory Committee. In a few moments we'll be offering closed captioning feature in Zoom. To access this feature, you will need to locate the live transcript button at the bottom of your zoom screen and then click show subtitle. This will allow you to view 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:

[The interpreter provides instructions in Spanish].

Karin Bloomer:

Can we also ask you to describe it in English as well?

Spanish Interpreter:

Of course. Also, for English speakers please, you can also click on the button for interpretation so that you can hear when either the Spanish people, or the Mandarin people, Spanish-speaking people or the Mandarin-speaking people talk. You can also click on interpretation so that you can hear the interpretation of that language. So please click on the interpretation button. Click on English, and there you can hear the live interpretation

Karin Bloomer:

And now for the Mandarin interpretation.

Mandarin Interpreter:

[The interpreter provides instructions in Mandarin].

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. We'll now activate the interpretation feature. Please let your preferred language channel at this time. And a few more items of note. The slides from today's meeting will be posted on the ECPC webpage within the next week. If you are a member of one of the advisory committees, in order to adhere to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Law, you are required to keep your cameras on at all times during this meeting. If you're having technical difficulties, of course, please let us know. Also, committee members, and members of the public, when you want to post something in chat, please make sure that you're selecting to everyone so everyone can see the conversation going on in the chat feature. Thanks so much. And now we'll turn it over to the chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee, Tonia McMillian, to open up the meeting.

- Welcome

Tonia McMillian:

Thank you. Thank you, Karin. So hello and welcome everyone. I am Tonia McMillian, chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council's Workforce Advisory Committee. I am joined by my colleague, Mary Ignatius, chair of the Parent Advisory Committee. I want to thank members of both advisory committees for being here today. I also want to acknowledge members of the council who are attending. And for the many members of the public who are here, we thank you. So we will be keeping the chat feature open for the duration of the meeting so that members of the public can comment as we go. At the end of the meeting, we will devote time to verbal public comment. Now, on to a review of today's agenda. Mary?

- Review Agenda

Mary Ignatius:

All right, thank you Tonia. So we're going to be focusing on two topics today. First is that the California Department of Social Services will join us to share the work they are leading to improve the state's quality rating improvement system. And there's a panel working to address inequities in the QRIS, and to ensure the system makes sense to families, and that it is accessible and beneficial to providers across all setting types. And CDSS would like to engage our advisory committees today to solicit your feedback on some of the equity priorities and definitions the panel is currently working on.

And then for our second agenda item, we have invited the Center on Law and Social Policy from Washington D.C. to brief us on the impacts the federal government shutdown will have on children and families. And of course we want to make sure there's time for Q&A and verbal public comment before we adjourn. So I will give it back to Tonia to introduce our next speaker.

Tonia McMillian:

All right, thank you. Thank you, Mary. So am I introducing the speaker?

Mary Ignatius:

I can do it if you want me to.

Tonia McMillian:

All right, well-

Mary Ignatius:

We're turning it over to Nadirah Jones, CDSS to lead into today's presentation.

Tonia McMillian:

Thank you, Mary.

2. Ensuring an Equity-Centered Quality Rating Improvement System in California

- **Presentation**

Nadirah Jones:

Thank you. And good morning everybody. I'm Nadirah Jones. I'm an administrator here at the Department of Social Services in the Child Care and Development Division. I want to start just by thanking each of you for attending today and participating in this discussion. Today I'm going to go over the Equity-centered Quality Rating and Improvement System advisory panel meeting that was held on September 25th, 2025. This effort addresses calls from the community, and from system leaders to address inequities in the QRIS system. In 2020 and 2021, we heard from the community through advocacy groups, surveys, and focus groups, which revealed that addressing workforce compensation was the priority. The QRIS ratings were paused while the state convened a work group to address rate reform. The work group recommended that the state move to a single rate structure utilizing an alternative methodology to inform the setting of reimbursement rates for subsidized child care, replacing use of a regional market rate survey.

The state finished the alternative methodology process by filling a cost estimation model report, and update to its CCDF state plan this past summer. It continues to engage the public in the process of finalizing the single rate structure, and setting rates. That process is ongoing, and you can find out more about these efforts at the rate and quality website. With these efforts to address compensation underway, CDSS launched this work group to begin the work to reimagine a QRIS system that centers equity, ensuring QRIS makes sense, and is useful to families, and is accessible and beneficial to providers across all setting types. We'll go to the next slide please.

Thank you. We are working toward the following desired outcomes. The outcomes are listed here. QRIS is created in collaboration with providers and families. QRIS makes sense to families, and is useful as they make choices for early learning in care. QRIS is

accessible to and beneficial to all providers. QRIS works to reduce racial inequities for providers, children and families. QRIS standards ensure that children's language, identity, and culture are valued, and they build important life and school readiness skills in a caring and supportive environment. Go to the next slide, please.

To guide their work, the advisory panel has agreed to use this list of equity priorities, and equity indicators as their shared definition of quality. The panel will make recommendations for how each equity indicator should be considered to inform a revised QRIS. So they'll look at what should this look like in our California context? What processes or strategies should be included? What processes or strategies should we avoid? And what supports or resources might be needed? In September's meeting? The panel discussed equity indicators seven and eight. Go to the next slide. Next slide. Thank you.

As the roadmap shows, we have been covering two equity indicator topics per month through December of 2025, when the recommendation will be gathered into the advisory panel's final report. I want to emphasize that the panel recommendations are not intended to be the end of the QIS revision process, but instead will be used to guide the next phase of this work. Our end goal is to achieve an equity-centered quality recognition and improvement system that ensures all early learning settings are recognized, and supported in providing quality experiences that enable California's children to thrive. A quality improvement system is about the intersectionality of children, families, and the workforce to support quality. And each is essential to an equitable system. Next slide, please.

As an example of how the eCQRIS advisory panel undertakes this work at the September 25th, 2025 meeting, the advisory panel looked at equity indicator seven. The full definition for this indicator is, working conditions such as breaks, paid planning time, and adult-child ratios are currently being addressed for subsidized programs through the rate and quality reform work, advancing a single rate structure. When defining quality, consider these working conditions for fee-based and non-subsidized programs, as well as subsidized programs. When defining requirements for higher education, and professional learning, consider access for all, especially members of the workforce for marginalized, and underserved communities. Next slide, please. Thank you.

So I think we're going to insert the link to the core tools in the chat if someone can do that. In order to help set the context for indicator seven, we gathered some information about the resources California has to offer. So the quality accounts, California core tools and resource document list the following resources; professional growth manual for child development permits, permit information in PD that qualifies for 21 hour requirements, tiers three, four, and five regardless of permit obtainment, commission on teacher credentialing, CTC, professional Growth Plan, CTC, child development permit worksheet, CTC, child development permit application page. Other related resources listed are; the California Early Childhood Mentor Program, early childhood educator competencies, COMSAT, which is the companion to the California ECE competencies, Child Development Higher Ed Curriculum Alignment Project.

There are also many other workforce supports listed such as, the PITC Online Infant and Toddler Group Care, California Preschool Instructional Network, California Teaching Pyramid, National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, Family Child Care at Its Best, California Department of Social Services, video streaming subscription services, California Early Childhood Online, and CDSS Quality Initiative page. We can go to the next slide please.

We also gathered a high level overview of what other states are doing in the area of workforce conditions, preparation, and development. And here are some of those efforts. Some programs are offering teachers both individual and collaborative paid planning time. Some states are establishing a benefits package for staff that include at least four of the following; paid leave for professional development, paid planning time, vacation, sick time, retirement, or health insurance. Some states are introducing salary schedule and merit bonuses systems that reward educational training, for example, degrees and certificates in early childhood. Some states are implementing intentional follow-up, for example, coaching, to support the application of content learned during professional development. And some programs are developing program wide and individualized professional development plans that align with specific needs of programs. We can go to the next slide please.

This equity priority is quality definitions, centers, family needs and priorities. The guiding question is, what do staff need to effectively center the needs and priorities of families? This is where we wanted to hear from the advisory panel. We asked, what are your thoughts or wonderings about this indicator?

- **Committee Discussion**

Karin Bloomer:

And Nadirah, is this now something that you'd appreciate-

Nadirah Jones:

Yes, we can pause here to get the feedback from... Yes.

Karin Bloomer:

Okay, great. And I'm happy to watch for raised hands if that's helpful.

Nadirah Jones:

Okay. So I can repeat, again. So the priority here is quality definitions, center families needs and priorities. And the guiding question that we also would like to hear from this group is, what do staff need to effectively center the needs and priorities of families? And so we want to know what are your thoughts, or wonderings about this indicator?

Karin Bloomer:

And I see Zoila Toma's hand. Zoila?

Zoila Toma:

Good morning. Thank you for the presentation. I love what I'm seeing. But my question is also, everything that I see is good, but I don't see anything that also include family child care. Feel like all this is center in early education when it comes to the public system, but it doesn't include us. Because when it comes to priorities, we also have to think about the families want, what the families need, what the child needs. I always keep saying that children learn and develop differently. So we have to have options for the families and children. And right now we don't have options for the family and children. Because the only thing that the families are going to choose and select is what is free out there. And we as... I'm a family child educator myself, I have my own program, I am not included. I love the idea of helping providers, early educators like myself to get the permits.

Many of you have higher education degrees, we already have the permits, but it doesn't give us a path to be part of it. To be part of the families, to be part of the community, to be part of the group. So that's what I'm like, what is the path? What else can we see that family child care are also going to be included, to be part of helping? Because we've been helping the community. We go back in history, we go back in time, we are who created the system. We are the early educators. And I'm not going to take... And I love my early educators that work in the schools, because I feel like right now we are bumping against each other when we shouldn't, because our main priority and focus is helping the child develop properly. But right now, I feel like we have this clash because we are left out of the picture, and we are being left out of jobs. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you Zoila. Looking up. I lost my light again. So looking for other feedback from advisory committee members about what does staff need to effectively center the needs and priorities of families. Looking for a raised hand, to help contribute to the advisory panels work. Committee members you're unusually quiet.

Okay, so council member, Andrea Fernandez, I see your hand.

Andrea Fernandez:

Yes. I just have one question. I understand we're about to face some budget constraints in the next fiscal year is there any intentionality, or where is the funding that would be used to support the implementation of these systems?

Karin Bloomer:

Nadirah or Karen, are you in a position to speak to that?

Karen Chang:

Nadirah, I'll chime in, and say that is something that we're looking at is, as we look at these elements, how would we also create a mechanism or a vehicle to be able to fund them? So thank you for the feedback.

Karin Bloomer:

I'm not seeing more hands, and Nadirah I know you have more to share, and some more questions.

Wait, maybe I just didn't see. Oh, I'm sorry, Mary, and Janet, and Yenni.

Mary Ignatius:

I'll defer to Yenni, and then I'll speak after her.

Yenni Rivera:

Okay. So a keyword that I see here is quality. And going back to what Zoila said, and what others are saying in the chat. Is, what does staff need, like Zoila said, to be included? To be provided wraparound connections, wraparound services, resources, to have those clear avenues resources. Trainings, like she mentioned. Very clearly there's a lot of training that comes to the public spaces that it's incentivized. For example, get this training, get this license because they have the funding, but somehow the funding doesn't trickle down to the family centers necessarily. And I know for... I've mentioned over and over that my child has selective mutism. My child needed that small setting that in the chat is being said, that small setting, that individualized, that closer to being at home. He just survived... Many of our children are literally surviving homelessness right now. It's an epidemic. And so our children have special needs that need to be taken into account.

And so because of that, you got to make sure that anything that you create, new funding, anything that you create staff that are in those child care settings that are homes, that feel like a home, also get that training, also get those resources, also get connections to those wraparound services. Because our children should not be forgotten, and our children should be able to have the option to be able to be taken care of in a place they will thrive. And sometimes they get lost in large settings. I know my son would not have to thrive with mental health, would not have thrived in a big setting. And so we cannot forget those children either.

Karin Bloomer:

Mary, did you want to defer to Janet and then go, or please whatever your preference.

Mary Ignatius:

I'll jump in. I think that, I don't know, this conversation is really hard to have, because I think in this moment where our early educators are not being set up to be able to provide what they want to the families that they serve. And in many times they're doing it, but they're doing it out of their own pocket, out of their own sacrifices, at the expense of their own health, and mental health. And so it's hard to, I don't know, have this conversation around quality in the reality of the burden we put on our early educators. It just feels unfair, I guess, is what I'm trying to say. And I think even... I know there's a pause on this system. I think this pause needs to be indefinite until we're actually getting our providers paid the true cost of care. And then even once we get there, we need to be waiting some time for implementation to give them the chance to hire the number of

staff they need to raise the wages, be able to purchase the materials, and things they need before we even rate them. Which rating also...

So I just want to say that at first. And then to go back to the actual question of what do staff need to effectively center the needs and priorities of families? I do believe we need to create a culture where staff and families are a team, and are working together in support of their child, that child, the child they're caring for and their child. So anytime that I think the two adults can come together in partnership, in co-creation, in co-partnership, I think is really key. And I know as a parent of two children, I did not know much about child development, and what the needs of my child was. But every time I got to spend time talking to their providers, and learning and understanding from their perspective why my child was going through the things that he was going through, it made me feel better. It made me respect and love my early educator that much more, and it helped me understand my child and what he needed.

But that requires time. That requires check-ins. We had a morning check-in, and an afternoon check-in. I don't know what time staff have to be able to do that with each of their families. We've talked about parents love having pictures, and notes throughout the day about what's going on in their child's life, but I just also don't know what the reality of that is today, and under today's circumstances.

I'll pass to Janet.

Janet Zamudio:

Thank you Mary. I'm having a reaction first to the questioning because to a former comment, it doesn't feel inclusive of all programs when you call out staff in this way. And it's also inherent that early care and education educators are doing a lot of things that are effective right now. So maybe also asking what is being done today in this current moment that is effectively supporting the needs, and priorities of families. I think inquiring in that way would also be helpful for this question. And that being said, I think I was a little silent because really thinking about this question. Like Mary said, at this point in time is a little hard when we're thinking about indicators for a QRIS. Absent of funding, absent of paying educators livable wages, absent of benefits fits that they so deserve. And to indicate anything on this that will be looked at at a later time, and when in programs, it is a little hard to respond to this, and write down an indicator.

With that being said, I do want to point out my own experience in working with many family child care providers over time, and having used solely child care provider, family child care providers for my own three children when they were growing up. That some of the things that they need effectively because they play many roles, they listened to me, they helped educate me on early childhood and child development. They cooked for my children, they manage a business, finances their own homes. There're so many hats that they wear within their business that if we're really talking about what they need to effectively center the needs and priorities of family, there's so much there to unpack. And that's starting with family child care programs.

Now if we're talking about centers, it differs a little bit, but overall, what people need to thrive in their environment to care for others are many other things as well that need to be considered. Especially when you're talking about little people, their families. We're caring for children in these places and families, they're really emotional about it naturally because they are our children. And so it's hard to answer this question. You have to kind of unpack it, get it from many sides. So I'm really having difficulty in trying to come up with an answer, knowing where we're going with information that we're giving, so I just wanted to provide that feedback

Karin Bloomer:

Appreciate it. And Nadirah, I know you have more slides and some more questions for the committees, and just seeing the time, I wonder if ... And with no more raised hands, I wonder if you'd like to move on?

- **Presentation**

Nadirah Jones:

Sure, and thank you for the feedback, and we'll go ahead and go to the next slide. Slide. Thank you. So, at the September 25th [Chinese Language Translation Breakthrough].

WestEd Technical Support:

Apologies Nadira, we're having-

Mary Ignatius:

Translators in the English Channel.

WestEd Technical Support:

Yeah, if we could have our Mandarin interpretation team broadcast into the Mandarin Channel. Thank you.

Nadirah Jones:

Do you want me to continue?

WestEd Technical Support:

Yeah, I think you're good to go, Nadirah. Thank you.

Nadirah Jones:

Okay, no worries. So the full definition of this indicator is prioritize effective messaging to the public in the early learning and care community, employ strategies to better engage specific populations so all communities see themselves as part of the system, and reduce or eliminate barriers to access by aligning systems. So we can go to the next slide. Thank you.

To consider Equity Indicator 8, we presented California's current resources regarding communication and outreach. Currently, some of the resources we have for communications and outreach through Quality Counts California are the California the Quality Counts California website, and we can put that link in the chat, the Quality Counts California email listserv. These are emails that go out on Fridays, and have all kinds of updates relevant to the QCC community. All three state agencies, which is the Department of Social Services, the Department of Education, and First Five California, they all have their own individual listservs, newsletters, and web pages that also share valuable resources. And each county or consortia also have their own outreach efforts for their communities that vary across the state. So let's go to the next slide, please.

We also gathered high level overview of what other states are doing in regards to communications and outreach. And here are some of those efforts. So for communications and outreach, communication is tailored across different groups, families, program types, public, et cetera. Some states are providing one-pagers in multiple languages featuring frequently asked questions and engagement opportunities for families and programs. Some states are sharing information with early learning communities through local advertising channels like the radio parent periodicals, newspapers, et cetera, and some states are engaging in public awareness campaigns to promote transparency. So they're using social media, videos, badges, et cetera. Go to the next slide, please.

Our communications and outreach equity priority is quality, definition, center families needs, and priorities. Data showed that families largely saw star ratings as too complicated and not a meaningful way for them to understand a program's quality. How can we help families be aware of and understand provider and early learning and care programs strength? For example, some ways to recognize strengths includes micro credentials, degrees, parent feedback surveys, training certificates, or badges. Do those work as ways to message quality? Do they work for all settings types? And if not, what other ways might work better? And so our communication outreach guiding question for you all today is, how can we better support families to select early learning and care programs that meet their needs and preferences? So I'll pause.

- **Committee Discussion**

Karin Bloomer:

Zoila, I see your hand again.

Zoila Toma:

Yes, it does work. I think, honesty, it has to be of course there. But just like family child care educators, when they're presenting their program, we describe what programs offer the qualifications. I think also that also have to be done with every program across, because the families sometimes don't understand that to work in preschools, many only have 12 units. And sometimes, we have more than that. So families also need to understand what are they getting, so they can decide and make the right choice and fit for the child. So yes, not just everything will, but it have to be across the board, just like

we do it ourselves to present that program. Because we have to do that, we have to show our families what are they going to receive, what are the benefits for their family and their children? And you have to be across the board. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Zoila. And I'll just note I'm appreciating the broader context that Mary and Janet mentioned around focusing on this right now is challenging for reasons they described, and that means that CDSS welcomes your thoughts on this. Yenni?

Yenni Rivera:

Yeah, going back to the families I serve and support, not just one area, but the whole county of LA, I'll tell you that you need to make clear and diverse options that clearly help the family decide, "What am I looking for?" Because families, when they're looking for child care, trust me, you just gave birth not long ago, you're covering yourself. Many people go through depression for example, after giving birth. You're breastfeeding, you just came out breastfeeding, or maybe you're potty training, all these things that you're going through as a family. What if you're a single parent that you're going through that? So many issues. What if you're going ... Somebody mentioned affordability. What if all these things that families are enduring, paying rent to have places to live? Sometimes you're going through DV, which is what happened to me. And sometimes figuring out, you just get a list of names. What? A list of names is not going to help me knowing what will work for what my child needs or my family needs.

So I think it's creating just beyond names. The options that make it easy. How it works, when. Now mobile because of that, because it functions because paper is "kept getting lost." And so what did they do? They made it easy for parents. Now they upload papers into an app. So making it that easy for parents to be able to choose what they want to be able to know, and the provider therefore can have a little ... For doctors, what do you do when you choose your doctors? They have a little bio. Let me see, who's a doctor? What do they study? What do they do? What do they offer that fits me? And I don't mean just education for me. Trust me, I didn't care about education. I wanted somebody that would understand my DV and my fear, and have a connection with me. And the moment I met her at her home, to this day, I'm her friend, 13 years later, because of that. So we want that. I want that clear options for parents.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Yenni. Nadirah, I see Lissete's hand next.

Lissete Frausto:

Yes. Hi. Good morning everyone. My apologies for being late. I was at a coffee with the principal at my older kids' school. So as a mom of a young child, my youngest one is going to be three, it was challenging to find child care for her. For me it was also knowing, as a mom, you need wraparound services. Before care, after care, or even later hours of care, because as we know, there needs to be a working parent or two working parents to be able to survive. So knowing as a parent, knowing what supports

would be out there for wraparound services. And then also somebody that understands you as a parent, that understands you, that thinks ... Life is life and every day is different, and I'm thankful that now I have found a family child care provider who is amazing. It's a mom and a daughter, and they are working with what my family needs are, my schedule, my work schedule, and other different aspects of my family and what we need.

So just knowing what families need, meeting them where they need to be met. Especially if you have multiple children, you're juggling yourself around with doing kid activities, meetings, working, trying to survive. So it's just making sure that families first supported. And especially, during these times, where a lot of our communities are being targeted, and a lot of our families are not wanting to receive the supports that are out there because of fear. So meeting families where they need to be met, and letting them know that there's these resources here, and it's okay to receive them, it's okay to ask for help. Yeah, there's much more I could probably say, but just meeting families where they need to be met and providing the resources that they need so that their family can be able to succeed.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Lisette.

Nadirah Jones:

Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Andrea, I see your hand next.

Andrea Fernandez:

Yes, Lisette. Again, that was very well said and thank you for sharing that. It is very heartbreaking what the families are going through, what all of our families are going through right now. And seeing it firsthand is hard because we know children are not coming to school, families are not seeking support. Basics of food and shelter are being in jeopardy, and that's a very real issue. So thank you for highlighting that.

My question and my comments are around communication. I think that one of the issues, and we've seen it in Los Angeles County, the statistics have shown across California, and there've been different surveys and studies that the communication of what's available isn't happening and it isn't happening well. Families need different types of services, they have different needs. And when they're going through a resource and referral network, like Lisette said, they get a list of names. They don't get the support to actually ... What do they need to bring? What do you have to gather to make sure you can get started as soon as possible?

And I know my child care plan website is being worked on and is in process, but there are still issues on how we market to families. Are we doing it in their home language? Are we reaching out to those specific communities that have those different needs, and

how we're doing it. So I think we really need to focus on communication, really meeting the families where they are and then connecting them with resources. Even in our department, and I'm going to give just an example, the Department of Social Services and early education, even connecting those two, and having, "You can refer your families to us, and we can refer families to ..." That basic communication isn't happening. And so I think if we work on the communication and find a way to help smooth that out, and get families access to all the options would be very beneficial.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Andrea. Patrick MacFarlane, I see your hand.

Patrick MacFarlane:

Hi. Good morning, everyone. Andrea said pretty much exactly what I was going to say, and said it perfectly. I would just echo all of that. The only thing I would just add is having the experience of having children at multiple ages. The experience, if you have a 4 or 5-year-old, and you want to figure out how to enroll them in a school district, it's very straightforward and you can kind of go to one website, and they'll tell you everything you need to do. And usually, they've got it in a pretty accessible way, and you can figure out how to go tour multiple schools. It's easy to figure out. And on the early education side, there's a lot going on, and it's kind of hard to figure out what all your options might be, and what all is out there. So I think that's sort of the way I would frame it. But Andrea said it perfectly, there just needs to be more information for parents and families.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Patrick. I See Janet's hand and then we should probably move on to the slides and final set of questions. Janet?

Janet Zamudio:

Yes, thank you. Something that Patrick said just reminded me something that I believe wholeheartedly, and that is for any state-funded program or any program receiving state funding, they should have some mechanism of referring families back to every single program that is available to them, or a search function where they can find other programs that are accessible to them. When I worked at Bananas and Children's Council previously per the state, I'm not going to say guidelines, regulations, whatever it was, we needed to make sure we are talking about Head Start, we are talking about AP programs, we are talking about all these different ... Referring to all programs. Do school districts have that same mandate to do the same? There are websites that feature TK information don't have information for families talking about other programs that might be accessible for children who are four-year-olds. So I just want to say in broad strokes, any program that's state funded, they should have information that's available to parents to help them understand where there's child care programs, early education programs, whatever we want to call them in broad strokes.

And again, the language on this question is so interesting, I don't know, maybe it's because I'm hypersensitive right now, but what we know to be true too is that families don't necessarily have options, they can't necessarily select programs because these things just don't exist depending on location or path of travel, costs, whether programs are full or not, the hours. You just might not have programs that you could select and need just to go where you can get a piecemeal child care.

In some programs you hear parents still saying when they're looking for child care, I was just told I should have applied a year ago, or I should have been looking a year ago. I was just like pregnant then for child care, and I need it tomorrow, and I didn't know this. So I think just in general, there's still so much work to be done in terms of just giving families information that would help meet their needs. And it's very hard to meet preferences, because sometimes there is no choice depending on where a family lives within the state. It's just what becomes available depending on their hours of work and what's in their neighborhood. So just wanted to point those things out. Thank you.

- **Presentation**

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Janet. Okay, Nadira, I should turn back to you.

Nadirah Jones:

Yes. Thank you so much for the feedback, very engaging, and very important, and we're taking those notes back for sure. Let's go to the next slide.

Okay, so continuing with the discussion for Equity Indicator 8, we looked at systems alignment and here are some of California's current resources regarding systems alignment. So the master plan for early learning in care in California is a roadmap for building a stronger, more equitable early learning, and child care system. The master plan provides directions for building a comprehensive system over time, one that partners with families takes a whole child approach to ensure the best outcomes, and support the advancement of early learning and care professionals to ensure that families across California have equitable access to quality care and learning support.

There's also the early childhood policy council, ECPC, that's you all, which elevates the needs of young children, and their families as well as advises the governor legislature and the superintendent of public instruction on statewide early learning and care, and child development. It provides recommendations on all aspects of the state's early childhood system, including support for demographic, geographic, and economic diversity of the state's children and families in ways the master plan for early learning and care in the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on early childhood education's final report can be updated and improved. With Quality Counts, we have things such as regional hubs, local consortia, the quality continuum framework, and core tools and resource documents. We have advisory panels and work groups such as this one, the Bills, and the QCC Higher Education faculty group to name a few. Let's go to the next slide, please.

We have gathered a high level overview of what other states are doing regarding systems alignment. And here are some of those efforts. So system alignments, some states are collaborating with their early learning coalitions to keep providers profiles updated with information on quality and program highlights, for example, hours of operation, types of curricula use, et cetera. Some states are leveraging their child care resource and referral networks to engage and increase the supply of high quality care in targeted communities. Some states are engaging in revision processes from following the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle approach, allowing them to pilot components of QRIS makes adjustments to better understand how the components best fit together. Let's go to the next slide.

So the equity priority for system alignment is quality, definitions, center family needs and priorities. And our system alignment guiding questions are, what are examples of effective engagement in the QCC system, and what should change or be added? So I will pause for feedback on this question.

Karin Bloomer:

And just for everyone's understanding, this is the last slide of questions, and then I want to do a little wrap up, and we'll move on to our next guest.

Karen Chang:

Karin, I saw in the chat, I think her name was Melissa, and she was wanting to speak. I'm trying to find it again. No. Michaela Mack?

Karin Bloomer:

Yeah, so appreciate you raising that up. I hope my note in the chat earlier helped that verbal public comment will be reserved for the last chunk of the meeting. And so please stay tuned to raise a virtual hand at that time, and be in the queue. Absolutely.

Karen Chang:

Thank you.

- **Committee Discussion**

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. Looking for feedback from the committees on these questions. Are there sort of unspoken thoughts or reflections just to share what you're thinking as you look at these? Zoila, thank you.

Zoila Toma:

I'm sorry, I'm trying to give time. I don't want to be the only one first putting my hand up. What I think it needs to change is or be added is that it is hard. It is difficult. It is a hard conversation to have because when it comes to early education, we are all working, like I said, for a ... Our priorities are children, right? The early education, the development in

all our children. But sometimes I think we are clashing too much. So I think when it needs to change is how we see each other. Because I respect my public systems calls, I respect my centers. I think I said it in this platform before. I have three children. Out of my three children, I have used all the systems, homeschooling, private and then public school. All three systems have worked perfectly for what my child have needed.

So the problem is not the system, it's how we are clashing among each other because we're all fighting for that. I want the education system to make sure that the funding follow the child to wherever the child goes. That's what the funding is supposed to do. The funding doesn't have to worry if the child goes to a private program, a public school, or it goes to a family child care. It needs to follow that child because that's what the parent has chosen and that's what the child needs. That's it.

And I feel that the school system, for example, sometimes they just want to grab all the funding, they just want to grab all the children. But what do they want the money for? The money's not for the schools. The money's for the child, for their books, for their learning material, for the support the child needs. If they need somebody to be in the classroom with the child to help them, and if they have any special needs, that's where the funding is. And I think that's what is missing, and that's what needs to changing at it. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Zoila. Any other reflections or feedback? Yenni?

Yenni Rivera:

I keep going after Zoila, but I think a perfect example, effective? I don't know, but what should change, my humble opinion, believe that we need to create stronger, better partnerships. Something that keeps being mentioned is we're kind of working against each other as a system. Kind of like we're enemies. So there's the public and then there's homesteadings, and there's the homeschooling. Everything seems to be like we're competitors instead of supporting the families and children instead of being truly a system that is to support, to thrive to help children thrive, and not fall back into the system and become part of the cycle. And so I feel like QCC needs to do a better job of that. It says that their goal is to prioritize communities, but yet, I feel red lining.

I live in South Central LA which is very known, but I live blocks from USC, and I see that red line. I see that choices are more on that side than on this side. There's a lot of waiting list on this side. Things of that sole priority is not working. Better partnerships, strong partnerships among systems so that resources trickle into our early education system, resources that may come to other avenues, like DV avenue or homeless avenue, or even food pantries. Things like that, that avenues.

We need to create stronger partnership with the WIC system, W-I-C, WIC system with original centers centers because many of our children need that kind of support from zero to three years. And so we need to make sure that our system has a strong partnership with those systems to really truly tap into, tho I know it's part of what QCC

does, linking to those supporting tools. And we are not doing a great job. We keep working in silos. And so that's really affecting the future generation of providers are feeling that impact. They are barely surviving with what they have, not enough in their pay. And now, they're going to have to try to make time to look for those resources while the QCC should be the one that provides that clear partnership and linkage. And so that's my humble opinion.

Karin Bloomer:

Thanks, Yenni. If there are no other hands, I should probably turn back to Nadirah to wrap up because I know Rachel Wilensky is here to share about the federal government shutdown. So Nadirah, I'll turn it back to you.

- **Presentation**

Nadirah Jones:

Certainly. Thank you so much. And we just go to the last slide here, and I just want to say that we hope this summary of the recent work of the ECQRIS Advisory panel offers you some insight into how through the ECQRIS Advisory panel meetings, CDSS is working to reimagine the CDSS-administered QRIS to ensure that how we define and support quality makes sense, and is useful to families, and is accessible and beneficial to providers across all setting types.

Please email us with any comments or questions. The email address is on the screen. And we can also add it to the chat. All materials from the panel meetings are available on the CDSS ECQRIS website, which is also on the slide. And we can also add that to the chat. And please join the Child Care and Development Division listserv to get email updates. You can also scan this QR code on the screen to join the listserv, and we can also post that in the chat. Thank you again for this robust discussion, and I will pass it back to our facilitator. Have a good day.

Tonia McMillian:

Well, thank you, Nadirah. Thank you for inviting the committee's feedback to inform the work of the panel and CDSS. And I encourage everyone, please, please reach out. Scan the code, send the emails. QRIS needs some serious attention. And so do your due diligence. So I'm going to pass that over to Mary.

Mary Ignatius:

Okay. Thank you. And I would like to invite Rachel Wilensky of CLASP to introduce herself, and inform us about the federal government shutdown, and the very real implications that California's children and families are going to be facing. And then we will allot time for Q&A, so please jot down any questions you have for her while she presents. And just remember, chat is open so you can share all of your comments in chat. They are being recorded. And then we will have a chance to hear from the public afterwards. So welcome, Rachel.

3. Impacts of the Federal Government Shutdown on Children and Families

- Presentation

Rachel Wilensky:

Thank you so much, Mary. Thank you all for having me here today. And I know this is a pretty big shift from the last conversation, so I'm going to invite everyone to take a breath because this is also really challenging information to receive. So I'm going to go ahead and get started. And again, happy to answer questions at the end. My name is Rachel Wilensky. I am a senior policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy. I focus on child care and early education work and I am really grateful to be with you all today to talk about the federal government shutdown and the impact on young children and families.

Next slide please. If you are not familiar with CLASP, I see some familiar faces and names for sure, but if we haven't had the privilege to meet before, we are a national nonpartisan nonprofit organization that has been working for over 50 years to advance policy solutions that improve the lives of people with low incomes at the local, state and national levels. At CLASP, we aim to advance racial equity and justice by working to center the lived experiences of those most likely to be impacted by policies we focus on. And CLASP has worked for over 25 years on child care and early education.

In addition to our child care and early education team, CLASP has a number of policy focus areas which include public benefits justice, education, labor and worker justice, and immigration and immigrant families. And I'll add some of the programs I'll speak to today. I am not a full expert in, but we do have colleagues who are deeper experts than I am on these programs, so I'm happy to make referrals as well if that's helpful. Next slide please.

So as of today, we are marking day 22 of the government shutdown. As you may know, in order to keep the government funded, Congress must either vote on their 12 appropriations bills, which make up the budget to fund the federal government by September 30th which is the end of the fiscal year, or vote on a continuing resolution. This did not happen by September 30th, and so now they're continuing to negotiate. For those who may not know as well, I'll say a continuing resolution is a stop gap legislative measure to ensure that the government remains funded. It often continues the level of funding from the previous year, but it can also include adjustments or alterations to the amount of funding for certain programs. Those are referred to as anomalies.

So when Congress does not pass a budget or a continuing resolution before the end of the fiscal year, there is a government shutdown. Government shutdowns, for context, are not incredibly common but do occur and can have very immediate impacts. In the past two decades, there have only been three government shutdowns, four counting the one we're currently in, and the longest one so far was between 2018 and 2019 and it lasted for 35 days. I think that's important to know in this context because as this month kind of comes to a close, people are talking about that transition from October to

November as an important time for legislators to be negotiating. And I'll speak to a little bit about why later.

But the end of October would put us at 31 days, and if they go past 35 days, that will be the longest shutdown that we've experienced. So when the government shuts down, non-essential government employees are furloughed and implementation of government programs and services slow down or shut down altogether. And this depends on the program and the length of the shutdown. So at this point in the process, in this shutdown, it is more likely that we will see a continuing resolution before there is a budget agreement. So that means they would pass for a certain amount of time an agreement to continue funding at the previous level of funding before they would pass a new budget bill with adjusted levels of funding.

For reference, the last time Congress passed a budget ahead of the deadline was 1996. So they do frequently rely on continuing resolutions to keep the government open. The length of continuing resolutions are decided by House and Senate leadership and can last for any duration, from a few weeks, months, or even have the continuing resolution last the remaining amount of the fiscal year. Both the federal appropriations bills which make up the budget and the continuing resolutions require 60 votes in the Senate to pass. So although Republicans control both the House and Senate, they require Democratic votes to pass a bill.

At this point, Republicans in the House and Senate have proposed and voted on legislation to pass a continuing resolution through November 20th. While Democrats in the Senate have introduced a competing bill to pass a continuing resolution through October 31st, which includes language to include enhanced premium tax credits and guardrails to stop the Trump administration from defunding the government through the rescissions process, which they've already tried to use. So without those premium tax credits, just so you guys have some context for what's being debated behind the scenes, millions of individuals will see their healthcare premiums increase by more than double starting in November.

And the guardrails to rescissions bills are also important because the use of them this year has essentially eroded the appropriations process. If the White House or the administration can rescind funding that has already been appropriated by Congress, then that takes away kind of the power of the purse from Congress. So neither of these bills have passed, and right now there is no deal actively being worked on, although some bipartisan members of Congress are having conversations, but without buy-in from the administration and the congressional leadership, a deal cannot move forward. Next slide please.

All right. The shutdown is having significant impacts on essential programs and funding sources that will only grow over time and have already grown over the course of this month. I'm going to take some time to review the current status of the programs on this slide, and we've just selected these programs as a few that impact child care and early education as well as families more broadly. As I said at the beginning, I have colleagues

who are better experts than I am in some of these programs, so if you have questions that I can't answer today, I'm happy to follow up and get back to you on them.

So to start off, I will touch on the Child Care and Development Block Grant or CCDBG. This program is funded through multiple funding streams and the discretionary resources, which are the appropriated funds, can be spent over multiple years which offers protection from immediate harm in moments like this. So states should have funding on hand for multiple years that they can spend down, and they also receive additional mandatory funding through the child care entitlement to states, which all contribute to the lack of immediate impact on this program. So in the short term and over the next few months, programs serving families receiving subsidies should not have their payments disrupted.

However, of course, the longer the shutdown lasts, the greater risk there is that there could be threats to the program stability. But right now CCDBG is one of the safer programs, the most protected programs because of these different funding sources and ability to spend funds over multiple years.

Next we have the Head Start program. Head Start is very much under threat right now. So Head Start funding is almost all discretionary funds, which means it gets appropriated each year at different levels. And grants are awarded on a rolling basis starting at different months throughout the year. A few programs with grant start dates that happened on October 1st are facing immediate disruptions. They've been able to get through most of it this month, but we are hearing that potentially two programs will have to close at the end of this month. And as we expect the shutdown may extend through November 1st and beyond, there are about 140 additional programs serving over 65,000 children and families with grant start dates in November.

So they will not be able to access federal resources at that time. And in the past, some programs have found ways to stay open, have been able to take out loans, but this is a huge challenge and a lot of programs are not able to do that. And so we expect that we will see more closures following November 1st. There are also over 100 additional programs with December 1st start dates, so this impact will only continue to grow as the shutdown continues.

Next, I want to speak to the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act, which is special education and early intervention programs. As far as we've heard, IDEA programs are forward funded and received their funding in July and October. The last update we had was that the Department of Education had put in place a contingency plan to ensure funding went out on October 1st. So we believe states have received that funding. However, there are other threats happening to special education programs right now, which I'll talk about in a little bit.

The next program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF on October 1st, which again is the beginning of the new quarter for the program, this would've been the date that TANF federal funds would've been added to state accounts. Due to the shutdown, we have heard that those funds were not added this quarter. However, states

generally have reserve funds that they can use including carryover funds from state maintenance of effort funding. So this allows them to generally keep payments going and ensure the continuation of services. However, this is a decision that is up to the state to decide if they're going to use these reserve funds. And so it typically requires a local policy decision at the state level and states will be making different decisions. And so we do expect nationally that there will be some pauses or decrease in services for TANF throughout this shutdown.

Next, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP. And we are seeing the shutdown extend here through mid-October. And at this time, that means the USDA could use some contingency reserve funding to cover SNAP costs. Under the prior administration, this reserve stood at \$6 billion, but it is unclear right now how much remains available in this reserve fund or whether the current administration will choose to use it. Recipients should not have seen a disruption in their October funds. However, if the USDA does not instruct states to transmit the necessary electronic files on time, November SNAP benefits could be delayed or interrupted entirely.

This is a very urgent and a significant problem. We know some folks are working to try and find contingency funds or ways to transfer funding from different programs in the USDA, but again, there is a big threat here right now and each state operates on its own internal processing schedule to ensure the timely issuance of benefits. And if a state misses its deadline to begin that process, delays are most likely inevitable and this will leave households without access to the food assistance they rely on.

Finally, I'll speak to the Woman, Infants, and Children program or WIC. As of last week, WIC was able to remain operational generally through the end of October with some additional federal funds that were shifted around. However, some states are expected to run out of funds faster than that. So if a state runs out of federal funding, they can use state general funds. And the USDA has said that they will reimburse states for this when the government reopens. However, anecdotally we have heard that some states and organizations had started pausing benefits because they had not received any additional funding and were looking at running out of funds. So there's a lot of uncertainty and information is changing daily, if not hourly, around how all of these programs are impacted. And because each state is different, it will be different across the country and the impact that we see.

Next slide, please. Thank you. So I did want to cover some additional impacts that have come up. So in addition to these funding challenges, the Trump administration initiated a government-wide reduction in force or a RIF during the shutdown. This is an addition to the RIF that they had conducted earlier this year where they laid off many federal employees. And in this round of the RIF, the administration fired more than 4,000 employees across various federal agencies. These actions heavily impacted the Department of Education and Health and Human Services Department.

At the Department of Education, a number of offices were decimated, including the offices that administer special education, which is what I mentioned in regards to the IDEA funding earlier, is that the Special Education Office at the Department of

Education has very limited staff at this point. They were significantly impacted by this RIF. And then additionally, the office that administers funding for after school programs, or if you're familiar with the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, this is the program where staff were also completely eliminated.

In addition, at the Department of Health and Human Services, the team that administers the Preschool Development Grant B-5 was completely laid off as well. And additional layoffs happened across some programs at HHS and Early Childhood Development. So there are already several ongoing lawsuits about these RIFs during the shutdown. And there has been one temporary restraining order granted by a judge that will stop more RIFs of federal employees who are represented by two unions. The unions have acronyms, it's AFSCME and AFGE, and I can write those out in the chat. But this is new.

A recent update is that this week, additional federal employee unions have also filed to join this suit as well. And there will be a hearing held in two weeks on this case to discuss another preliminary injunction which would block layoffs temporarily for these additional unions that are trying to join the suit. That was a lot of really intense and wonky information. I got really deep in the weeds on some of that. So I'm going to thank you and go to questions now, and again, I will do my best to answer your questions. But yes, I see one in the chat already. I'm happy to answer, but please call my attention to others that have been posed.

I'm just seeing the most recent question about the Preschool Development Grant B-5. This is a program that is not for... It is states have to apply individually, but it's a program around early childhood systems building. So some states have funding from this program that supports early childhood systems building. And I'm going to scroll through the chat and see if I can find others. But if anyone else has already done that and wants to share them, please do.

- **Committee Discussion**

Karin Bloomer:

So Mary, I don't know if you want to invite feedback from committee members or happy look for hands, just let me know.

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah, yeah, I mean I think ideally we would've had somebody from DSS here who could have told us what we can expect November 1 specifically for California families and the early educators that support them. She couldn't participate today, but hopefully we can get some information after this meeting and share that with everybody because I think it's going to be really important to know and understand. Karen, you're with CDSS though, you're here. Yeah. Is there anything you can share that or anyone you can call?

Karen Chang:

Right. Well, here's what I can share and agree. We can follow up in writing, but right now tracking impacts especially around what's happening in Head Start and partnered with CDE to do a survey to our known contractors who are operating Head Start to have a better picture of how that is resulting in potential loss of capacity around our state and then partnering with those contractors so that work is underway. And then we are also, in the larger context, closely monitoring what's happening at the federal level and how it might impact the funding through our Child Care and Development Fund. So Mary, that's what I could offer in this moment. Is there anything else specifically you are looking for right now?

Mary Ignatius:

Yeah. I mean, I think it is the sort of question of what can be self-funded, what reserves, what I think Rachel described maintenance of effort reserve funds that might be able to be pulled on to delay the worst of things. So yeah, thank you, Karen. But I think if you can get any message back to folks at DSS that we are looking for some answers of what to expect.

Karen Chang:

Absolutely can take back the question for follow up for more specificity. Also just want to take a moment and heard this in some of the feedback which we so appreciate, but it's a challenging time and it's really impacting our families, our providers, and our children and just want to honor and acknowledge that and our commitment to find strategies and solutions to help us all through this period of time and what's happening in our communities around the state as a result of what's going on at the federal level.

Mary Ignatius:

Okay. Are there any other questions from panelists? Tonia?

Tonia McMillian:

Okay, this is not a question, this is more of a statement, but we are all trusted messengers and so with everything that's happening in this world daily, I think the more informed we are, the more we can fill in the gaps or answer some questions that our families may be struggling with. We just have to stay tuned in and stay on top of things and it's asking a lot. But I really appreciate Rachel, what you shared. Because I know many have families who are on SNAP and who have WIC, and yeah, it's important. It is important that we take this information. And if we can answer questions, we can answer them honestly. So just a statement. Thanks, Mary.

Mary Ignatius:

Thanks, Tonia. Zoila?

Zoila Toma:

Thank you for the presentation. I think it's very important what Tanya just mentioned, we need to be informed and we need the truth and we need it raw. We need it how it is

because we need to be well-prepared, right? There's a lot of things that are affecting family child care educators, any program out there, education program, everything is so expensive, right? So we need to be well-informed and prepared to what could be the outcome. Because as you are sharing this information, I'm also now trying to read it. It's so much information to unpack. But what my concern is that a lot of this stuff is this discretionary. So that means that it's up to someone else's discretion to take decisions.

And sometime you have to understand that education sometime is, in early education especially, is the last one to be noticed and it's the first one to be cut. When it comes to funding is the first one that they start making those cuts. So we need to be well-prepared. And yet, throughout the presentation and the speakers we've been hearing, that partnership, and yeah, there is partnership. It's very important we need to build because our democracy is being destroyed right now. Our education system, it's being also dismantled. We always had a very weak education system and with everything that is happening right now, it's even worse.

Because books are being removed, museums are being closed, everything is being hurt that real true history of our country, it's being dismantled. And now as early educator, it's our job to make sure that we educate our kids. Everybody that comes in our programs have the quality, that right information and all these matters. The topics that we touch here, it's sensitive, it's heartbreaking, and sometimes we might not agree to everything, but that's what we're here for, just to have the conversation that hard rock conversation. Thank you.

Rachel Wilensky:

Thanks. Mary, if I can address a couple more questions I see in the chat. Okay. First off, I do not believe California receives the PDG B-5 funding, so you should not be impacted by that. Second, I wanted to be clear that for childcare providers, no, they should not see an impact in the next month or two even. I think that CCDBG funding is pretty stable and we can't say anything for certain because we don't know what will happen under this administration, in this Congress, but for the next few months, if the shutdown lasts that long, child care providers should not be impacted if they're participating in the state subsidy program for getting paid through that.

Of course, we know child care providers also rely on other federal programs like SNAP, like WIC, like TANF. So we want to make sure to acknowledge that and know that they will be impacted by the other programs that might be challenged more to have funding during this time. And Head Start providers specifically, if there are teachers or providers in Head Start programs, yes, that is challenging. I would recommend finding out when your program's grant renewal date is. They happen throughout the course of the year, so it's very specific program by program and that you will be safe until that date, for sure.

If that date is November 1st, there could be funding challenges that will impact Head Start programs. Some programs are closing because of this. So child care providers participating in the subsidy program should not be impacted with those payments right now. I do not believe, no. I believe the two shutdowns we're expecting right now from

programs that had October 1st renewal dates are in Florida, so California should not be impacted by those. We're trying to keep track of where these are happening, but there's limited information being shared at this point.

Mary Ignatius:

Karen, you had your hand up and down and up again if you want to respond.

Karen Chang:

I did. I wanted to wait for Rachel to finish. I saw a question in the chat, what is the impact to CCTR? And consistent with what Rachel's saying, to this point, we have not seen any reduction and so waiting for the budget, but at this point there hasn't been any reduction to those programs. What we've seen to date has really been around heads.

Mary Ignatius:

Okay. Are there any other questions or comments from committee members? I think we are going to move into public comment. I think I just wanted to end with child care providers are first line of defense in so many things you see and experience the impacts families are facing almost immediately. I know in LA you've already experienced the National Guard coming into your community. In the Bay Area, the news is reporting that we're about to see 1500 ICE agents come into our communities. And so just want to give my heart out to everybody who is just experiencing all of this in real time.

And I hope that as much as our governor is making fun of what's happening, takes everything really seriously and uses our state budget and our fourth-largest economy to protect every community member and protect every family and child care provider that deserves it, that deserves all of our protection. So I will, I don't know, Tonia, if you have any last comments before we hand it off, but I'm grateful to have this community and to know that there are good, amazing, wonderful adults out in this world fighting for our babies and our families and each other.

Tonia McMillian:

Yeah. Ditto, ditto, ditto what you said, Mary. And y'all, we got to stay prayed up. No joke. No joke. So I think, yeah, we have a lot of folks wanting to speak public comments, so we can turn that over to Karen or the host. Let's hear what our folks have to say.

4. General Public Comment

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. Thank you, chairs. So this time we will be continuing to take public comment in the chat and then also opening up a public comment verbally. So please at this time use the raised hand feature if you'd like to be in virtual line to speak. We'll call on one at a time and invite you to unmute at that time. Please state your name and your affiliation that you may have. We ask that speakers keep their comments to no more than two minutes so that we can allow for as many people speak as possible in the time we have left. I'll give you a brief warning when you're getting close to the two minutes and let you

know when that time is up. Please remember, this is public testimony, and so this is members of the public's presentation and not an opportunity for dialogue back and forth between committee members and the public. Okay. With that, I see Micaela Mack, we're going to unmute you on our end. Please go ahead and unmute.

Micaela Mack:

Hello everyone. Can you hear me okay?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes.

Micaela Mack:

Hi, my name is Micaela Mack. I operate a licensed home-based preschool on purpose. I was a former director of a center-based program, worked in early childhood education for over 20 years. What I have seen in center-based, I thought was a center-based issue with the racism and bias that I've witnessed happen to black children, African ancestry, children and families, as well as brown, Latina, Latinx, Hispanic families. And I chose to open a family childcare program with the intent of supporting this population as well as children with individual needs. Center-based programs do not like to work with children with individual needs. I thought that that was a center-based issue.

The issue that we're talking about is far greater than racism. It's far greater than discrimination. There's an obvious caste system that's happening right now. It is happened from the beginning of time. And when I say, "What are you going to do as an individual and who are you is speaking to, what are you going to do to make sure that these systems do not take over our entire population? What's happening right now has been happening and the call is what are you going to do as an individual?"

We can blame Trump, we can blame everything else, but there's things that are happening that I've typed in the chat that happens on a regular basis. I have families that come to me that do not get access to these programs that you are stating that Trump is defunding. When we had the funding, when the funding was available, it wasn't available to our students, our children and families, and that is what I'm speaking to that we need to address instead of shifting the blame instead of saying that the government needs to do something. What are you as an individual going to do?

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Thank you for your public comment. We're now going to turn to Linda Moreno. Linda, we're unmuting on our end. Please unmute. Go ahead.

Linda Moreno:

Hi. I just wanted to thank you guys for the job you do because I could just feel everyone's heart and thank you, Rachel, for what you share with us. I can feel your genuine caring for us. And I know this is not an easy job and it's not going to be easy, and hopefully they'll come to an agreement. I'm praying for all of us, but I think that we

need to be here and support each other if we have questions or we need laws, you know what I mean? Questions, we have a union for providers, just throwing it out there. And also, we do have a law firm so they can stand up for providers or different private, but I'm here just saying thank you for the job you're doing because it's not easy even on our part and we're trying to hang in there. And for the families, we have resources. We should have a resource on our bulletin board for families, what they can do and even direct them. So I just wanted to throw that out there and just thank you guys for your job. That's it.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. We'll turn next to Marcella Graves. Marcella, please go ahead and unmute. Marcella, it looks like you still need to unmute on your end on your Zoom application. Marcella, you're still-

Tonia McMillian:

Can you come back to her, Karen?

Karin Bloomer:

Absolutely, absolutely. So Marcella, if you could raise your hand again so I can try to remember and hopefully you can work on your audio. We'll turn next to Clarissa Jones. Please go ahead and unmute.

Clarissa Jones:

Hello. Thank you guys for taking my comment. So my thing here is us providers do a lot. Every time we come to these meetings, we're told, well, we need to change how we need to change it. And then it's under the guise of for the family, for the children, but us providers, we suffer a lot. We don't even have the income to run our business. And now, and it feels like our business is not even our business. It's a sister company for the government. I do, I said Trump meaning the same way Trump is pushing out the immigrants. It's the same way that a lot of these programs are pushing out home providers and forcing us. I just got my associate teacher's permit. I don't even have to sit here and justify this, but it's a lot of providers who does not have the time to get this education, but has been putting families through college, helping these kids prepare for college, and they don't get the credibility.

And all they're told is to attend this Zoom meeting. "Oh, go to your union. Oh, talk about this, talk about that." We're tired of talking you guys. We need a solution that's going to help us to grow our businesses. Y'all want us to sit here and put our lives and our health and our families on the line for other people, but nobody's hearing us, nobody's hearing us. We're having the same arguments fighting the same fights that we've been fighting, and I cannot be the only one feeling like this. It's very overwhelming. When I look at my business that I brought up from the ground and feel like that the government and all these other programs are running it, running my business, literally.

We have to have so many inspections. We have to have so many food. We have to follow so many rules that we really don't have time to really help these kids and the

families like we want to because we're spread all over and all we ask for a little bit. And again, it gets pushed aside and then put under the guise, we're doing what's best for the families, for the children. That is a BS lie. That's all I have to say.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Melissa Alvarado invite you to unmute on your end.

Melissa Alvarado:

Hello. Hello?

Karin Bloomer:

Hello.

Melissa Alvarado:

Hi. Okay. Okay. I got to be quick because I only got two minutes. Okay. First thing I want to say is I want to say thank you to everybody that came to this Zoom. Whether you're a provider, whether you're on the panel, this is the first step to try to make things change. Also, I do want to mention that 70% of the debt of the United States is held by individuals. It's not US people necessarily. It's that one that's at 2% at the top of the chain that actually has control over all of us. And we as providers try the best that we can. I'm in Brentwood. There's a lot of funding that doesn't happen in Brentwood for childcare providers, a lot of help that doesn't help us out here because we're apparently in an area that makes more money. That doesn't mean that we have the money to better our programs for these kids.

I have three employees and myself. We have 14 kids here every day. We work super hard. I help my employees the best they can with their own families. We realize that we're putting on food on the table for them. I don't think anything's going to change until we all look at it as a whole. These kids are our future. They are what is going to potentially change this world into something better. And until we realize that the funding does not need to be taken away from these children, there's people out there in the government that are making a lot of money and not cutting their paychecks to benefit anybody else. So that's all I have to say. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Elida Cruz, please go ahead and unmute.

Elida Cruz:

Hey there. My name is Alida Cruz and I'm an educator here in Kern County. And my worries are in regards to the agencies. The agencies like mentioned before regarding the education part, the subsidized agencies is giving the parents a list and they are also suggesting that example, "Don't you choose Alida Cruz because she charges a lot. Why don't you go to this other provider who doesn't charge at all?" So they're making recommendation, and this is a personal experience. It has happened two times, but since the parents know me already, they always come back to me. So that's one.

And another one is also in regards to education. A lot of US providers have university degrees who have been licensed, who get our license and keep studying and keep on going to workshops to keep ourselves updated. A concern for me is licensing, giving licenses for people who only have what is required, which is the CPR class. Just minimum education. And also another concern is like I've mentioned, a lot of us have a lot of education and centers is employing employees with only-

Karin Bloomer:

30 seconds.

Elida Cruz:

... Six units. So that's a very strong worrying for me and a lot of questions is why. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Judith Hernandez, please go ahead and unmute.

Judith Hernandez:

I live in the county of San Benito and what seems very cruel to me for the children and for the families, I bring children to school and I pick them up. And the thing is that the programs, there's only one program here and they give care only after school. But the saddest thing is that the parents have to pay me when they drop the kids off, I take them to school and then I pick them up afterwards and drop them off at a center. So that's painful to see that they take them home, they take them to school, and then they take them to the center. Why? Because the center wants the money to be in their program when they're not even looking after the needs of the child, nor of the parents. And that's very painful and very sad.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Marcella Graves, we're going to invite you to unmute on your end. Here we go. Please give it a try.

Marcella Graves:

Hi, can everyone hear me?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes. Yes. Well done.

Marcella Graves:

Oh, good. I had to change the phone. My name is Marcella Graves. I'm out of Fresno, California. I just want to say yes, it's like I was piggybacking on what the other lady was saying. We talk about Trump, Trump, Trump, but it seemed like the same kind of institution as far as trying to push out providers. It's like sometimes you can't hardly catch your breath because we're trying to go to school. We take other little classes.

We're trying to keep up with all these rules and regulations, pick up kids paperwork. It's a lot. And then what I don't like is that they have summer camps or winter camp and they have the three-year-olds, the kids up to six o'clock in the evening. They're trying to push us out. They don't want us to get the after schoolers. And so it's like what you get is just infants, you got to work-traditional hours around the clock, seven days a week, 23 hours a day like I work to keep the bills paid because they're taking all the children from us, from TK.

They're not giving them an option. They just say, "Oh, we have TK here, sign up." They send the paper literature home to the parents or whatnot. They don't give them an option. It's like some of the parents think it's mandatory. And I tell my parents, "No, I do that here in no sense of going to school. So they should stress that on the paperwork." But the school is trying to get the kids for themselves and it is just not fair. Especially, I've been in the industry almost 29 years, well, 29 years. I've been in industry for years and I done seen a lot and I just seem like they're trying to push us out. That's what I see.

Karin Bloomer:

30 seconds.

Marcella Graves:

Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Elisa Felix, we're unmuting you on our end. Please unmute and go ahead. Please go ahead. You're unmuted. Elisa, we're not hearing you even though your zoom microphone is unmuted. Sorry, Elisa, if you want to raise your hand, if we have time, we'll try to take your comment again. We're going to move on to Jacqueline Harper. Please go ahead and unmute. Jacqueline, can you unmute on your end, on your Zoom? Jacqueline, you're still muted on Zoom. So sorry. We'll move to the next person. Please feel free to raise your hand again and we can try again. Sarina Lynn, please go ahead and unmute.

Sarina Lynn:

Hi. Yeah, thank you so much for taking public comments and the time and the effort that goes into these meetings. I think I just wanted to raise up a heartfelt thank you to everyone that comes on these calls and really reaches out and supports children, families, but most importantly, our early education workforce. I think all of us child care providers really appreciate that. But I would say I do really believe California has a bigger role to play. We've been having a lot of conversations about the rate and quality panel, the workforce, and it seems like we're met with a lot of roadblocks and frustration and lack of funding, honestly, to be put towards it.

And it's nobody's fault, but so this conversation is disheartening, but also the lack of progress and the childcare provider union, all of the providers, all of everyone on this call that has been talking about this rate forever, we've had four years. They said they

had us do two studies. I mean, it's crazy. And so I think just taking some self-reflection that California and the leaders of California really have some work to do, including maybe some of the groups on this call to really make a change in that way because it hasn't happened so far. Thank you so much.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Rebecca Grasty, please go ahead and unmute. Rebecca, you're unmuted, but we can't hear you. So sorry. We're going to go ahead and move on to Maria Gomez. Maria, please go ahead and unmute.

Maria Gomez:

Thank you so much. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to talk. I just don't want to take that much time, but I want to echo everyone who was here and give us an opportunity to have this platform for us to work. Yes, please. I'm a home daycare provider. I have all your credentials, BA and Child Development teachers credential. So we as a home daycare providers, a lot of us have a lot of education too, and we are competing, but instead of competing, I want to build a bridge to work together to lift us up all together to work for all the services their kids needs. So I want to say thank you so much for everything you're doing, and please don't forget your home daycare providers. We're also struggling in a lot of different ways, and let's support each other and reach out to each other. So thank you so much for giving us this time and an opportunity. Really appreciate it.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you, Elisa Felix, please go ahead and unmute.

Elisa Felix:

It's not letting me.

Karin Bloomer:

I might've just heard you. It was very faint. Can you please turn up your volume?

Elisa Felix:

Could you hear me?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes, much better. Please go ahead.

Elisa Felix:

Okay, cool. Awesome. Hi, my name is Elisa. I am the owner of a child care center as I was also a child care provider also in my home. I just wanted to point out the TK programs in the public schools are killing our programs here, barely holding on the string. I know that child care providers also have things to do, and they're also as qualified as a preschool center. But like I said, it's just depending on the child, the

parents' needs of their child and whatever works best for them, especially the scheduling and whatnot. I have to deal with paying a really high rent lease. And then I also have to pay all these different insurances just to keep up with my teachers. I have teachers that are doing their best to be here. I have to pay for substitute teachers now. The minimum cost to hire a substitute teacher, I had to pay \$32 an hour to hire a substitute teacher.

And in the centers are struggling too. The TK programs are taking the children, and we are a small center. We're not corporate. They're small centers. There's corporate and small centers. There's a big difference between us and the corporate. And just don't forget about the small child care centers. I just have 35 children I haven't been able to fill up in the past two years. So thank you. And we appreciate you guys having these meetings so we can express our situations and experiences. Thank you so much.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. Rebecca Grasty, please go ahead and unmute.

Rebecca Grasty:

Can you hear me now?

Karin Bloomer:

Yes.

Rebecca Grasty:

Perfect. Between Microsoft Teams and Zoom, they both screw up the microphone. I just want to echo a lot of what has been said as a family child care provider of over 10 years with a teaching credential and a BA degree and other things, until a child can attend FCC for quote, unquote, free, just like TK, only then will a family actually be prioritized. A family's authentic choice for their children will then be prioritized. And following that vein, quality is a relative term, especially when you're talking about children and parents and cultural preferences. Staff in order to provide all of that for children, as is what have been said, they need to have their own needs met, pay, satisfaction, recognition before they can effectively center the needs and priorities of family.

You have to take care of yourself before the other people on the plane. The whole oxygen mask concept that we've heard for many years. As far as reaching parents and parents finding child care providers, I find many, many child care providers do not know how to use my child care plan. They don't know what it is. So that goes on both sides. More parents need to be informed about how to use my child care plan. More providers need to be informed that they need to go fill it out. They need to help do that for themselves so that parents can then call them. You can't judge a book by its cover. And lastly, it keeps being talked about, and it's a parent's authentic choice for their children, regardless of what it costs. Only then will it be their authentic choice. Thank you.

Karin Bloomer:

Thank you. At this time, I want to turn it back to Chair McMillan to just close us out and officially adjourn.

5. Adjourn

Tonia McMillian:

I think there was one more, Cynthia Janaro, and then I'll close it out. That's okay, Karin.

Karin Bloomer:

Yeah, no, of course. I just wonder if that individual could raise their hand.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay. Cynthia, she put in the chat that she had her hand up, but...

Karin Bloomer:

Okay. All right.

Tonia McMillian:

Well, okay. Well...

Karin Bloomer:

Sorry. Sorry. I could try to unmute her, but I'm not sure we're able to.

Tonia McMillian:

Okay.

Karin Bloomer:

I appreciate you keeping an eye out. Please back to you.

Tonia McMillian:

Well, members of the public, thank you for all your written and verbal input today. Your participation is so important to this process. And to my fellow members of the ECPC Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees, thank you for your insights today and your continued dedication to this cause. And so with that, this meeting is adjourned.