



## **Early Childhood Policy Council Agenda and Transcripts**

### **Virtual Meeting**

Tuesday, November 19, 2024  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### **Physical Meeting**

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

## **Agenda**

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### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

- Welcome
- Report from chairs of advisory committees
- Voices from the field
- Public comment

### **2. Whole Child Community Equity**

- Presentations
- Council discussion
- Public comment

### **3. Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update**

- Status Update
- Council questions
- Public comment

### **4. Child Care Transition Quarterly Report from CDSS**

- Final report from CDSS
- Related updates from CDE
- Council questions
- Public comment

### **5. Adjourn**

## Attendance:

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### ECPC Council Members:

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, Carola Oliva-Olson, Dean Tagawa, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Kim Patillo Brownson, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Lisette Frausto, Mayra Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Natali Gaxiola, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Scott Moore, Sonia Jaramillo, Tonia McMillian.

### Parent Advisory Committee Members:

Deborah Corley-Marzett, Lisette Frausto, Yenni Rivera

### Workforce Advisory Committee:

Miren Algorri, Tonia McMillian

### Guest:

Amira Elmallah, Anna Levine, Carlise King, Chana Wynne-Swan, Deborah Rawson, Jacqueline Barocio, Jawid Azin, Karen Chang, Shanice Orum, Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez, Stephen Propher

### Hosts:

Diana Yactayo, Laura (SP), Jateri Willis, Junting Tan (CN), Jen Troia, Karin Bloomer, Veronique Baumbach, Ya-Nan Chou (CN), Vicki (SP).

## Meeting Transcript:

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### **Spanish Interpreter:**

Good morning. I will give the instructions first in English and then in Spanish. In a few moments, you'll be able to see at the bottom of your screen, if you are on a laptop or a desktop computer, a globe that says interpretation, and you would click on that and then choose English. If you are using a smartphone, an iPad, or similar device, you instead need to look for the three dots on the top right of your screen. Click there, then you'll see the globe for interpretation, and then you choose English. This will permit you to be able to hear anything spoken in Spanish or Mandarin simultaneously on the English channel. Otherwise, you will not be able to hear those comments.

[Foreign language].

Now we will have the interpretation instructions in Mandarin.

### **Mandarin Interpreter:**

[Foreign language]. Thank you.

### **Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you. We'll now enable the interpretation channels and language channels at this time. Please select the language of your choice. Two more items of note. We'll be

opening up the chat feature to invite written public comment at the end of each agenda item today. During the final public comment, we'll also invite verbal public comment. We'll be asking those who give verbal testimony to limit their time to two minutes in order to invite as many voices as possible to share.

Secondly, the slides we'll be sharing in today's meeting will be posted on the ECPC webpage within the next week. And now I'll turn the meeting over to Jen Troia, the director of the California Department of Social Services, who'll be chairing this meeting.

**Jen Troia:**

Good morning. It's lovely to be here with all of you. Welcome to the fourth quarterly meeting of the year for the Early Childhood Policy Council. Karin mentioned, my name is Jen Troia. I am very honored to have recently stepped in to serve as the director of the California Department of Social Services behind our now Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kim Johnson. It is a pleasure to be here with all of you. I have followed the council since its inception in 2020, and I deeply appreciate your ongoing dedication and the experience and wisdom that you share in this space.

I've known some of you for many, many years. Some of you, I think it will be a newer opportunity for me to get to know you. Just by way of quick background, I have about 20 years of experience working on children and families issues in mostly policy spaces. Although I did start out as an attorney and advocate directly working with children and youth in foster care. I spent a lot of time in the legislature, and I've now been with CDSS for about five years before stepping into this role.

So thank you again for being here and for joining us today. I also want to thank members of the advisory committees who are here with us today and appreciate all of the stakeholders who are here with us and attending and for the public comment that you will share to add that perspective to our discussion as well.

For our housekeeping, for roll call, we're going to have our support team take note of the council members who are in attendance. So no need to do anything else. But I do want to take an opportunity to take a quick moment to welcome a new council member who was appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and I see her here on my screen. So Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, welcome. It's lovely to have you here with us.

Andrea is the Vice President of Education at the California Children's Academy or CCA. CCA, which she can tell you a little bit more about, provides free and affordable early education to low-income working families at 15 centers throughout LA County. And Andrea is responsible for the development, direction, and coordination of these full-day subsidized programs, which are serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Andrea, if you're willing, I'd turn it over to you for a couple minutes just to say hello and share a little bit about why you wanted to join the council.

**Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:**

Good morning, and buenos dias, everyone. I'm excited to be here with you all this morning. One of the reason... Well, this group has always been an inspiration to me as well, and with all the work that you've put in to lift up children and families in California. So it was really exciting to know that I had been nominated, elevated and accepted to

the position. And now in California, the voices that you raise are needed even more so, and it is important work, and I'm really happy in joining you to elevate those voices. So thank you for the time and the introduction. I appreciate it and I look forward to working with you going forward.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much, Andrea. It's lovely to have you here with us. Welcome one more time.

So quick review of our agenda. We are going to hear a report out from the chairs of the council's two advisory committees on themes from their most recent joint meeting in October. We will get a chance to listen to the Voices from the Field and then we'll engage in a topic of Whole Child Community Equity. I'm very grateful that Carlise King of Child Trends is here with us and will share the status of that work and invite the council's input to help shape that important work. And then we will address the standing agenda item of Rate Reform and receive the final Child Care Transition Report from CDSS along with an update from CDE in that space. We'll carve out some time for a verbal public comment before we adjourn, so we've got a full day and we're looking forward to it. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Tonia McMillan, the chair of our Workforce Advisory Committee.

**Tonia McMillan:**

Good morning everyone. I am Tonia McMillan, chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee. My partner in crime, Mary Ignatius, chair of the Parent Advisory Committee, could not be here today. You guys lift her up in prayer. She had surgery.

So now we had a really good joint meeting of the advisory committees on October 17. We approached the meeting as a listening session and we asked our committee members to share their reflections to this question, what is most on your mind as parents of young children and as providers in the early care space? Individual committee members shared and then we opened it up for general discussion.

We'd like to share the things that emerge from our meeting. The number one thing was Rate Reform and true cost of care. That's the need for Rate Reform to align with the actual cost of providing quality child care and the urgency of addressing this issue by July 1, 2025.

Parental choice and accessibility. I'm not going to read all of the information, we'll share that with you guys because I know we've got other things on the agenda, so I'm just going to go down the list. But I had to say Rate Reform and true cost of care. Number one, like I said, parental choice and accessibility.

Number three, universal pre-kindergarten, UPK, and family child care providers and the challenge of integrating family child care providers into the UPK program.

Children with special needs and early intervention. We discussed difficulties in accessing early intervention services for children with disabilities and the challenges that providers face.

Workforce retention and professional development. The staff retention in early ed, the importance of competitive wages and the need for adequate, adequate training and

education, racial wage, justice and equity. The existence of racial wage disparities in the early education workforce, particularly affecting black early educators and the call for systemic changes.

Licensing and regulatory challenges. The administrative and regulatory barriers such as delays in licensing inspections and so forth.

The impact of TK, transitional kindergarten expansion. This is the effect of the TK expansion on family child care enrollment and the need to consider the implications for providers and the families they serve.

Advocacy for systemic change. This is the importance of advocating for changes to improve the early care system, ensuring that the policies and practice are inclusive and equitable.

Emergency funding and financial stability. The call for emergency funding supports for providers still recovering from the pandemic and facing financial difficulties.

Whole child, whole family approach. The call to adopt a holistic approach that addresses the needs of the child, the family, and the community. Similar to the Head Start model.

And last but not least, parent and educator voice and policy. Parents and educators need to be more directly involved in policy discussions and decisions affecting the early care and education system.

So it was a robust meeting with a robust conversation. And as you can see, we are sharing 12 of the top topics that were brought to the forefront. As the chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee and as a member of this council, I urge you to keep these issues up front and center.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much, Tonia, for that report out and for your leadership on the Workforce Advisory Committee. As many of you know, we also start each council meeting with a share out from voices from the field in which we invite a parent and provider to share their perspectives. So today we've invited a parent and provider from the Advisory Committees to share and lift up their voices. Yenni Rivera, welcome. Would you like to share first?

**Yenni Rivera:**

Thank you so much for the platform, and I just want to basically second what Tonia shared and what all the parents have been sharing. I actually work in LA County, and I survived DV in LA County and now I support the 55,000 homeless children or housing instability children that enter our legal, our school system. Now imagine those are children that get affected since preschool years, since early age, since the moment they're born, they're born into housing instability. And so what we're saying, the holistic approach that we're asking as parents that I as a parent needed for DV was to be able to have providers that have a more setting that's more a parent choice, that it's more like a home, like a community, that they can feel identified, Spanish speaking, things like that. Because our children are going through separation anxiety to PTSD. We're having an impact of migrant families. And we got to understand thinking of those

children coming through different countries, passing through, it's kind of like the adults are going through trauma.

Now, imagine the children that now are entering our Head Start, our preschool, our child care settings, and when we don't have the selection of neighborhood areas that have child care, it affects the parents. And unfortunately, part of what Tonia said is because unfortunately many child care centers are having to close. The cost of living is high, so many child care centers are having to close and therefore there's a triple effect. There's a ripple effect for the parents. Now, our children who need that trauma-informed care, who need to feel like they're identified, they're being take care of like a grandma or an aunt, somebody from the community. Now we have less selection of where to put our children who need that holistic approach, who need that care, that separation anxiety care that sometimes our community can offer because we're used to speaking, for example, the same language for migrant children.

If somebody in that setting doesn't speak Spanish, imagine how that child feels. So all that needs to be addressed. And the last thing I want to say, what is astonishing to me is that how are folks that have gone through lived experience, who have children that have gone through the system, how are they not the ones making a decision of how child care should look? How is this somebody that has been in the field of provider, that has dealt with all these scenarios for decades and knows exactly how to approach holistically a family, how are they not the ones making a decision of how our child care should look? So I second what Tonia says. It's very important. We cannot forget, especially as we start a new year next year and we know there's going to be a lot of changes, we cannot forget that.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much, Yenni. I appreciate very much you sharing that. I'd like to invite Deborah, Corley Marzett to also share with us.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Yes, good morning to everyone. I want to really to present true voices from the field. Again, good morning. For those who don't know, my name is Deborah Corley Marzett and I am a family daycare provider, home-based educator here in Bakersfield. I want to thank you all for taking the time out of your busy mornings to hear and listen to what's really going on out in the field.

Growth, strength, and understanding comes from being involved. And with that being said, let's hear the voices from the field. So many voices and so many issues, where do I start? Do I start with the providers who are supporting local families who are now guardians for children in the foster care system from an outside county. Like in Palmdale where DCFF has failed to reimburse the provider, in Bakersfield for services from March of 2024 to September of 2024. And to add insult to no pay, the case manager refuses to give the provider the supervisor's name.

These are conversations out there in the field. Emails don't work, leaving messages fall by the wayside. The phone numbers are out of service. And all the while the provider never misses a beat on providing care for the children and making sure that this bump in the life of these children will not affect the love that these kids deserve and receive.

Or do I start with providers whose parents are saying that their agencies or networks are telling them, "You're certified for 12 hours a day and if you, the parent, do not use those 12 hours a day or you miss a day, you'll lose your child care." Providers are underpaid and have to deal with abuse of power. Again, voices out in the field.

Or do I start with the UPK providers still want to see CDE blueprint, a mixed delivery on how they're going to include all providers in the UPK system?

Or do I start with providers who are asking if the 10 to one ratio was good enough during the pandemic, why wasn't it good enough to keep this policy and regulation as a permanent change? The voices in the field.

Do I start with the providers who are talking about the 80-20 rule. Title 22 section 102417 states. When circumstances require the licensee to be temporarily absent from the home, the licensee shall arrange for a substitute adult to care for the supervision of the children during his or her absent. Temporary absences shall not extend 20 percent of the hours a facility is providing care per day. When you talk to providers who are dealing with cancer, kidney disease, heart disease, once a week dialysis, yearly physicians, yearly mammograms, basic doctor appointments from medical to dental and vision, they're asking, what do I do? What about the provider who lives in rural areas where the doctor is 30 to 45 minutes away? And if the provider has staff that meets state requirements to step in, the provider should feel comfortable and confident enough to go.

Providers like myself over the age of 50, not able to retire anytime soon and have to work even harder to survive. Doctor's appointments are more often. What is expected from providers? We can't continue to put providers lives on the back burner and be afraid that licensing may stop by while a provider is at a reasonable, excusable over 20 percent of the time appointment. Again, these are the things on the mind of providers.

Or do I want to talk about true cost of care? Providers are asking, when will the state make this a priority and get on top of it and get the true cost of care enacted? Providers are tired of being tired, tired of waiting. Some providers are having to leave this field right now due to the continued low reimbursement rates. These are just a few issues from the field. Providers are talking. Because there are so many more and the state has to do more than listen. They have to be proactive to the provider's concerns. Thank you.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much. Thank you Tonia, Yenni, and Deborah for sharing those really important perspectives on the impacts that we have on children, on families and communities, and on our workforce.

We have a couple of extra minutes. I just want to see if there are any council members. We have maybe space for just a few folks, if there's any council members who want to share reflections, I just want to open up a space for that for a couple minutes before we open up public comment. Robin, I think I see your hand on my screen first. If you want to go ahead and jump in.

**Robin Layton:**

Good morning everybody and thank you to Deborah for that conversation. I just realized when we were getting the update from Tonia about the committee meetings that this would've been the meeting to do a budget letter. So I know we haven't met since August. This is the last meeting of the year, of the calendar year. We don't have yet when we're going to be meeting again. If that's not in place, I wonder if I could propose that we meet in early January so that we can get our annual budget letter to the governor and the legislature. We've done one every end of calendar year as well as after the May revise.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you for raising-

**Robin Layton:**

That's for all council members.

**Jen Troia:**

Yeah, thank you for raising that, Robin. I'll let others respond in their comments as well before we circle back. Sonia, I think I saw your hand next.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Right, you can just speak.

**Sonia Jaramillo:**

Hi. I'm wondering if during the conversations, Tonia, if there was anything regarding the need to develop, or maybe it's already in place, but as the UPK initiative, the TK plan is being implemented, programs are starting to see some of our highly qualified staff members transitioning to TK and they need to have a plan and a path to develop our workforce and collaboration with different entities, but at the same time, they need to have incentives to be able to support the assistant teachers to get the courses and then move up in the ranks, but also to provide that support that we need to have. Was there anything like that discussed? I'm just wondering.

**Tonia McMillian:**

Actually, Sonia, no. Most of the discussion was the family child care providers being left out of the equation when it came to TK and UPK. But no, and I'm pretty sure there wasn't. I'll check back with Karin but thank you for raising that because you're right. That's another concern. So thank you for lifting that.

**Jen Troia:**

Let me just check to see if there's anyone else who has any final comments on this item before public comment. If not, I want to check back in on the request that Robin raised, and the budget development process will clearly be going on over the first quarter of 2025 and into the summer. I wonder if there are volunteers to spearhead things and



maybe we want to gear up in the first meeting in 2025 to have additional conversations about budget development or if others want to discuss a different approach.

**Karin Bloomer:**

And as a reminder to the council in terms of adhering to Bagley-Keene rules, this would be a maximum of two council members who would spearhead the process.

**Robin Layton:**

Do we have an idea yet of when the meetings are going to be?

**Karin Bloomer:**

I think we're looking at dates and lining them up with leadership. My understanding is that we're looking at February for the first meeting at this time, which is, as you all know, pretty early in the budget development process after the governor's release of his proposal.

**Robin Layton:**

So then maybe I'll propose that two people, two council members meet immediately after the proposed January budget is released and now the letter will be a response to that. We don't really have a choice since we didn't bring one today unless we can get approval to really... I mean the one that we did last year is the same as we did the year before. I would love that to happen if we can just do that today and just change the date and probably some of the legislative leadership.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Robin, if I could just from a practicality perspective, I don't know that we're in a position to share last year's letter in this meeting and assure people have the support for it. I mean that's just my, I guess a question that comes up for me. Hearing that that's an option you're offering obviously for council members to consider. I think as you just mentioned, Robin, another option is once the governor's proposal is out for the letter to be underscoring the priorities and responding to that proposal.

**Jen Troia:**

Donna, I see your hand. Do you want to jump in?

**Donna Sneeringer:**

I was just going to underscore that I think the letter likely won't change much in content. I find our values are our values and we continue to be moving them forward. Logistics, I will defer to what's possible. I am fine either trying to move update of what we had, or I would also volunteer to draft a letter to be reviewed in February if you need volunteers.

**Robin Layton:**

So there's one. And I'm happy to do it again unless anybody else wants the experience to work with Donna, which was wonderful last May I have to say. So thank you. And Mary has done it with me as well, so if anybody else wants a turn, please let us know.

**Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:**

I know I'm a newbie here, but I'd love to sit in and participate with that if that was possible.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Okay, so again, just appreciating maximum of two council members, so I'm hearing maybe it's Donna and was it Andrea that spoke up?

**Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:**

Yes, I apologize.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

No, no worries. And just so I'm clear what I've volunteered for Andrea, and I will then get together after the release of the governor's January budget and update and revise a draft of the letter to come to the council in February.

**Karin Bloomer:**

That sounds right. Thanks for reiterating that.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

Okay.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you all so much for the first agenda item and let's like bonus. Bonus conversation of the first agenda item. Appreciate it very much. I'm glad we were able to get to some clear next steps. Karin, I'm going to turn it over to you for public comment.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Yeah, thank you so much, Dr. Troia. At this time, since we are closing out the first agenda item, we'll be opening up the chat feature for the next five minutes for written public comment and we will move on to agenda item two, whole child community equity and I will turn it back to the chair.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much. This next agenda item is also at the heart of our work about supporting the whole child, not just academic development, but also social, emotional, physical needs. The discussion is about equity, ensuring that every child, no matter their background, benefits from the state's investments and initiatives. So we've invited Carlise King to lead this discussion today. Carlise, thank you so much for being here with us and for your leadership in this space. I will turn it over to you.

**Carlise King:**

Thank you for having me. I think I have some slides coming your way. Okay, great. Hold on one second. First slide. So just first, good morning. My name is Carlise King and I'm the executive director for the Early Childhood Data Collaborative at Child Trends. Just a little bit about Child Trends. We are a national research organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth, and families, and committed to applying a racial equity lens to our research as well as how we communicate our research. We conduct independent nonpartisan research and work closely with partners to apply research findings to both policy and practice. Myself as the director of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative, my work centers around improved coordination and use of early childhood data systems to inform policy.

I did want to share just as someone who grew up in Sacramento and was educated through California's UC and state college systems and has had the honor of working in the early childhood field for the last 24 years, I am excited for this opportunity to support this effort as well as the opportunity to speak with you today.

Our team in collaboration with WestEd has been facilitating the Whole Child Community Equity workgroup on behalf of the California Department of Social Services, which is collaborating with the California Department of Education around this work. This work is guided by AB-2832, the legislative framework that's driving our efforts.

So for today, I'm here to provide the council with an overview of the workgroup's goals, an update on our progress to date. We've had about three meetings as well as a timeline for our next steps. At the end of my presentation, I'll be sharing some reflection questions and welcome any questions or thoughts from you that you would have about the workgroup's effort and how it can be most helpful to the work that you guys are doing as well. Next slide.

So for my update today, I would first like to share a summary of the bill and explain how it is guiding our work. Next, I'll touch on the role of the workgroup and its actions to date. And I'll end with a high level summary of the workgroup meetings and development of final deliverables. You'll see from my update we're in the conceptual frame, but we definitely want you guys to know early the work that's happening and how you can get involved. Next slide.

So I'll start with an overview of the legislation and how it's guiding our work thus far. So one of the key steps in this effort has been the formation of the public workgroup, which has been convened to provide recommendations on the development of two resources that are outlined in the legislation. So first, the Whole Child Community Equity Framework, which will be a report outlining approaches to supporting the whole child. And then the second is the Whole Child Community Equity Tool. So first, with the framework, this will serve as a guiding foundation for development of the equity tool. The framework will help to conceptualize and understanding of California's youngest children by taking a whole child approach. And by that, currently our meeting, we're in the process of defining our vision statement around this, but really meaning not just their economic development, but also their social, emotional and physical needs, all within the context of their communities.

The framework is designed to have clear focus on equity with the goal that no matter their background, a child can benefit from investments. All children can benefit from state's investments, and initiatives. The second resource is the development of the Whole Child Community Equity Tool. This tool is being developed to help inform early childhood investments in California. Its purpose is to support decision makers and how best to allocate resources to reduce racial and economic inequities that impact children during their earliest years. By using this tool, the state aims to ensure that communities with the highest needs receive the appropriate support so that all children, regardless of race, income, or location, have access to the opportunities that they deserve. Together, the framework and the tool represent a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for California's youngest children. This collaboration between CDSS and CDE with the input from the public workgroup reflects the state's commitment to advancing racial as well as economic equity. Next slide.

In addition to the formation of the workgroup and the development of the framework and the tool, the legislation also outlines key categories regarding the scope and the use of the framework. So as I mentioned, the framework is intended to serve as a foundational guide outlining essential categories that need to be addressed to truly support children from a whole child perspective. When we talk about a whole child approach, we're talking about considering all aspects of a child's life, not just their education, but also their health, their safety, emotional well-being, and the environments in which they live and grow.

Some of the key categories that are identified for inclusion in the framework that were outlined in the legislation are listed here below, and I'm going to walk through a few of them. The first access to child care and give an example of what we mean by the category and the potential indicators that could be included. So first, access to child care. This category could include indicators such as children's enrollment in early learning settings within a community, broken down by race and ethnicity, as well as economic status. Its inclusion could be to understand whether and where children do and do not have supports they need to access affordable, quality child care services to support both children's development as well as family's needs.

Next, health and mental health services category is also part of the whole child approach because children need access to both physical and mental health care to thrive. In this instance an example, this would include preventative services, early interventions, as well as mental health and emotional well-being supports. An example of indicators within this category could be healthcare access. So indicators may include the number of hospitals, urgent care clinics, and primary care physicians per 100,000 residents and as well as the percentage of the population with health insurance within a community. So you'll see some are talking about resources in a community as well as thinking about need and demand for services. The purpose of these metrics would be to help identify areas where there are differences in health care access.

The remaining categories, I won't go through every single one of these. We took a couple of hours to do this during our last workgroup meeting. Include education referring to the school environment that supports the child's academic, social, emotional, and physical development. Supports to address childhood adversity and community safety. We know many children face significant challenges early in life from trauma or unsafe

living conditions. The framework will focus on creating systems that address these adversities and ensure children grow up safe and in nurturing environments. Economic well-being and stability for families is at the core of the framework as well as it impacts children's overall well-being. And ensuring families have access to resources that support financial stability is a key part of this whole child approach.

And then last is built environment, and this is the physical spaces where children live, learn and play. Safe, healthy and enriching environments such as parks and open spaces that can contribute to children's well-being. So you'll see in the initial legislation, there were a range of categories that were outlined that are starting as a foundation for the framework. Each of these categories was included as a starting point. In our first three meetings, our workgroup members have identified maternal and child health as well as environmental conditions, as categories that they would like to add to our definition for the whole child framework to be included in the final framework. Next slide.

In regard to the tool or data tool, the legislature indicates the equity tool should allow leaders to identify specific factors in communities that either support or hinder a child's development. These factors could range from access to child care and health services to economic stability and safe environments, as I discussed on the last slide. By examining these conditions closely, we can begin to see where children may be facing challenges that need targeted intervention. One of the most important aspects of the equity tool is that it'll provide data-driven insights across a range of categories. This means decision makers, whether at the state, regional or local levels will have information with a whole child lens to make decisions.

With access to this data, leaders can strategically direct resources and shape policies and ways that will have the greatest impact on reducing racial as well as economic inequities in their communities. In short, the Whole Child Community Equity Tool will provide a spotlight on community strengths and needs so that we're not guessing about where support is needed most. This will lead to more targeted investments, more effective policies, and ultimately better outcomes for children and families. Next slide.

A little bit more about the workgroup. In line with the legislative requirements, the workgroup was carefully composed to ensure we bring a wide range of perspectives and expertise. The aim was to ensure the framework tool were reflective of the needs and experiences of children, families, and communities across California. The workgroup includes representatives from key sectors that directly impact early childhood development, that includes child care providers, early childhood advocacy groups, early childhood researchers, those from education, family service and advocacy groups, ECE workforce organizations, and parents and families from historically underserved communities. You can see the list of the workgroup members on our workgroup website, which I'll provide more details about at the end of my presentation. By bringing together these diverse perspectives, our goal is to develop a framework and a tool that are informed by voices of those who know the field well and their communities well. Next slide.

So again, the workgroup has been also tasked with providing recommendations around the two goals. So as I mentioned before, first the development of the framework. The workgroup members will have already actually provided input on the essential categories needed to support the development and well-being of children from birth

through age 13 is the scope of the framework and how these categories can be used to create a comprehensive framework, that addresses all aspects of children's need with a strong emphasis on equity. Second, the workgroup will provide recommendations for the development of the equity tool. This includes identifying a set of common indicators aligned with the categories that I shared with you before. Mind you, these are all still in process and we just discussed the categories at our last meeting and are in the process of updating those. These indicators though, will serve important purposes in terms of the tool. In terms of identifying indicators that will help to assess community need by providing measurable data points that reflect where support might be needed most.

The tool will be used to help prioritize high need areas, ensuring that resources and investments are directed to communities facing the greatest challenges. Looking across all of these categories. And then finally, the indicators will enable decision makers to monitor progress over time, helping to track how well we're doing in reducing economic and racial disparities across communities within California and across the categories that are identified in the framework. So by identifying these common indicators and aligning them with the framework, the workgroup will develop an equity tool that is both data-driven and strategically focused on targeting inequities in communities that affect children's growth and development. Next slide.

So the workgroup has also been tasked with offering recommendations on potential uses of the equity tool. The goal is to ensure that the tool informs how resources are allocated and targeted to areas of the greatest need, as I mentioned before. For example, the workgroup has already discussed the importance of taking an asset-based approach to talking about community strengths as well as needs. The workgroup will also provide input on the final development of the framework and the equity tool. This includes not only refining both the framework and the tool, but also making recommendations on their practical applications before they're presented back to the legislature. Next slide.

So far we have held three workgroup meetings, and with the last one occurring on November 6, details of all the work is available on the workgroup website. To date, we've made progress the following progress with the workgroup members. First, we've made progress in a vision statement and definitions for whole child as well as equity. As I mentioned before, as part of the framework, these will be foundational concepts guiding our efforts. We have actively been exploring existing tools with different sets of indicators and community need indices such as the child opportunity index and the social vulnerability index, as well as California specific data tools. This work will help us to understand what data and measurement tools already are available, allowing us to build on existing knowledge and leveraging tools and learning from their processes as well. And we've had several presentations during our first two meetings about some of these national as well as state specific tools.

In addition to learning from other tools, the workgroup has been exploring indicator categories that will be used in both the framework and the tool that I shared earlier. These categories serve as the backbone for measuring key aspects of child development and community conditions. And our goal is to identify the most meaningful indicators to reflect the needs of children in their communities, particularly in terms of categories that can support reducing racial and economic disparities.

Lastly, we've been exploring in our last meeting in November, state administrative data that could be used to populate the equity tool. Identifying data that's already available through the state is really core to part of this effort as it allows us to utilize existing resources to develop a more efficient and comprehensive tool. This data will be key to ensuring that the equity tool provides actionable insights for decision makers. We of course need to consider the potential bias in existing data sources, and this will be part of the recommendations that are provided around any use inclusion of any type of data source and the use of the tool by our workgroup members. And then our steps are to gather information from our initial workgroup meetings to develop an initial draft of the framework that we are working on as we refine the scope moving forward. So next I'm going to talk a little bit about the timeline, and I promise give you guys an opportunity to reflect and ask some questions.

So this timeline provides a roadmap for the workforce activities and deliverables, which I haven't mentioned yet. We began in June discussing as I am with you guys, the legislative background and goals of the Whole Child Community Equity Framework and Tool. This was to set the foundation for our work and ensure everyone was aligned on the legislative framework that would be guiding the workgroup's effort. In August, we explored community indices and considered how they could inform the design of the framework. This allowed us, as I mentioned before, to leverage what already exists while identifying any gaps or opportunities for improvement based on what California specific needs are. And then in our recent meeting, we dove into defining the whole child community categories that I walked through with you and reviewed available California data that could be used in the framework.

That was our last meeting of the year. And the plan is that in February we'll outline our approach for measuring community needs. This will include identifying indicators and metrics for the current categories to help assess resource and service needs. By April, we'll provide recommendations on the development of both the framework and the tool. In this stage, it'll set the foundation really for the final products to come.

And then after, we would like to have the foundation and the framework really in place, as I mentioned, to inform the tool. In May, we'll hold meetings that'll be focused on the design and implementation of the actual data tool. And this will be an important step just in terms of making sure the tool is both practical and user-friendly. During the summer of 2025, we'll move into the actual tool development process and begin piloting the tool. This will allow us to get real world feedback and refine the tool before any broader implementation and sharing that. And then in September, we're going to reconvene the committee again to review feedback from our user testing and make any final adjustments to the tool. And then by October 2025, we will hold our final workgroup meeting where we'll complete the framework and tool and make any final changes. Between November and December, the plan is to submit the final report and the equity tool for review. I know that that's a lot. Next slide.

So thank you guys for listening through all that update. So I want to pause here and just to see if you have any questions. We've developed some reflection questions for your consideration. As I mentioned, we're three meetings into this process. So we would love to hear from you, one, about how, as we've laid out the goals of the legislation, could the Whole Child Community Equity Framework best represent the needs of children in

California? Two, are there specific outcomes that you would hope the framework and the screening tool could achieve? Three, how could the framework ensure a comprehensive approach, not only in terms of access, but also quality of early childhood resources? And then last, just how could we leverage the equity tool to inform budgeting and resource allocation needs? So I will pause there for questions.

**Karin Bloomer:**

And Carlise, this is Karin Bloomer. What I could do is maybe stop sharing my screen and drop these questions into the chat. And I'm hearing you invite just questions in general about this, and then of course, inviting this input to help inform your process. I'm going to stop sharing.

**Carlise King:**

Yes, and I don't know, Karin, I do want to make sure to be able to share the information about the website, the Listserv and all those things. So I know you're keeping track of time that we can just make sure to come back to that so folks know how they can continue if they want to see any of the meeting recordings or updates.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Absolutely. All right. I see Natali, who's physically in the room with us here, has her hand up for Carlise.

**Natali Gaxiola:**

Yes, it is a lot of information and so I really appreciate it. I'm still processing and digesting a lot of it, but as a practitioner in the field as a preschool teacher, and I just think of the whole child has always been the approach that I've known for over 20 years and meeting the needs of the children and that including their families and resources in the community. And being that I work with a community that it is very close-knit, and we do attempt to support children. I wonder if there's been thought about implementation processes that would be used as in, at least from my experience, and as we've been talking about the needs of those currently in the field and the difficulties and the challenges that we experience is in identifying and meeting the needs of children and making sure that equity is at the forefront.

How much of this has led to thought of the implementation process of how do we meet these needs without adding to plates that are already full in order to effectively meet the needs of these children and these families? So I just feel like there's a lot of talk about equity, there's a lot of talk about the whole child, but being realistic with the implementation process is concerning to me because I've seen a lot of efforts, people working in silos, but really discussing what are we going to add for these needs to be met and not add just another task onto a person that's already has a lot of things. So I don't know if that question makes sense or if it applies well enough that that's my question right now.

**Carlise King:**



No, absolutely. And as I mentioned, we haven't necessarily gotten to the part of talking about implementation, but part of the framework is recommended uses, talking about audiences, talking about supports. One of our initial conversations in the workgroup was about making sure that we're prioritizing actionable data and defining what we mean by that in terms of that there's a clear specific use. Because I think you're right. I think part of our work in leveraging existing tools is like how can we make sure that this is being tailored to be most useful to the field and really answering those key questions. And I think our goal in the user testing is that this would be more of a resource for users and hopefully not an additional burden. But there is going to need to be some overview and dissemination about the tool, how it was developed, it's purpose, and how somebody might go about using that. So I think it's helpful that you raise that now. Because I think as we get into more of those conversation about using the tools, this will be helpful information for the state to have.

**Natali Gaxiola:**

Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Carlise, I see Dean Tagawa's hand is next.

**Dean Tagawa:**

I Carlise, thank you for the presentation and all the background on it. I do have a couple of questions. It sounds very similar to, I'm going to say, LCFF in the idea of having some equity needs based index or something like that. I do have to agree. I think providers including us, even though we're a big LEA, it's a pretty full plate already. And I guess my concern is that if any of this data will ever be used and tied to funding, and the reason I say that is because a lot of the things that you spoke about for me make a lot of connections to LCFF, which is definitely tied to funding.

So as a provider, I do have some concerns about where areas where we know that we have people who have a need, but they may not be in a zip code that shows a high percentage of need, but a lot of families who either work in those communities or bring their children to those communities, even though that zip code may not look like a community of need, there are needs in those communities. So I do want to say that I like the idea of looking at it from an equity lens, but I do have some concerns about doing that.

And then the last piece I'll end with is, for providers to have to do anything similar to LCFF where we would have to write plans and different things like that. I think that's going to be a hard road for folks. So anyway, just a couple of thoughts as it moves on, but just keep those things in consideration.

**Carlise King:**

No, thank you, Dean. As of right now, that hasn't necessarily been discussed and it's not something that's explicitly listed in the legislation as a use of the tool, however, you make a good point. And I think just in terms of Child Trends and how we've provided recommendations around equitable uses of research and data. It is important to have

quantitative and tools like that being used in partnership with communities to really understand the data, it's kind of to your point, particularly around child care where it's very place based, industry based, community based. So we don't see the tool as an endpoint. We really see this as a starting point as communication with communities to really understand where community needs are and resources. And again, this will be something in terms of really key recommendations around the tool. And I really want to underscore that, that really how you use the tool is going to be really important and something that our workgroup is going to be providing framing and recommendations on as well as the public as we're building that out.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thanks, Carlise. I'll just note in that chat from Carol that she agrees with Dean's concerns and the implications they raise for achieving true equity. I see Donna Sneeringer's hand next.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

Thanks, Carlise. It's good to see you and am really excited about the work that is being done by this group and how it aligns with some of the work we've been doing locally. I am curious, and I don't know that this is a question for Carlise or for Jen and the team at DSS, but one of the things that's going to be necessary for us to achieve whole child and community equity is better coordination and collaboration amongst all the different services at the Department of Social Services, not just in the child care space.

And I think of things like mandated supporting, prevention through the Families First Prevention Services Act, universal basic income, food supports, and all of those comprehensive needs that families have, which would benefit from us looking at things more holistically instead of just what is child care doing to meet this? What is child welfare doing to meet this? And I am curious if there's any thought about how the department more broadly could be looking at some of these goals, not just in the child care space. Understanding the charge of the work you're doing is child care focused, but to really achieve this, the whole department is needed. And I'll just leave it at that.

**Carlise King:**

No, thank you, Donna. I cannot speak to the department, but in terms of the workgroup and the vision statement around whole child, the need for coordinated systems has been something that's built into that. Obviously the tool itself isn't going to necessarily do that, but it does cover multiple categories. And I think part of the framework is going to outline that approach in terms of, well, what conditions might need in place, in order to achieve this separately. And the coordinated system is something that the workgroup members have already brought up and asked to be a core part of how we talk about whole child services. Not just on the need or community side, but also how the state responds and coordinates those services and those investments.

**Karin Bloomer:**

I see, Andrea Fernandez Mendoza next.

**Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:**

Good morning. Thank you, Carlise. Fascinating information. A few thoughts here. Second and third, the concern around the implications for implementing this process. I also want to elevate the communication aspect, and I know several counties are working on different communication tools to be able to coordinate and collaborate services for children and families. I appreciated hearing that is a part of the workgroup's charge. So my wisdom would be to not reinvent the wheel, but work with those who are currently doing the work and tie that all in together. But my question is a data point.

In looking at the whole child and breaking down systemic racism, how are the children and families with varying needs being considered in the whole child picture? Because we all know there are typically developing children, and their families and their parents or those providing that role that do have those same different needs. How is that being factored into the research and the work that you're doing?

**Carlise King:**

Currently, the way that we've been talking about it within the workgroup, we haven't not had a discussion of specific groups. We have outlined and defined specific areas and groups of need, but I think we've talked about it in terms of disaggregating the data, but also not just looking at individual groups such as children that might have different developmental needs in isolation, as the comment earlier. It's like you're looking at over all services for each of those populations as a whole, not just through the lens of one particular category or indicator. So, again, we haven't gotten into these conversations, but it would be about how we're disaggregating and looking at the needs of different populations within a community, again, across all of the different categories.

So what we have done is shared different indices that exist where you can look and layer income access to resources, but then also hone in on specific populations such as children under five that may be experiencing homelessness or that live in households that earn less than the federal poverty level. So we've talked about it in that way that it's really important that the needs of specific populations are being layered and with examples from other tools with how we're looking at whole child, if that's helpful. But we'll definitely take down this note and share this back with the workgroup as we're building out the framework.

**Karin Bloomer:**

I see Janet Zamundio's hand next.

**Janet Zamundio:**

Yes, thank you. Good morning. My internet's a little unstable, so I hope it holds up, but this is definitely all exciting work. And thank you Carlise for the presentation. It was super helpful to understand the work that is in progress and what's going to take place in the near future. My question is just really trying to understand how the workgroup might take all the local efforts and funding that is in place by county and all the various things that are happening across the different counties to try and address the needs of children, families, and the workforce.

A specific example that just came through email that I wanted to bring up is Measure C, for example, in Alameda County with a community advisory council that is currently going through listening sessions starting in December on some of the various topics that you're bringing up where in these sessions with having the groups coming together, there'll be a lot of valuable information. I think it's somewhat aligned to your timeline as well, but that's a very specific example. But the question is really how well county level already funded local efforts frameworks be taken into consideration for the workgroups process?

**Carlise King:**

Janet, we are taking in all information that is available. So I mean, I think our goal is definitely to review existing frameworks and approaches to share and incorporate from the workgroup members as well as from public comment. So all examples that have been shared with us, we've been incorporating in, so welcome to see if you have them to share. We haven't gotten into conversations specifically around the community need indices and how that aligns to current local efforts. That's a planned conversation for our February meeting, but if there are key local areas that you think really align well, please, please share them.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Right. I see Deborah Corley Marzett's hand.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Yes. Thank you. Good morning, Carlise.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Hi, Deborah.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

First, I do have a two-part question if I can ask. So my first question, Carlise is that would you say that the state is really driven by data, that data is very important to the state and that it's very important, especially when it comes to children. So my second question or statement is that, has there been any conversation on how to get policymakers to accept this tool and also to put resources behind it to help support it? Thank you.

**Carlise King:**

Deborah, I cannot speak on behalf of the state, but in terms of efforts to have the legislature use the tool, this is work that has come through legislative guidance and so it's not required, and I think part of outlining and sharing it back to the legislators is to sort of share and encourage for that. I can bring this question back to the state in terms of if internally there have been efforts in conversations with the legislature about the use of the tool and get that back to the workgroup, if that's helpful.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Yes, thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

All right. Sonia, I see your hand.

**Sonia Jaramillo:**

So I posed the question in writing, but I want to make sure that I somehow get a general overview if there's not a clear answer. But you mentioned in one of the slides the looking at data available during the workgroups and I'm wondering about data sources you're looking at, also any systems you're being considered, how will this be monitored once it's implemented? And the question on training and professional development has already been asked, but it is like I'm also thinking about the whole child, but also the whole adult is systems in place to ensure we are being impactful in a positive way for our children and families.

**Carlise King:**

So, the data sources, we haven't identified specifically ones for the tools, but the ones that we have shared have been census data sources from different federal as well as state agencies. The tool, once it's completed, will be monitored and managed by the Department of Social Services after the workgroup has completed it. So I can bring back that question if they have any specifics on plans for updating and training around the tool. But I think in terms of our role in our process is that the framework would be providing information around the data sources that are being recommended. As I mentioned, any sort of limitations or cautions around its use as we're talking about recommendations for the tool, but it will be given to the Department of Social Services to manage in collaboration with their partners. But I don't know if there's folks on the call that wanted to answer or add.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Carlise, this is Karin Bloomer. Just also pointing back to the questions you had in your slide that I've dropped into the chat, just taking this opportunity for council members to be providing input to your process by answering any of these questions like I, for example, looking at number two, what specific equity outcomes do you hope this framework and screening tool will achieve for children ages zero to 13 as well as the other questions in there. I just want to underscore this is a good opportunity for the council to be voicing again, your hopes around this process, this framework, this tool. Yeah, Mayra, please go ahead.

**Mayra E. Alvarez:**

Hi, good morning everybody. I apologize that I was late. So Ms. King, I'm sorry I missed most of your presentation, but I'm familiar with the work that Child Trends is doing given our partnership with Catalyst and a number of organizations in the whole Child equity partnership. So thank you so much for your leadership and the incredible work that you all doing and the robust stakeholder engagement process that has played out. It's incredible.

I remember when this legislation was going through, just the wide breadth of areas that we want to be able to use this tool for. Obviously in the distribution of resources for early learning and education that was central to the discussion, but also in the areas of healthcare and mental health and general well-being beyond the early learning setting. And I'm curious, as you all have engaged in these conversations where there might be opportunities for learning or maybe even more opportunities for input from health providers, health centers and thinking through how this tool will apply for the distribution of resources in the health space, health and mental health space. Any thoughts to that point?

**Carlise King:**

Well, this was actually a question that came up during one of our workgroup meetings that we provided a follow-up response from the state, and I think that there we had mentioned also sharing this with folks in the health field and departments at CDSS, like in terms of that they're aware of the tool, how it could be used similar to where that we're sharing it with you guys as well, and also the potential to have folks on future workgroup calls, I think, was the other thing. I try not to do too much from memory. I might miss something, but I can share that also back that response about plans to engage those in the Department of Public Health or those that are focusing on health access as well.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much Carlise for leading this really important discussion and inviting all of this input from the council and thank you council members for your reflections and feedback to this work. Karin, I'll turn it back to you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you so much. Yeah. At this time as we wrap up this agenda item, we'll be opening up the chat feature again for the next five minutes to invite public comment on this most recent agenda item and we will move on to agenda item 3, Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update. I'll just note that Dr. Lupe, Jaime-Mileham is away and so we'll be turning to Jackie Barocio who's here in the room with us and I'll switch slide decks.

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

Hi everyone. My name is Jackie Barocio. I'm relatively new to the Department of Social Services. I'm a branch chief of the central operations branch and I'm really excited to be here with this group. I'll just be providing a quick update on the state's progress towards Rate and Quality Reform. Next slide. I think this is okay, there we go. So since the last ECPC meeting in July, the department has continued to make progress on the Alternative Methodology Process and Rate Reform. Over the summer, the department hosted a series of focus groups with center-based programs to gather additional feedback on the cost model. We convened two center focus groups comprised of center-based programs including both Title 22 private centers that participate in the Voucher program and Title 5 Child Care and Development and State Preschool programs. The focus groups were advisory in nature. Their purpose was to review the

rate element definitions for family child care providers that were adopted by the Joint Labor Management Committee and provide feedback on the applicability of these definitions for centers.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse me, Jackie. I'm just going to pause. I've just been told that some folks are having trouble hearing.

Is that right? I'll turn up the volume in here, see if this helps. Okay.

Maybe you can just speak up a bit more [inaudible 01:17:00].

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

I'll also speak up a bit more.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you.

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

In the course of these conversations, the department has also sought information to help inform our thinking about the selection points for certain rate elements. The focus group feedback was presented in detail at the September '24 Rate and Quality Advisory Panel meeting and the materials can be found on the Rate and Quality website, which we will post in the chat. On November 8, the administration for children and families approved California's 2025-2027 child care and development state plan, a huge accomplishment and milestone for everyone. As a reminder, the plan contains an update on the alternative methodology process and timeline, including a plan to set new rates using the alternative methodology by July 1, 2025, per the federal deadline. Because the alternative methodology process is still underway, some information, such as the new rates themselves are not yet reflected. The department will submit an update to the ACF by July 1, 2025, which will include new payment rates informed by the alternative methodology.

The plan is posted or will be posted shortly on the CCDF State Plan page on the CDSS website, and we'll just drop a link in the chat in terms of where you could find that information. Finally, we have been working with Child Trends, the national research firm that is developing an evaluation framework for Rate Reform itself. Thank you for those who have provided input and support throughout that process. We are looking forward to having a final draft of the evaluation plan by the end of the year and we'll be sharing it in future public meetings.

Next slide. Looking ahead, I just wanted to note a few key deadlines and dates. With the ACF approval of the state plan that occurred on November 8 that triggered a 90-day clock that is dictated by statute. Specifically State statute requires that within 60 days of ACF approval, the department submit an implementation plan to the legislature and the union. The report must include a plan to set rates by July 2025 and the estimated cost and timelines associated with the implementation of the single rate structure. The

department anticipates publishing that plan sometime in the winter, late winter of this year. It will be posted on the rate and quality website.

Additionally, with the approval that also triggered the start of state bargaining with the union, which in statute is within 60 days of ACF approval. And I just wanted to provide an update that the state and the union have agreed to begin these conversations in December. Rate setting will occur for non-CCPU or Child Care Provider United Union represented center-based programs through the state's fiscal year 2025-2026 budget development process that would occur concurrent with and informed by rate negotiations for family providers.

The federal deadline to set rates informed by the alternative methodology is July 1, 2025. Just a reminder rate setting is not the same as the implementation of new rates. Implementation will occur in fiscal year 2025- 2026, or as soon as possible after all necessary activities to prepare have taken place. The implementation report will discuss in more detail, these implementation activities that would be required, such as automation and other state workload impacts. Next slide.

Finally, just a brief reminder on ongoing opportunities for public input to the Rate Reform process. The next RQAP meeting is on December 11, and we are tracking that the ECPC will continue to meet quarterly in the new year. And finally, I also want to remind you of our email address for public comment on Rate Reform, which we will post in the chat right now.

Next slide. Okay, and this is the end of my very short presentation update. So really want to thank you all for your engagement today and I can pass it over to Karin for the next portion.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you so much Jackie. And I do want to pause here before we move on to the next agenda item to invite questions or comments. Deborah Corley Marzett, I see your hand.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Yes. Thank you. Can you go back? You mentioned something about Caltrans, correct?

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

No, maybe there was an audio issue, Deborah. I did not mention Caltrans.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Okay. What did you say? Cal something or that the state has to meet with someone.

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

Oh, are you referring to ACF? Maybe ACF, the Administration for Children's and Families.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**



I'm not sure. I'll come back to it, but I will say this. You also mentioned that there's a meeting with CCPU in December with the bargaining, correct? And you said that a report had to be in by January the 7 that they submit the implementation report to legislature and CCPU within 60 days of the ACF approval. And that's by January the 7, correct?

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

Yes.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Okay. So does that mean are you meeting more than one time with CCPU in order to submit this? How many meetings do you need to meet in order to get this submit it? Help me and the public understand.

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

So the statutory requirement is that we provide a copy of the implementation report to the legislature and CCPU within 60 days. After those 60 days, there will be a 30-day period to solicit feedback from both the legislature and CCPU. During that 30-day period, we'll definitely be in conversations of how do we receive that feedback and those discussions.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Okay, thank you for that, because we have to also remember, we know how important that the true cost of care and how important it's for providers, but we also have to remember that the providers who are here on these calls also need clear clarity of what's really being said in between the lines, because we all don't know what's really going on in between the lines because sometimes when we present or when things are presented to us, it's presented in a matter of policy as if we're policymakers and know all the regulations and everything in between. So if at times when everyone's presenting, break it down for us so we can have a clear understanding of what's really going on and being said behind closed doors. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you, Deborah. I see Robin Layton's hand next.

**Robin Layton:**

Thank you for that update. I just want to encourage and reiterate what was presented. I'm not only on this council, but I'm also on the Rate and Quality Advisory Panel. I just want to remind everybody in the public that we are in an advisory, so even with the focus groups and the panel we're advising, but that doesn't necessarily mean what that's going to end up in the report. So it's really, really important that the public attend those meetings. So she mentioned that the next meeting is in December. The other thing that I really want people to hear, even though it was said, but to hear this again, the reports and everything are due by January 1, 2025, but we won't see implementation or rate increases most likely for a whole year if we're lucky. So it's really

important this year and next to continue the advocacy and education with our legislators and electives and staff from both CDSS and Department of Education. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Donna Sneeringer, I see your hand.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

Hi. Thank you. I appreciate the update, Jackie. My one question is, is there a plan to engage with contractors around implementation as part of that implementation plan development? Depending on how the rates are structured and what changes we have to make, there'll be different implications for our computer systems, and we want to make sure we have as much information and input as possible so that there are no impacts on provider payments and that we're able to process things as quickly as we can.

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

Thanks Donna. I do want to reiterate that those focus groups that I discussed that occurred during the late summer and fall were helpful spaces where some of these issues were elevated and those were heard and received and we are tracking not only are there state system automation changes that we need to be considered, but we're also tracking at the contractor level, the local provider level, what are those reporting changes that would need to occur? And I would also reiterate that while this is the first implementation report statute, then also requires us to provide quarterly updates to those implementation reports.

So we will be providing in those reports updated information based off of the progress made throughout the Rate Reform process itself. Like you mentioned, Donna, there's certain components that at this time we don't know what the rate structure will be because it needs to go through collective bargaining process and the budget process itself. But these implementation reports hopefully will be that tracker where we could, as more information comes to light and details are fleshed out, we can then be responsive and provide insights on what does that then mean for implementation activities in those future updates.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Any other hands before we move on? Okay. Thank you, Jackie. So that concludes this agenda item. So we'll open up the chat feature for the next five minutes to take public comment on this most recent agenda item and we'll move to agenda Item four, the Child Care Transition Report. Karen Chang from DSS is with us to provide the update and then we'll invite Stephen Prophet's CDE update and then we will open it up for questions from the council.

**Karen Chang:**

Thank you so much. My name is Karen Chang. I'm the program quality improvement branch Chief. I'm going to be staying off camera because I'm joining everyone from new contractor training down in Southern California and the connection is not the greatest. I am excited to be here with you today to provide new information on our progress towards the objectives of the Child Care and Development Transition.

Next slide please. This brief presentation covers... Oh, sorry. This brief presentation covers information featured in our October quarterly report to the legislature, which has been published and we will drop a link in the chat to that presentation. During this webinar, we will also share news about automation efforts. Our department's first and middle of the Child Care and Development state fund plan to the administration of children and families, Rate Reform and quarterly updates and staffing and organizational enhancements that have been made since the transition. Again, thank you so much everyone for joining us.

Next slide please. For our automation updates, in July of 2021, CDSS launched the Brilliant Beginnings Initiative to support and improve upon the child care data landscape consisting of California supporting providers and reaching kids, also known as CalSPARK, Child Care Connect, and mychildcareplan.org. During this quarter, the department and its contracted vendor continued to work to complete Stage two of the project approval life cycle, also known as the PAL process. The primary focus of Stage two is to understand the needs of the new system and complete market research to understand available solutions in the marketplace. This quarter, the project executed vendor proof of concept demos. For Child Care Connect, we are supporting meeting the federal child care consumer education requirements and state mandates. The development, we completed stakeholder mapping and scoring workshops, which will support the development of the stakeholder engagement plan.

The department also began developing an organizational change management and communication plan for Child Care Connect. Lastly, for mychildcareplan.org, want to highlight that in our spring awareness marketing campaign, we reached over 1.9 million families. And with that back to school campaign, which concluded in early October, we really tried to capitalize on the busy time period for parents. Their routines are often changing as many parents and caretakers begin searching for school year child care options in their communities.

Next slide please. The Child Care and Development state plan, also known as CCDF on June 26, 2024, the California Department of Social Services, which is now the lead agency for the CCDF, submitted the Triennial '25-'27 CCDF State Plan to the administration of children and families. This was the first time CDSS had submitted the state plan since the transition. The department began working on the state plan in August of 2023, soliciting public feedback between August and March of 2024. On November 8, 2024, ACF approved the '25-'27 state plan. The '25-'27 state plan is effective August 1, 2024, to September 30, 2027. And all future changes to policy during this period will be submitted as amendments to the state plan. We are in the process of publishing that state plan to our CCDD website. Next slide please.

Rate Reform is one of the items that is covered in section 4 of the '25-'27 state plan, and it addresses equal access to care for families receiving child care subsidies. It contains a detailed summary of the alternative methodology process that California is

currently undertaking and provides a description of the remaining steps required to set rates based on the alternative methodology by July 1, 2025. Since ACF approval... We since receiving ACF approval to conduct an alternative methodology process in August of 2023, the department and its partners at Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies completed a detailed cost study and built a cost estimation tool informed by extensive data collection and input from all of our partners.

In March of this year, the Joint Labor Management Committee, also known as JLMC, approved definitions of the rate elements that will be part of our new single rate structure. The next steps in the process are to use the cost estimation model, to set rates and to implement the new rate structure. Rates for represented providers are determined through the collective bargaining agreement. Rate setting for nonrepresented center programs will occur through the state's '25-'26 budget development process, concurrent with and informed by rate negotiations with family child care providers. The state has every intention to continue to work with our provider partners to reach a successor agreement and to address the very concerns that providers are seeking to address. Federal guidance requires the rates be set-

Seeking to address. Federal guidance requires the rates be set and submitted to the administration of children and families, including a timeline for implementation no later than July 1 of 2025. Between May and August of 2024, the department and collaboration with the Department of Education hosted a series of focus groups with Title 22 and Title 5 center-based child care programs and state preschool programs. The purpose was to provide a forum for center-based child development and state preschool programs to give us feedback on the elements of the proposed single rate structure as defined within the JLMC. The JLMC includes representatives from the Child Care Provider United CCPU union, which represents family child care providers but not centers. The department summarized and reported out themes from the focus group sessions at the September rate and quality advisory panel. Focus group feedback will help to inform decision making as it relates to the proposed single rate structure and cost-based reimbursement rates.

Next slide, please. Lastly, our staffing and organizational enhancements. Since July 1 of 2021, the CCDD within CDSS has added 69.5 permanent positions. Budget change proposals were approved for additional staff to support the expansion of child care programs through the historic investments such as the infrastructure grant program, collective bargaining with CCPU, the preschool development grant, continued expansion for the general child care and development program and to right size several offices that were understaffed. Our most recent BCP approval provided CCDD with a third branch chief to oversee the administrative functions data, information technology, and fiscal services related to direct service child care contractors.

As of July 1, 2024, child development fiscal services, also known as CDFS section was transferred from the finance and accounting division within CDSS to the child care and development division as well as the program quality improvement branch will have a team dedicated to creating trainings for child care and development field. These 69.5 positions will ensure that the division is able to respond promptly to policy and fiscal inquiries and to serve in a more supportive role for the child care and development field and for the families and children we serve.

This concludes my short presentation. Want to open it up for any questions.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thanks, Karen. And I think that's a good idea. Maybe before we turn to Stephen, just pause here in case there's any pent-up questions or comments so you don't lose track of them before we move on to CDE's update. Any feedback for Karen? Questions? Janet Zamundio, I see your hand.

**Janet Zamundio:**

Yeah, thank you. Trying to go back to where I did have my questions, but my question is essentially around the infrastructure grant program. Karen, you mentioned right-sizing staff within the department, but it would be helpful to get an update on the infrastructure grant program and to understand how many applications and boards overall have been made. This information's not available on the website, it's not part of the report. What is the timeline or how is the department thinking about providing information or updates on that program?

**Karen Chang:**

Thank you for the question, Janet. The reference to the rightsizing was around our fiscal services. Can take that question back as a follow-up question or an action item from this meeting because I don't have that information with me right now.

**Janet Zamundio:**

Okay. And I guess the request is and look to the council members as well, just to have more information or data available with where we are with that program so that we can understand how that program's being leveraged, who it's helping, how much is being awarded, where, who's applying, not getting the grants. I mean just more information would be helpful to have overall.

**Karen Chang:**

Okay. And Janet, just so that I'm tracking correctly, you're asking then for high-level data around the number of grants awarded the amounts?

**Janet Zamundio:**

Not necessarily high-level data. That would be helpful, but also where in the state are we making the awards? Who's benefiting from that grant program? What are the trends with the program overall?

**Karen Chang:**

Okay, thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Any other questions for Karen before we move on to Stephen Propheter? Okay, thanks Karen. Stephen, I will get your slide deck up.

## **Stephen Propheter:**

Thank you so much Karin. So good morning everyone. My name is Stephen Propheter. I'm the director of the Early Education Division at the California Department of Education. I'm proudly joined this morning by Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez, the associate director for early education at CDE and the amazing Amira Elmallah from our policy office. Our vision, just to lay out some of the vision here and what we're going to be speaking to. So our vision is to increase access to mixed delivery UPK in which families have genuine access and a genuine choice of high quality programs, whether they be in a school, a community-based center or family child care home setting. And at the same time, we also acknowledge there's still a long way to go in terms of expanding family child care, home education networks across the state as well as supports for family child care homes to join a family child care home education network. We hear that many of you share this concern as well. And so also just wanted to note that it takes time and resources to achieve that vision.

And also, as part of our time here, I wanted to refresh ourselves on some of the recommendations that came out of the universal pre-kindergarten mixed delivery workgroup regarding pathways to join state preschool, family, child care, home education networks and what is required as well as what we are currently doing within existing resources to implement those. Some of these may sound familiar because we were back here, we were here with this body in June and presented on some of this so you won't see everything repeated, but you will see a few things called out in the slides. Next slide please.

So the workgroup itself developed over 100 recommendations in categories that included educator quality supports, child-centered learning environments, improving the administration and systems, quality improvement systems and data-driven improvement work, family engagement, inclusion, dual language learners and family child care, home education networks, including several recommendations to support increased access to UPK for family, child care home providers. So I want to emphasize that implementing these recommendations does take some time and resources.

Since the recommendations were submitted to the legislature in March of this year, we've been working on recommendations that we currently have resources to implement. So today I want to highlight what we've done within current resources as well as the opportunities to get us closer to meeting the three recommendations on this slide. So you see assessing the existing workforce development funding sources and recommend changes to ensure that funding can be used for preschool educators to earn college credits, supporting optional opportunities for family child care home providers to earn units towards child development permits and provide pathways for family child care homes to join state preschool program FCCHENs.

So we're also happy to say that since these recommendations were issued, we've already added an additional state preschool family child care home education network in LA County and we look forward to continuing to increase the number of FCCHENs across the state as more resources become available. Next slide.

So the recommendations to provide pathways for family child care home providers to join state preschool FCCHENs includes providing recommendations and technical assistance to a state preschool program contractors on how to offer services through a

FCCHEN, ensuring that state preschool contractors and applicants are aware of expansion funding opportunities and to provide services through a state preschool FCCHEN, working with early learning and care infrastructure partners to communicate opportunities to join a FCCHEN to family child care home providers and modifying the state preschool program quality rating improvement system block grant request for applications to include a stronger focus on family child care home education networks. We're going to reshare some of the information that we provided during the June presentation to the ECPC, as well as other information we hope is helpful. So Amira, will drop that here in the chat. Thank you, Amira.

**Karin Bloomer:**

And Stephen, this is Karin. I'm just going to note we've been notified that there's been some issues with the Spanish translation. It's being worked on. So just appreciate everyone's patience, hope to have that addressed immediately.

**Stephen Propheter:**

Great. As part of that, I often speak quickly. Is my pace okay?

**Karin Bloomer:**

Well, I'll be looking in the chat to see if you're being asked to slow down. It's always good to maybe speak a little slower than what feels normal to you.

**Stephen Propheter:**

Wonderful.

**Karin Bloomer:**

I heard the pace is great from our Spanish interpreter. You're doing great.

**Stephen Propheter:**

That's a win. All right, thank you. All right, let's go on to our next slide. One of the efforts that we think will help CDE kind of make some headway in this space is the Assembly Bill 51, which was passed and signed by the governor in September 2024, that if funded by the legislature would provide resources to address a number of the UPK mixed delivery workgroup recommendations that I just highlighted. So it would allow the Department of Education to, among other supports, provide technical assistance to prospective state preschool contractors on how to meet regulations, Title 5 requirements such as, and some of those things might include completing assessments using the desired results developmental profile and using results to tailor instruction, implementing a developmentally appropriate program that racially, culturally, and linguistically affirming, meeting staff, education and permitting requirements, serving children with disabilities in inclusive settings and implementing the classroom assessment scoring system and class environment.

And other things that would allow us to do is to develop early learning resources, including best practices, information on statutes and regulations, instructions for

application and more. It would allow us to also implement a three-year outreach capacity building training and technical assistance plan, including specific assistance for first-time state preschool contractors. And it would also provide support to create a website for more effective outreach and communication. While our ability to implement these supports is contingent upon appropriation, we are working within existing resources that have been allocated to implement mixed delivery workgroup recommendations. Okay, I see that I've been asked to pause.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Sorry, Stephen. We understand that the Spanish translation is still choppy in terms of being able to hear it, so if we could just pause.

**Stephen Propheter:**

Need to do it, yep. And I'm happy to repeat if that's helpful.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Okay. It looks like the Spanish trans interpreters are going to be switching roles and for perhaps a better audio. And I'll just let you know as soon as we get the green light.

Spanish interpreters, I'm going to speak here for a moment if that's helpful to see if the audio is doing better.

Okay, we're still standing by.

Okay, I'm hearing it's better than before. I'll just be looking for guidance on whether we should proceed. Okay. The Spanish interpreters are asking if we can try. So Stephen, I'm going to go ahead and let you know it's okay to proceed and I'll just keep my eyes out for any further instructions.

**Stephen Propheter:**

Okay, that sounds great. I appreciate the flags, and my Spanish-speaking proficiency isn't at quite the level where I could do both the slides in English and Spanish, so I appreciate our interpreters.

All right, I think the last slide I had here was on the UPK mixed delivery quality and or the mixed. It's the universal pre-kindergarten planning grant. Now for those that may not be just to maybe I guess ground ourselves in the grant, this is a grant that goes to locals. Each county and grantees are required to plan for the expansion of Universal Pre-Kindergarten. So those local bodies include family child care homes include LEAs, they include a number of different and community-based center settings as well. So a number of different, it's a pretty expansive list of representation in these local workgroups. And so as part of our administration of the grant itself, one of the ways that we are working to build out pathways, so looking at what the recommendations of the mixed delivery quality and access workgroup said and how we could support building out these pathways within existing resources.

And so we've looked at this UPK mixed delivery planning grant and the funding goes to local planning councils resource and referral agencies, multi-county consortiums or First Five County Commission. Those are grantees that are eligible. There is kind of a priority



order or succession if you will, within the county as far as who can apply for the funds, who receives the funds, but really this body, in addition to planning for Universal Pre-K, the funds really are also to help support relationship building between agencies and to go along with the expansion of UPK in each county.

So in June 2024 at the joint advisory committee's meeting, we shared requirements that providers must meet to join a state preschool FCCHEN such as operating a licensed family child care home, having a current and appropriate child development permit issued by the commission on teacher credentialing.

So, the third round of the grant includes new allowances that target supports for both family child care, home providers and community-based organizations that meet that last requirement through educational reimbursements for college tuition costs.

So in implementing this, recipients are prioritized in the following order so there's a prioritization of community programs to support, that these funds will go to support. So first is family child care homes who do not currently operate within state preschool contract and need the minimum early childhood education units to obtain the appropriate child development permit. That's one of those requirements of being part of the California State Preschool Program is you've got to have a child development permit. And so the next priority is state preschool teachers working at a community-based organization or a state preschool family child care home provider who need to reach the associate degree level. And then third priority is community-based organizations who do not have state preschool contracts and have staff who need to reach the minimum qualifications for state preschool.

So those are some updates that we are doing kind of again, like I said, within existing resources. And I think our last two slides here are QR codes for resources. This is California Educators Together. This is where we house a lot of the information. All of the UPK and auxiliary quality and access workgroup resources are on California Educators Together. Once you navigate to it, there's a find groups button on the website and you can search for UPK/P-3 to join the group. And then I think the next slide is yeah, another QR code, which this takes you to the California Universal Pre-K.org website. Includes resources to communicate about UPK programs, partners, families, and communities. That's it.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much, Stephen. I want to open it up and see if there are questions that folks have for Stephen.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Deborah Corley Marzett I see your hand. My apologies.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Oh, thank you. Good morning everyone. Well, you know what? I do have a question, and it just really fits perfect with the voices from the field because one I did not mention. So the question is exactly who is responsible for the providers who work with networks,

who's responsible to do the DRDPs, the providers or the network staff? Can you answer that for me? Because seen it, but can you answer that?

**Stephen Propheter:**

I think what we just, and frankly what we'll see in implementation may vary, but it's best for the child of the provider. [Inaudible] does the assessment, has kind of that information around the child. But I think we see it happen both contractor staff and providers in different situations.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Right, because I think the providers were under the impression as well as when I'm reading that the network staff is actually responsible to do those DRDPs and then where providers are saying that they're overwhelmed by doing those themselves because aren't the network staff supposed to be doing it? So that's something, again, a part of being transparent and clear to providers because there's a mixed message out there, Stephen, to providers about that. And it really has to be clear and followed what really should be done because providers, again, are feeling overwhelmed and an abuse of power if there's no transparency on who should really be doing this.

**Stephen Propheter:**

Just going back to the slides that we had presented. So I appreciate what you're saying, Deborah. I think we want to make sure the provider's involved in that DRDP assessment because they're working with the child every day and they are the ones providing that direct instruction and support for the child's development. So the FCCHEN contractor's responsibility is to ensure that a DRDP is completed for each child based upon observations of network staff so I'll just clarify that a little bit. We do want to make sure that the provider is involved in the assessment, but the contractor does have that requirement in consultation with the provider and parents.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Okay. Thank you very much for that.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Miren, I see your hand next.

**Miren Algorri:**

Thank you, Karin. Question. So we see that now LA County has a FCCHEN. I'm curious to know how many family child care provider programs are participating. And we know that we had another five counties, affluent counties by the way, participating. How many family child care programs are participating in the LA county FCCHEN and which other counties out of the 58 counties and we still have 52 that are not participating, which ones are going to be participating in the near future? Thank you.

**Stephen Propheter:**

Definitely hear that, Miren and I think we're up to six contractors total across the state. So we're growing, it's baby steps, but we'll be updating our information to include the providers that are in that network.

**Miren Algorri:**

Which counties should be anticipating that are going to be participating in the near future?

**Stephen Propheter:**

I don't know that that's something that we can predict at the moment. Expansion may happen one of a couple of ways. One, if the CDE, if the legislature provides expansion funding for the California State Preschool Program, which hasn't happened for a few years, that's one way that we could expand FCCHENs. And another way is if an existing contractor chooses to adjust their service delivery model. So instead of operating centers working with family child care homes as part of a network, that's where we've seen a couple recently some shifts in programs rather than say through the expansion route recently.

**Miren Algorri:**

Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Robin Layton, I see your hand.

**Robin Layton:**

Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Stephen for this update. I think it's great that there's going to be an opportunity to expand the networks. As a Title 5 CSPP center-based program, the way I like to think about these networks is, and we're not a family child care home network, but we have schools that are, some of them have five classrooms, some have six classrooms, some have one classroom. So even the one classroom, which the way I understand these networks is that a family child care home could then look like maybe my one classroom school, which has to have licensing, a director, a teacher, but the overall contractor, our staff actually support that one classroom school. So that is a way that I think about that. So this could be a way to expand CSPP classrooms throughout the county because it's very challenging and very expensive to open up one classroom, two classroom, three classroom schools or centers. So I'm looking forward to seeing this expansion in San Diego County and I do not even know if we have any family child care home network in San Diego County. Does anybody know that?

**Stephen Propheter:**

I don't believe San Diego County is one that has a state preschool FCCHEN yet.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Donna Sneeringer.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

Thank you. I am curious Stephen; I know that the focus has really been on the FCCHENs that are through the CSPP contract. However, the Title 5, CCTR and FCCHEN contracts have to meet the same requirements. Are they being included in this plan? The contracts that go through DSS for FCCHENs?

**Stephen Prophter:**

The plans. Okay, so just a distinction and you know, Donna that CDE's kind of administration in this space kind of extends to the California State Preschool Program. We collaborate with CDSS including sharing information. So I couldn't speak to CDSS or their plans.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

So I guess my concern as a FCCHEN administrator for many, many years, we've already got so many varied rules and so many varied requirements and there have been multiple attempts to do alignment so that there's consistency across FCCHENs. And I feel like if you're setting up rules only for CDE FCCHENs, we're adding another layer of different rules and complexities outside of what's already there. We already don't compensate the providers at the higher requirement level. We at CCRC, we administer a FCCHEN contract that's run with an RMR model and one that's run with the CCTR model. And we bent over backwards to make sure we could continue to pay the providers at the RMR level, but a lot of contractors don't. So we're asking these folks to meet higher standards with different rules and different requirements for what the expectation is for the provider and for the contractor.

And we just keep making it more complex and more confusing. And now we are going to add this UPK layer, and I'm just sort of at my wits end, I will be honest with you about what to do about this because I do think we have to engage family, child care providers in this delivery system, but we've got to do it consistently and we need to compensate them for what we're asking them to do. I don't know that it's a question other than I'm just frustrated around the just continued layering of complexity in this FCCHEN system that providers don't understand, contractors barely understand and different rules coming from two different state agencies. It's just, it's really difficult.

**Stephen Prophter:**

I understand your question a little bit better now, Donna so thanks for that additional. As I recall at the transition, there's statute that both CDSS has for FCCHENs and their statute that CDE has for FCCHENs. My recall is that language is pretty identical across both. So in terms of the, and I think what you're calling out is a requirement around, say, meeting some of those requirements in statute. There's a lot of that. I think that's kind of part of the rate, the efforts to pay for the cost of care. And so we know there's a body, we got an update from the body earlier, so we know that there's a body that's working on getting at that.

**Donna Sneeringer:**

And the rate is part of it but it's also what Deborah brought up earlier around the DRDP. There is not consistency from FCCHEN contractor to FCCHEN contractor about who is responsible for which piece. So I know in my program we lead the DRDP in consultation with the provider. However, I know there are other contractors who make the provider do the whole thing. We don't have consistency, and we just keep layering more and more without tightening up the foundation so that it's consistent and that if a provider agrees to join a network, they know what they're getting into. And we have providers in our service area who are in our FCCHEN and another FCCHEN and they're dealing with completely different rules.

So as we look at, I just worry when we only look at UPK or we only look at one piece of the system and we're not looking at the reality that the implementers are dealing with and that the providers are dealing with, which are different rules, different standards and lack of communication across the system. Because to us when you say FCCHEN, we think it's all of them, not just one. And so I really encourage the state agencies to put their heads together and think about these things more comprehensively.

**Karin Bloomer:**

I see Tonia McMillan and then Miren Algorri.

**Jacqueline Barocio:**

And then maybe before we move on from this point, Donna, completely acknowledge your comments about the frustration and having similar models adhere to different rules. I know you said it's beyond compensation, it's beyond the rates. But I do want to emphasize that a part of the new single rate structure conversations at least is one, an attempt to capture those cost differences when there are requirement differences, but then also acknowledging that with a single rate structure, emphasizing that single part, there is at least that component of looking at standardization across similar models from that payment perspective. Acknowledge your comments are beyond payment and are talking about also program requirements, and we'll take that back, but appreciate that comment, Donna.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you. Tonia.

**Tonia McMillian:**

Okay. Yeah, I appreciate your comment too, Donna. And I have to point out how this lends itself to racism in our system. Immediately my brain started thinking about what Black folks had to go through to vote and the tests that were put in front of them, those challenging tests that could never be accomplished. The extra layers that were added.

You guys, we got to make sure that we don't put forth something that clearly appears as if it is good for one group and intentionally not good for another group. And that is how it is coming across to me. And if I'm thinking this, I know I cannot be the only one who is thinking this, but not only am I thinking this, I'm feeling some kind of way right now, and not in a good way. So yeah, I've always said that there is an underbelly of racism in this

system designed to do exactly what it is doing. And in my opinion, some of this conversation is validating it. So yeah, I needed to share that.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you, Tonia. Miren, I see your hand next.

**Miren Algorri:**

Thank you, Tonia, and thank you Donna. As a family child [inaudible] with two agencies which are FCCHEN in San Diego, I can only attest to what Donna expressed, the inconsistency and how that hinders the work that we're doing. We have one FCCHEN that is very consistent, and they have a staff member come out and do observations and we always send communication, anecdotal records, pictures for documentation of these observations. And then we have another one that even if we send the anecdotal records and we send the pictures and sample activities, pretty much they tell me that that's got to wait. They're not working on it. We understand that for DRDPs, it's not that you sit one day, and you observe the child and that's the anecdotal records that you need or the pictures or the samples that are required.

This is the progress throughout time. But when they need to meet their requirements, then my life has to come to a halt and then I need to meet their requirements. And it may be one day they tell me they're coming out and they need to gather all this information, which is very not only stressful, but it's also hindering for our programs because we cannot just one day sit down and dedicate all this time to something that we have been doing progressively throughout the months. So there's that inconsistency that Donna just mentioned.

How is it that these agencies, these sponsors, whichever the term is, is working in this manner, in this this fashion with the providers, and then this other one is doing something totally different that is causing so much stress and it's causing for us to have to do all this work that we have been doing throughout the month, in one day, in one sitting, or at the end of the month or at the end of the week when we have other things to do that have been planned accordingly. So I just wanted to share, and I really appreciate you, Donna, bringing this up because it causes a lot of stress on the workforce and on the relationships between us working directly with the children and the agencies. And there should be something across the board where everyone should be submitting this information accordingly and working with dates, which we're supposed to be following, and everyone's sticking to those dates, so no one gets stressed out and we don't have to come up with all this information at the last minute. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Andrea, I see your hand next.

**Andrea Fernandez Mendoza:**

Yes, and thank you Stephen. It's always good to hear from you. One of the things that I just wanted to highlight is going back to funding. The Department of Finance put out their finance bulletin stating that '24, '25 revenues are going to be 5.3 billion over their October forecast, and it really means we're going to have to advocate around putting

some of that into funding for the CSPP family fees or getting those family fees waived again, because it's not true access for all families and parental choice if some families have to pay a fee.

They can go to UPK or TK and it's free, but for center-based programs and family child care homes, if they're subsidized under CSPP or a funding source, they would have a family fee tied to their services. So creating true equity, breaking down those barriers will include making sure that we're getting either those family fees waived for the families or some type of funding to supplement them, because families are not going to have true choice and it's going to hurt family child care providers and center-based providers, because they're not going to come to our programs if they have to pay a fee, they're going to go where it's free. And that's not true parental choice and access. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thanks Andrea. Kay, I see your hand.

**Kay Ruhstaller:**

Yes, good morning. Just on the point of the CCTR versus the CSPP FCCHEs, I just wanted to make sure my concern in San Joaquin County is that our providers in those CCTR contracts aren't somehow viewed differently locally in the UPK system and that they don't get left behind because they're not part of a CSPP contract. And so that's why I think making sure that it's very, very clear that the standards are the same and they're meeting the same quality measures. So we just don't want to see them shut out of UPK by local contractors or LEAs, if that makes sense.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thanks, Kay. I saw lots of nods. Robin, I see your hand.

**Robin Layton:**

Yeah, I know this conversation is about the family child care home networks, but when Miren was talking about the inequities and the issues within the networks, and actually everybody has been bringing that up. I just want to point out that in our center-based world, in the Title 5 world, we have the same issues. Every contractor, whether they're a non-profit or a for-profit, people may not even know there are for-profit centers out there. We're a non-profit, that they're all set up differently, they look different, and they're treated differently by licensing, by CDSS reviewers, by CDE reviewers.

So all of those inequities that we're talking about today is not just family child care homes and family child care home networks. It's happening across the board with all contractors. And those are issues that I think we should definitely be talking about, and again, just remind all of us that... Also, not just center-based, we're on school district property too, and some have to be licensed, some don't. So the whole system is about who we're all serving, and we're all serving babies up to age four and five, whether or not they stay with us or go to TK. They're all children. They should all be treated equally and our staff should be treated equally whether or not the staff are in a family child care home or in my centers or a school district. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Deborah Corley Marzett. I see your hand.

**Deborah Corley Marzett:**

Yes, thank you again. And I guess I just want to end by actually saying that it sounds like to me that CDE needs to meet directly with network providers and the network contractors as soon as possible for truth and actions. That's what's expected of each other. The providers have concerns, and this is just one, just the top of it. So CDE and my hope is that you take this information or these concerns that are coming out and meet with the providers who work in those networks directly, find out what's really going on, so we can have some clarity and some fairness and deal with the systemic racism that's still out there. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thanks, Deborah.

**Stephen Propeter:**

Yeah. Oh, sorry. I was just going to just say, just appreciate what everyone has shared. I know that part of our vision with expanding FCCHEs and thinking about relationship between providers, contractors, who does what, what we're hearing is there's a need for some clarity and we'll build out what we've started, what we've done, because we know that if we want to expand family child care homes in CSPP, that that communication is essential.

We also want to make sure that in thinking about responsibilities for providers versus contractors, because noting the point that I think Donna, you made earlier around differences in implementation, and we can only speak again to our state preschool programs, but a provider shouldn't feel like they hit the jackpot by working with a contractor who is supporting the provider. We want that kind of consistency across. So that's part of the driving force here.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much, Stephen. Thank you all for the robust discussion on this topic. And I also want to appreciate CDE for adding this topic. I know that it came up in the October advisory committee meeting, and so the opening up of the discussion was in response to those concerns that were raised and the desire to have this conversation. So appreciate that responsiveness, and I think I will turn it back to you, Karin, for our final period of public comment.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you so much, Director Troia. It is now time for general public comment, and so we will be opening up the chat feature for written public comment and also taking verbal public comment at this time. If you'd like to make verbal public comment, please look for the raise hand feature at the bottom of your Zoom screen or the bottom of your participant panel, and please raise your virtual hand. We will take comments for the next



30 minutes, if there are enough to do so. We ask that those making verbal public comment, please keep their comments to two minutes or less. I'll give you a gentle reminder as you are hitting up against that time. Please also appreciate this is one way communication, public testimony to the counsel. All right, at this time I see a hand from Florita Ruiz. You've been unmuted on our end. Please unmute and go ahead.

**Florita Ruiz:**

Hi, my name is Florita Ruiz and I'm speaking on behalf for all my sisters that work with networks. I am one of the providers that I've been working with doing a lot of DRDPs. I am actually enrolled. I'm doing the DRDPs, and I do notice it has been very overwhelmed. I would love if in the state or anyone that regulates this information can come randomly to different providers, because I know some programs when the state has to go and check their providers, the directors from these programs get certain amount of providers who they feel comfortable, and they don't understand why they go to the same providers.

If they go randomly to different providers, they will know the truth. I'm speaking from the heart. I'm so tired. Really, I have to work with 14 children, and out of the 14 children, can you believe I had to make 32 observations for each child? When do I have time to eat? When do I have time to go to the doctor? With all these new regulations that licensing wants to put on us, what else should we do? I am open 7:00 to 5:00. My networks, the centers are open 8:00 to 3:30. We provide quality care, we go way and beyond. Please hear our voices. Please respond back. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you, Ms. Ruiz. Next, Tessie Ragan. We will unmute you. Please unmute on your end.

**Tessie Ragan:**

Hello, my name is Tessie Ragan, and I just wanted to say that one of the issues that I have found is that the FCCHEN recommendation was unfair and inequitable to begin with. Equity without access is inequity no matter what. When I don't have the ability to provide TK or UPK to my community after I have the education and the background to do so, and the way that you have said that we'll be able to participate in the system is that I have to be with a FCCHEN that is not in the area, you have created another barrier that there was already barriers in place for family child care to be a part of the program.

Not only that, it prevents parents from actually using continuity of care, which is research and data backed. Every time a child has to switch an educator or a program, we are making it hard for them to actually form healthy attachments. And as a military person, veteran and family member, I'm telling you right now, making it so that we have to constantly have our children switch people when you're already moving from place to place is not an actual good practice for early education. Early education and care cannot be separated and the way the program is being run is doing just that.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you so much. Next we'll turn to Samantha Thompson, please unmute on your end.

**Samantha Thompson:**

Good morning, Samantha Thompson with Black Californians United for Early Care and Education. And I just want to uplift all of the members' comments and candor around this topic. A couple of things that stand out to me that I think are worth elevating, particularly around this discussion around DRDP and any assessment tool. And I'm not even going to go down the road of who designed the tools and how the tools were designed and all of that. But really going to ask us to center the fidelity of the tool with the understanding of the purpose for which the tools are being implemented to benefit. And we're talking about children.

And so what concerns me is if we have folks that are conducting observations that are not adequately trained on the tool or are not implementing the tool to fidelity because they're not the individuals with the children on a regular basis, that is again, an issue of this equity conversation in terms of training and access to training and all of that. It also is concerning to me around the messaging. One of the members talked about the messaging in local communities of certain types of programs versus other types of programs.

Again, that is particularly concerning when parents are having to make really hard choices in today's climate. And lastly, I do want to acknowledge I've worked in this industry across systems for almost 20 years, and I think it's worth reminding ourselves that as much as the system is doing what it's designed to do, we've never been in a space to have these kinds of conversations. And that is something really important for us to realize. I know folks are coming with a lot of emotion, and rightly so, but we are in a place where we're actually having conversation to make change, to influence change, and to contribute to outcomes that improve the quality of life for California's children and the families and the workforce. And so I just don't want us to lose sight of that today. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you. Verlinda Walker, please go ahead and unmute on your end.

**Verlinda Walker:**

Hello everyone. I'm glad to be here. I've been a provider throughout LA County for a while, family child care as a substitute and everything. For the FCCHEN program, one, I think it needs to be transparent. Two, the staffing needs to be more knowledgeable, not only just in what is required by the state, but also through licensing regulations for FCCs. Yes, we do do the DRDPs, the ASQs, some of us even enroll the children into the programs.

Now you're taking out the administrative costs because they saying that they're doing it, but a lot of us do that. That's in order for us to get the kids. Because of the children and families that we get in our program does not qualify for the R and R program because they're undocumented or don't have papers or are stay at home moms and things and

are trying to get established. So the process is totally different, and it takes a team to get these families here.

But then, and again, these children that you're asking us to do the ASQs, the DRDPs, and when they need assessments or they need further assistance, the agency, I'm assuming that you guys are paying them for the administrators to have these resources of the counselors, the therapists and so on. Not to sit here and tell the provider or the parent to call 211 for them to get the child more services in the special needs what they need services in. Also, it just needs to be revamped. The whole veteran program, they're not on the same page. They have different holidays. The 10 holidays that is allowed through the state of the United States, they're telling providers what holidays they could take off and what holidays they can't. So that needs to be addressed.

And then like I said, the classrooms and everything, they come in. Majority of the time, they don't do observation. They're conversating with the provider and not spending time with the children. And that needs to be... where they're supposed to be with the children as the providers sitting in the classroom and watching them so they can get those observations. But we're doing everything. We're taking the pictures, we're submitting them, and then they come up and they write up something really quick and then we do parent conferences. And majority of time, their notes and their information are not the same. So again, somehow it needs to be revamped, transparent and teamwork and all those other things. Thank you for allowing me to talk.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you, Ms. Walker. Marcella Graves, please go ahead and unmute on your end.

**Marcella Graves:**

Yes, hi. Good afternoon. Can everyone hear me?

**Karin Bloomer:**

Yes.

**Marcella Graves:**

Okay, great. Yes, my name is Marcella Graves. I've been a provider for many years. I said this before, I'm going to say it again. I've always said it needs to be restructured, the system revamped. And also there is a lot of systemic racism in this system, and things need to be addressed and things need to be changed. Thank you so much.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you. Usario de Zoom. Please go ahead and unmute on your end.

**Usario Cesarone – Spanish interpretation:**

Yes, good morning. My name is Usario Cesarone. I am here because I consider that we as providers are every day preparing ourselves a little bit to give better services, not just taking care of the children, but also equality. But we are also preparing ourselves so that they can, when they go to kinder, have all of the tools that they need. Regardless, I

consider that the pay that you're giving is not enough. It would be just that you would take us into account in this sense. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Gracias. Dion Aaroner, we're unmuting you on our end. Please go ahead.

**Dion Aaroner:**

Hi, can you hear me now?

**Karin Bloomer:**

Yes.

**Dion Aaroner:**

Oh, great. Thanks so much everybody. I just want to... The issue of FCCHENs, there's nothing new here. We've been having this discussion. I can see Donna shaking your head and lots of you. There's nothing new here in this discussion. That's what's so sad is that for the last, I think at least 10 years, if maybe even longer, the field has been asking whoever the responsible parties are to do something about the foundational issues of FCCHENs. Legislations has been introduced. It has never gone anywhere. I think probably mostly because there's been an opposition from whoever the administration was at that time that didn't want to deal with it. And here we go again, where in particular with the discussion with CDE is that they want to make changes to the program and all of that without dealing with the foundational issues.

If you don't deal with the foundational issues, all you're doing is creating more discrepancies, more differentiation, as you've heard between the two departments in how they view this program. And providers are not going to be willing to participate. They can't participate in something they don't understand. They can't participate in something that doesn't reimburse them appropriately. Most importantly, they can't participate in something that they don't see themselves as being treated fairly.

Fairness is a huge issue for humankind in general. But in particular here, when they know that there are discrepancies and differentiations between programs, because departments aren't working together, it's really hard for them to then understand why they should participate in something that is just setting them up for failure. And so until you deal with the foundational issues, from many provider's perspective, all of this work that you're doing, while it sounds lovely, doesn't deal with the problems that they face with FCCHENs. And you're hearing it, but you haven't heard one comment yet that says, "Everything's working great, and thank you for doing all of this work." I wonder why that is. It's because the foundations for this program have not been clarified, have not been fixed. And until they are, you're not going to have a positive response from the field. Thank you.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you. Seeing no more hands. I'll turn it back to Director Troia.

**Jen Troia:**

Thank you so much. Thank you for the public comment and testimony. And I want to thank our guests for joining us today and the council and committee members, thank you for your comments and reflections throughout the meeting and for the collaborative spirit and passion that you all bring to this incredibly important work. So I thank you all. And with that, we will adjourn our meeting for today.

**Karin Bloomer:**

Thank you.

ENDS [02:35:10]