



Early Childhood Policy Council Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees

Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome
- Review of agenda
- Conduct check-in with Committee members

2. Creating Safe Spaces in Early Childhood Education for Children in Immigrant Families

- Presentation
 - Liza Davis, Advocacy Director, Children in Immigrant Families, The Children's Partnership
- Committee discussion

3. General Public Comment

4. Adjourn

Attendance:

Parent Advisory Committee Members: Mary Ignatius, Lissete Frausto, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Patricia Lozano, Patrick MacFarlane, Yenni Rivera, Cheryl Schroeder

Workforce Advisory Committee: Tonia McMillian, Patricia Alexander, Miren Algorri, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Virginia Eigen, Amelia Soto, Latonda Williams, Zoila Toma

Early Childhood Policy Council Members: Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Mary Ann Hansen, Socorro Martin, Miren Algorri, Mary Ignatius, Tonia McMillian

Guest Speakers: Liza Davis

Summary Report:

Welcome and Introduction:

Tonia McMillian and **Mary Ignatius**, Chairs of the Workforce Advisory Committee (WAC) and Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), respectively, thanked members of both advisory committees, the Early Childhood Policy Council, and the public for their attendance.

Ignatius acknowledged the current challenges and grim realities facing families and child care providers due to wildfires in Southern California and federal immigration policies and shared that the day's meeting would consist of a listening session for members of the advisory committees to share their concerns for the early childhood education (ECE) space followed by a presentation on creating safe spaces in child care settings for children of immigrant families.

Check-in with Committee Members

The full text of the Joint Parent & Workforce Advisory Committees listening session is recorded on pages 4–11 of the [WAC/PAC March 26 meeting transcript](#). The themes that emerged and items shared from the PAC and WAC members' discussion included the following:

Sharing Concerns and Challenges

There is chaos in people's lives and business operations due to the toll of wildfires on countless families and child care homes and centers. This creates an increase in demand for subsidies and services that is compounded by operational unclarity in the face of federal executive orders, changes to immigration policies affecting access to funds, and service provider disruptions. All this contributes to an intensely stressful, volatile atmosphere.

Possible Solutions:

- Keep open communication with staff.
- Endeavor to adapt to uncertainty.
- Cultivate self-education, awareness, and community empathy.

Select Comments:

"I have a lot of staff members that every week I have to send emails reassuring them that we're continuing to work until we don't. ... I keep reminding them, let's turn our attention back to the kids because that's really who needs us for our Head Start and our child care development program. We need providers to make sure that they know that they're going to get paid. So, we have switched around how we do business to get our payments out faster ... we are trying to work within whatever's thrown at us."

“We had to deal with the fires right here in South LA, so we had to pause our homeless count, which again is connected to our funding. Our main concern ... we were already falling short in the county before the fires even started and before the new [federal] policy started ... originally we had about 55,000 homeless children that were identified in the education system just for LA County ... before the administration and before the fires. So, knowing that the fires then occurred and more people have been displaced, more families are now falling into poverty. ... It’s not just the homeowners, but a lot of employment has been affected. A lot of parents who were relying to go to work to put the children in Early Head Start and Head Start ... Give it about a year, but the number’s going to rise. More children, they’re going to need support.”

“And like my previous person, colleague mentioned, the definition trying to navigate. That’s been another challenge, trying to navigate how to keep DV services, how to keep DI services in order to still be able to serve our community, who’s always being redlined into certain zip codes in order to be able to have subsidies. So we have been trying, and if anybody knows how to cleverly do that, how to change wording so that it doesn’t fall into what’s not allowed in order to be able to still serve as those in our community. That would be great if you can share.”

“[California is] ... the fifth-largest economy in the world. And we are who we are for the simple reason that we are made of immigrants, that immigrants are innovators, that they work in Silicon Valley, their labor and culture, the construction workers, caregiver, educators. We are small [business] owners. We are everything in our state. And, because of that reason, there’s no state in the country that has been able to do what we do. ... In this time and age, we shouldn’t be discussing this kind of situation. We shouldn’t be worried about how we’re making our children be worried about coming to learn because the uncertainty, if they come home and they don’t find their parents or worry about that immigration is going to enter their schools. ... As an immigrant myself, it’s so devastating. ... Family child care educators, we work so hard in creating this home-like environment where children can learn to be kind with one another. When we want to work with multicultural and teaching multi-languages and build this because we them to be decent human beings.”

Expressions of Fear and Uncertainty

Family child care providers want to support children and families through difficult times but are unable to shoulder the needs by themselves. They are also under continuing circumstantial duress affecting both themselves and their staff. Apprehension from real and perceived possibilities of family separation is being expressed in adults and children, affecting their behaviors and hindering day-to-day decision-making around attending school or seeking medical or evacuation center assistance. There are

concerns about reactions to immigration enforcement policies resulting in a potential loss of candidates for the future workforce in the ECE field.

Possible Solutions:

- Stabilize the ECE workforce by implementing rate reform and significant financial compensation.
- Incorporate trauma-informed approaches to care.
- Actively engage in advocacy work to ensure continued support and resources for families and communities.

Select Comments:

“The recent executive orders are profoundly affecting the well-being of parents, especially in families with mixed immigration status. We’re witnessing parents who live in constant fear of separation from their children and loved ones. These fear(s) [manifest in daily] decisions, whether to attend child care, whether to attend school events, whether they should seek out medical care or even go to work. ... And our children are experiencing this trauma too as they worry about their friends not returning to school or their own parents being taken while they’re in our classrooms. And this a conversation that has been held while I’m driving my school age students back to my home. ... Why is a 6-year-old having to have these conversations? ... Early childhood educators and staff are often from the very communities experiencing these challenges. ... Now with the Southern California wildfires ... insurance costs have skyrocketed. And these creates yet another layer of financial uncertainty for families and for providers who are already struggling with economic uncertainty.”

“Fair, reliable compensation acknowledges the [essential] nature of the work and the help that is needed to retain qualified professionals. Family child care providers are closing their doors. Family, friend, and neighbor (FFNs) cannot continue. [Providers] cannot continue to subsidize the subsidy system.”

“I want to make sure that all parents know that they have a voice and that they have a right, and they can continue advocating for their child and collaborating with every space that their child is in, because that’s how children thrive. Children thrive when adults are interacting with other adults, come together to build a plan for them for their future.”

“I think that the worst thing that’s happening is that people are afraid to register for school, to do their FAFSAs, their free financial aid. ... I do think we have to have a thought around the community college because that’s where we’re educating our ECE workforce and your child care personnel. And we’re closing the door [on that].”

Resilience and Advocacy

ECE educators stay focused on children's needs amid turbulent times, highlighting the vital role of early educators and the need to provide fair compensation and respect. Given the multiplicity of challenges facing the field and its constituencies, it is important to recognize the need for remedies that address the spectrum of ECE providers.

Possible Solutions:

- Provide more recognition of immigrants' contributions to California's economy and society, urging a shift from fear to positivity.
- Include home-based providers when remedying limitations on access to resources and lack of protections.
- Proactively seek mutual peer support and connection.

Select Comments:

"The problem with [Assembly Bill] AB 49 for me is that home-based educators we're not included to be protected. If you're going to protect the children from [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], you have to protect all the children and all the educator programs."

"It is a new world that we're living in, but it's good that we're in community and we're sharing, and even though we don't have all of the solutions, it feels like you're not alone in that we have a space."

Creating Safe Spaces in Child Care Settings for Children of Immigrant Families

The full presentation slides and remarks of the discussion are available:

- [The Children's Partnership slides](#)
- [WAC/PAC March 26 transcript](#), pages 12–23

Liza Davis of [The Children's Partnership](#) provided an update on immigration policies that are impacting access to ECE and addressed how early childhood educators can support immigrant students and families.

The Children's Partnership and Californians Together are launching their *ALL IN for Safe Schools* campaign with a core collaborating team of organizations, including Early Edge, Equality California, Teach Plus California, California School-Based Health Alliance, and the ACLU of Southern California, to ensure that schools and early learning centers are safe for all families. To receive ALL IN for Safe School updates, sign up on the [ALL IN for Safe Schools website](#).

Children in Immigrant Families

Davis reviewed a demographic breakdown of California's nine million children ([Children's Partnership, slide 3](#)), noting the following:

- Nearly half of the state's children are part of immigrant families.
- Almost half of the state's children have at least one parent who was born outside of the U.S.
- One child in every three in immigrant families in the state is age five or under.
- While the vast majority of the state's children are U.S. citizens, one in ten has an undocumented parent.

Children in immigrant families make up a large portion of the children whom ECE providers serve. They are a diverse group with rich and diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. To see health factor demographics and protective factors for the state's children by subpopulation including children age zero to three, see [A Child Is a Child campaign fact sheets](#).

Immigration Policies and ECE

Key trends over the past few months of shifting immigration policies that have significant implications for children in immigrant families include dramatically heightened enforcement at the southwest border and the interior of the U.S. by (1) increasing the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents, increasing formal partnerships between local police and federal immigration officials, and ramping up large-scale work site aids; (2) removing legal protections, including terminating those previously granted; and (3) reducing access to health care and public benefits. ([For more details on these key trends, see meeting transcript pages 12–15.](#))

Other actions that have been taken include issuing executive orders that target immigrant families and their advocates and enacting federal funding cuts. Protections such as terminating legal representation programs for [unaccompanied minors](#), which provided safeguards to ensure the humane treatment of immigrant children in federal custody, have also been removed. Read [ACACIA Center for Justice's statement on the Unaccompanied Children Program](#).

One of the executive orders that is most directly tied to safe ECE spaces for families is the rescission of the Protected Areas Policy, which, prior to January 2025 restricted ICE and CBP agent immigration enforcement actions in certain locations, including, but not limited to, schools, early education centers, and places of learning ([Children's Partnership, slide 6](#)). The U.S. House of Representatives is currently considering a bill, the [Protecting Sensitive Locations Act](#), which seeks to bring back protections in places that provide vital services important to well-being, including child care centers.

The effects of current anti-immigrant policies are taking their toll on communities, broadly manifesting as heightened fear of family separation and disruptions in daily

living, including avoiding community life and opting out of services and employment ([Children's Partnership, slide 10](#)). ECE providers, schools, programs, and staff and the families they serve are impacted significantly as well ([Children's Partnership, slide 11](#)).

If a provider believes that a federal executive order impacts their work, it is imperative they speak with legal counsel, such as an attorney, before making changes to their programming and to learn about if and when compliance is required ([Children's Partnership, slide 9](#)).

Developing Safe Spaces

Schools and educators in ECE settings can support immigrant students and families by developing safe space policies ([Children's Partnership, slides 12–22](#)). A safe space policy is a plan to protect immigrant families' safety and privacy. Space policies are rooted in basic security and privacy protocols and reinforce basic constitutional principles and federal agency guidance on immigration enforcement ([Children's Partnership, slides 16–17](#)). Davis described the unique situation facing some ECE programs whose physical space is collocated with areas that are open to the public within or outside of the facility and underscored that Fourth Amendment protections do not extend into public spaces ([Children's Partnership, slides 13–14](#)).

As a national advocacy organization, The Center for Law and Social Policy's (CLASP's) [Guide to Creating Safe Space Policies for Early Childhood Programs](#) discusses concrete actions providers can take that are within the control of ECE providers in their settings, or within the home space. Topics cover staff roles and communication protocols during engagement with immigration agents, privacy and security measures, guidance on how to alert parents, and provider collaboration with community networks. Finally, providers' policies should address how staff will be trained, how parents will be informed of the policies, and how key resources like their safe space policy, [a family preparedness plan toolkit](#), and [information on immigrants' rights](#) will be distributed ([Children's Partnership, slide 23](#)). Any questions about the *Guide* can be directed to Priya Pandey via email (ppandey@clasp.org). If participants want assistance developing a safe space policy, Davis encourages them to contact Pandey or herself via email (ldavis@childrenspartnership.org).

If you have specific questions about how the law is applied to your situation, you are encouraged to contact an immigration rights organization or legal service provider near you. The legal aid organizations [Public Counsel](#) and [CLASP](#) provide advice free of charge to California-based ECE providers.

Davis reviewed a suite of ECE provider resources ([Children's Partnership, slides 25–28](#)). She highlighted that the [ALL IN Keep Kids Covered Educator Toolkit](#) includes electronic flyers and other media in multiple languages to share with immigrant communities about benefits like Medi-Cal that they are eligible to apply for in the state. Infant and early childhood mental health fact sheets for parents and resources are also available. She shared an invitation to the [ACLU Foundation San Diego and Imperial Counties' webinar series "Know Your Rights Trainings"](#) to learn about rights and what to do if they are violated.

ALL IN for Safe School resources:

[*A Child Is a Child* fact sheet](#)

[Public Charge Test Chart](#)

[*Resources for K–12 and ECE Educators*](#)

[*Sign Up Form for ALL IN Educator Toolkit*](#)

Other Resources:

[American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) Immigrants' Rights](#)

[ACLU California Rapid Response Network](#)

[*Healthy Mind, Healthy Future: Promoting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children in Immigrant Families*](#), The Children's Partnership & California Immigrant Policy Center

[Immigration Policy Tracking Project](#)

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center \(ILRC\)](#)

[Infant & Child Mental Health Resources](#), The Children's Partnership & Partners

[ILRC Family Preparedness Plan Toolkit](#)

[Legal & Mental Health Resources](#), Abriendo Puertas

[National Immigration Law Center \(NILC\)](#)

[Southern California Rapid Response Network](#)

[Parent Voices' California Tips and Sample Signage](#)

McMillian and **Ignatius** thanked Davis for the presentation. Ignatius encouraged participants who are aware of any families who were disenrolled from child care due to the Los Angeles fires to contact her via email (mary@parentvoices.org). She noted that there is an eligibility pathway for them to use their subsidy elsewhere, stating, "We just want every family to have continuity of care because especially at this moment, our children need to be with loving child care providers that can keep that stability going."

Committee Discussion

The full text of the discussion is recorded on pages 23–27 of the [WAC/PAC March 26 meeting transcript](#). The themes that emerged from the committee comment and chat included the following:

Preparation for Family Separation

There were recommendations that parents and providers should prepare legal documents for potential child separation situations and gather passports and legal guardianship documents to ensure children's well-being if they are separated from their parents.

Advocacy for Home-Based and Tribal Providers' Perspectives in Policy Discussions

It is important to include home-based providers in policy discussions about safe spaces, emphasizing that all child care settings, not just schools and centers, should be protected. There is also a need to create specific guidance for Tribal communities, ensuring they are aware of their rights when dealing with immigration enforcement in Tribal child care settings.

Uplifting the Contributions of Immigrants

Select Comment:

"We need more community reports like this one to change the broader conversation: <https://www.cfsloco.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/SLO-Immigrant-Study-January-13-2025-final.pdf>."

General Public Comment

The themes that emerged from public comment and chat included the following:

Advocacy for All Children

Select Comment:

"Unify for children. Resist for children and families. Protect everyone's right to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' and education!"

Mounting Expenses for ECE Providers' Businesses

Select Comments:

"We [are] expected to be doctor, therapist, caregiver, teacher, and trauma coach for little ones. We need more money and selfcare. Parents need [to] understand we are dealing with a lot of entities."

"Yes, it is very difficult to keep your doors open! My insurance is too high, mortgage, I cannot hire a helper so I can get more kids they want to get paid 17 to 20 dollars an hour!! I can't afford to pay that."

Value of ECE Workforce to the Economy, Need for Fair Wages, and Impact of Federal Executive Orders on the Sector

Select Comments:

“We desperately needed wrap around mental health support in early education and fair wages and that need is still at the top of the list.”

“The ECE workforce is crucial to a growing and sustainable economy. Local and statewide systems need to embrace, support, empower, and ensure professional competitive wages and benefits for our professional early educators that serve California’s youngest and most vulnerable children. Adopting the alternative methodology and extending the hold harmless until the alternative methodology is adopted is non-negotiable for California. California is a state that considers itself progressive but still has systems in place that force early educators to accept poverty wage and bear the burden of work on our backs. On so many levels it is time for change. The budget is a reflections of values— without funding attached—‘equity,’ ‘collaboration,’ and ‘universal’ are just words and not the reality.”

“Those of us who have employees now have to report their citizenship status and our own ... which means this will absolutely impact hiring within the ECE community.”

“Providers often receive inadequate funding, which limits low wages and limited benefits for ECE staff competing with other jobs with higher salaries, for example, McDonald’s. Inequitable pay contributes to high turnover rates, making recruiting and retaining qualified ECE professionals difficult. The demanding nature of our ECE profession, coupled with low pay and limited resources, contributes to high rates of teacher burnout. ECE lays the foundation for our littles for the rest of their lives, and inadequate funding for ECE raises the question of the importance and value of ECE’s role.”

Gratitude for Speakers’ Informative Presentations

Select Comments:

“Thank you for this session. I was struggling figuring out an emergency plan for the ICE enforcement. This has helped me. I’m so grateful for all the resources and support.”

“I want to thank Liza (Davis) and The Children’s Partnership for an excellent presentation. But I have a concern in that while there might be hundreds of providers listening to this, there are 60,000 family child care providers, I think there are at least 12,000 child care centers in the state of California, and at some point the Department of Social Services has to take responsibility and put this

kind of information right out, whether it be on their website and or direct mail ... to communicate with the vast numbers of providers in the state of California directly so that they hear from the licensing agent that is the one that gives them the license, that authorizes them to provide care. It's really important at this point that the department take responsibility."

Reaffirming Commitment to Advocating for Immigrant Families and Creating Safe Spaces for Children in ECE Settings

Select Comments:

"We provided the red cards to our families. I work for a non-profit state funded preschool. We also talked to our teachers and staff on how we can support each other and the families we serve."

"[Early Edge CA] thank[s] the Council for caring about the well-being of our immigrant children and families. It's more likely than not that more executive orders will come down that impact immigrant families and other vulnerable communities, making it crucial to hold these discussions and find ways to protect them and support them. We appreciate the Council's commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment where all children, regardless of their immigration status, have the opportunity to thrive."

Adjourn

Chairs Ignatius and McMillian thanked the public, advisory committee members, and presenters.

Meeting adjourned.