



Early Childhood Policy Council

Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary Report

Thursday, May 29, 2025
9 a.m.–12 p.m.

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

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - Welcome
 - Review of agenda
 - Report from Chairs of Advisory Committees
2. Addressing Federal Immigration Action in Early Learning Spaces
 - Presentation and panel discussion
 - Council discussion
3. May Revise Budget Updates and Consideration of ECPC Budget Letter
 - Presentation
 - Council discussion
 - Possible Council action
4. Update on Rate Reform
 - Status update
 - Questions from the Council
5. General Public Comment
 - Members of the public are invited to provide comment
6. Adjourn

Attendance:

Council Members: Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, Miren Algorri, Mayra E. Alvarez, Lissete Frausto, Natali Gaxiola, Mary Ann Hansen, Mary Ignatius, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Sonia Jaramillo, Robin Layton, Socorro Martin, Tonia McMillian, Carola Oliva-Olson, Kim Patillo Brownson, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio

Parent Advisory Committee Members: Mary Ignatius, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Lissete Frausto

Workforce Advisory Committee Members: Tonia McMillian, Miren Algorri, Zoila Toma

Guest Speakers:

- Liza Davis, Advocacy Director, Children in Immigrant Families, The Children's Partnership (TCP)
- Jackie Gonzalez, Special Assistant Attorney General on Immigration Matters, Attorney General's Office, Immigration Affairs, California Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Richard Barrera, Senior Policy Advisor, State Superintendent's Initiatives Office, California Department of Education (CDE)
- Eliana Kaimowitz, Director, Office of Equity, California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
- Scott Graves, Budget Director, California Budget & Policy Center (The Budget Center)
- Jacqueline Barocio, Branch Chief, Central Operations Branch, Child Care and Development Division, CDSS

Summary Report:

Welcome and Introductions:

Claire Ramsey, Chair and Chief Deputy Director of the CDSS, opened the second Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting of 2025.

Full welcoming remarks are recorded on pages 3–5 of the [ECPC May 29 meeting transcript](#).

Report From Chairs of Advisory Committees

Tonia McMillian, Chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee and **Mary Ignatius**, Chair of the Parent Advisory Committee spoke.

Ignatius summarized the March 26 Joint Advisory Committee meeting, which included a listening session focused on committee members' reflections as parents and providers in the early learning and care space in the aftermath of Southern California wildfires and recent federal immigration actions. *Themes that emerged included:*

- Families, particularly those of mixed status, face heightened anxiety over possible separation and fear in daily activities (going to work, school, medical care).

- Children are exhibiting trauma-related behaviors (fear over friends' safety, parents being detained).
- Potential threats to public benefits such as Medicaid, food stamps, and Head Start are exacerbating stress for families and providers.
- Some child care providers are already struggling financially and bear responsibility for supporting families and children undergoing difficult times. These providers are being asked to be “superheroes, and they are feeling overwhelmed and unable to shoulder their communities’ needs on their own and without adequate resources.
- Child care providers and their staff, some of whom are from immigrant or mixed-status families, strain to support traumatized families while experiencing their own personal duress.

McMillian acknowledged Parent Voices and its executive director, Mary Ignatius, for its steadfast advocacy for children during “this very dark time in this state and in this country.” She noted that one of today’s speakers, Liza Davis, also spoke at the March Joint Advisory Committee meeting where she shared resources and guidance on establishing a safe space policy in child care settings.

Addressing Federal Immigration Action in Early Learning Spaces

The full Addressing Federal Immigration Action in Early Learning Spaces presentation, panel slides, and remarks of the discussion are available:

- [May ALL IN for Safe Schools Ensuring Access to Early Childhood \(TCP\) slides](#)
- [Department of Justice Overview of California Values Act slides](#)
- [CDSS Immigration PIN slides](#)
- [May Revise Highlights \(The Budget Center\) slides](#)
- [ECPC May 29 transcript, pages 6–31](#)

Liza Davis with The Children’s Partnership (TCP) provided an update on the policy landscape around ensuring access to early childhood education (ECE) for children and immigrant families and addressed how early childhood educators can support immigrant students and families. This presentation is part of the ALL IN for Safe Schools campaign, which aims to support educators and ECE providers in creating welcoming learning environments, especially for children of immigrants and LGBTQ+ students. 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 9 million children ([TCP, 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 United States.
- One child in every three 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 10 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 racial and ethnic backgrounds. To see health factor demographics and protective factors for the state's children by subpopulation, including children of immigrant families as well as children age zero to three, see [A Child Is a Child campaign fact sheets](#).

Immigration Policies, Immigration, and Customs Enforcement

Changes in national immigration policy and other executive actions are affecting many families and children in California. Children from families with low income and children in immigrant families are feeling an impact on their ability to access ECE as a result of mass budget cuts and actions against immigrant communities of color.

Federal policy changes that have significant implications for children and immigrant families include the following:

- U.S. immigration enforcement has become a “whole-of-government” priority under the current administration: heightened Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests; the tapping of the military for roles in deportation; and use of federal databases, including those never before accessed, such as the Internal Revenue Service, for deportations.
- Rescission of the 2011 Department of Homeland Security “Sensitive Locations Memo” removes restrictions on immigration enforcement activity at schools and ECE and child care sites. There are ongoing lawsuits and proposed state and federal bills that aim to restore institutional protections to sensitive locations.

The current federal administration is seeking budget increases for immigration enforcement from the U.S. Congress by recommending budget cuts on critical programs like Medicaid. If the administration is able to secure more money, those added resources could further expand the reach of their immigration agenda over the next months and years. To learn about efforts across the country opposing the proposed Medicaid cuts, visit the website FightForOurHealth.org.

Proposed State Legislation and ECE

There are a handful of bills in California currently making their way through the legislative process that directly address the intersection of schools and immigration enforcement. One of the bills, Assembly Bill 495 (AB 495), known as “Family Preparedness Plan Act,” includes ECE. The definition used under this bill for *child daycare facilities* covers daycare centers, employer-sponsored child care centers, and family child care homes.

Davis delineated some of the proposed changes to law in AB 495 ([TCP, slide 6](#)) that would affect providers broadly and some providers more specifically:

- It prohibits child care facilities from collecting children/family member immigration/citizenship status (except when legally required).
- It requires facilities to report any ICE activity to the state while safeguarding

family privacy.

- It mandates use of alternative emergency contacts if guardians are detained.

To learn about current policy efforts in the state and across the nation to enhance protection to sensitive locations like schools and ECE spaces, download TPC's *Safe Schools Policy Explainer* from the [ALL IN for Safe Schools website](#).

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. Providers are encouraged to keep in communication with leaders from the CDE, the CDSS, the Governor's Office, and the California Attorney General's Office ([TCP, slide 7](#)).

ALL IN for Safe Schools Resources: [A Child Is a Child fact sheet](#)

Other Resources:

[California Office of Attorney General—Resources for California's Immigrant Communities](#)

Developing Safe Spaces

Schools and educators in ECE settings can support immigrant students and families by developing safe space policies. A safe space policy is a plan to protect the safety and privacy of children, parents, and staff. Safe space policies are rooted in basic security and privacy protocols and reinforce basic constitutional principles and federal agency guidance on immigration enforcement ([TCP, slide 8](#)).

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), a national advocacy organization, in their [A Guide to Creating Safe Space Policies for Early Childhood Programs](#) (*Guide*) discusses concrete actions providers can take that are within the control of ECE providers in their settings or within the home space. CLASP and other California partners continue to update this resource to make it inclusive of all ECE providers.

Davis encouraged participants to view the recorded March Joint Advisory Committee Meeting where she reviewed CLASP's *Guide* in detail. (For Davis's detailed presentation of the *Guide*, see the [March 2025 Joint Advisory Committee meeting transcript](#).)

For any questions about the *Guide* or assistance with developing a safe space policy, contact Davis via email (ldavis@childrenspartnership.org).

Attorney General's Office

Jackie Gonzalez provided background on the protections that the state of California offers across different agencies serving the immigrant community. She discussed the [California Values Act Senate Bill 54 \(SB 54\)](#), also known as the "sanctuary law" enacted in 2018 ([DOJ, slide 3](#)), and K–12 policy and guidance models published by the Attorney General's Office as mandated by [Assembly Bill 699 \(AB 699\)](#) ([DOJ, slide 4](#)).

Senate Bill 54

SB 54 requires *public* institutions to adopt or align with the DOJ's "model policies" limiting immigration enforcement in sensitive settings. See the list of public institutions impacted ([DOJ, slide 3](#)). While SB 54 does not mandate that *private* entities such as early childhood care providers adopt the DOJ's model policies, providers can reference K–12 model policies to craft their own.

ECE providers and anyone using this guidance and doing work at sensitive locations should know that the constitutional rights that protect individuals in their home, work, and in private spaces have not changed. The U.S. Constitution's Fourth Amendment rights protect against unreasonable searches and in effect does limit a law enforcement officer's ability to conduct a search, depending on whether a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy in the area searched. Due to the recent rescission of the Sensitive Locations Memo by the federal government, be mindful that references in any guidance to Sensitive Locations Memo protections may be outdated.

Concrete actions that providers can proactively take to protect their child care spaces, including private/home-based child care settings, from "unreasonable searches" could include delineating private versus public spaces (i.e., using locked doors, signage) to strengthen privacy claims. (To learn more about suggested actions that can be implemented to create safe spaces, see the [March 2025 Joint Advisory Committee meeting transcript](#).)

K–12 School Model Policies

The K–12 school model policies offer the closest guidance for ECE programs that might be interested in adopting their own policy. The model policy guidance summarizes some of the laws that govern the collection and protection of student information, specifically immigration status, Social Security number, and enrollment information ([DOJ, slide 4](#)).

Providers should know the distinction between *warrants* and *administrative notices*, including how to identify when compliance is or is not required (e.g., judicial warrants require compliance; administrative warrants do not), as well as *subpoenas* (i.e., varying types of requests for written information or documentation). The [DOJ K–12 guidance and model policies document](#) includes sample warrants and subpoenas to help staff respond correctly. Gonzalez encouraged providers to take advantage of in-house legal counsel if they have any and local nonprofit and community organizations that offer technical assistance to develop policies for their child care setting. She also encouraged them to consider identifying and training point personnel who know what to do in the event of phone call, correspondence, or encounter related to immigration enforcement.

Office of the Attorney General Resources:

[Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for All: Guidance and Model Policies to Assist California's K–12 Schools in Responding to Immigration Issues](#)

CDE

Richard Barrera described how the CDE communicates guidance coming from the Attorney General's Office to the state's school districts, individual school leaders, principals, administrators, charter school leaders, leaders at state-sponsored preschools, and child development centers and then provides policy implementation support. The CDE is working to make sure that they are supporting students under state law.

All 1,100 school districts received a letter reminding leaders not to share student and family information or permit ICE access without a valid judicial warrant per K–12 guidance. The importance of written policies and staff training became apparent last month during a Los Angeles Unified School District incident when Department of Homeland Security agents were denied entry to two elementary schools after they could not produce proper warrants. Los Angeles Unified School District was prepared because it had board policies and trained staff in place. Despite AB 699, implementation of policies and staff training across school districts are mixed. State Superintendent Tony Thurman is sponsoring the upcoming SB 48, which would require all school districts to establish and implement policies restricting immigration enforcement officials' access to school campuses and student information. Also, the CDE will soon send another communication to school districts addressing the threats presented in the Trump administration's April executive order on withholding federal funds to public agencies in "sanctuary jurisdictions."

School leaders and school district leaders are encouraged to call the CDE Rapid Response Hotline for Schools phone number (916-319-0795) for support regarding questions or concerns about immigration enforcement actions.

CDSS

Eliana Kaimowitz reviewed CDSS efforts in its immigration integration branch, in partnership with programs across the agency, to lift up the needs of the state's immigrant communities. In support of disseminating guidance to providers and spaces, the Community Care Licensing Division and Child Care Licensing Program are in the process of issuing a Provider Information Notice (PIN) amplifying and highlighting guidance and topics of particular relevance to ECE providers. The CDSS knows that access to information in preferred languages will be a key component of resource sharing with immigrant families and their children ([CDSS, slides 2–3](#)). Kaimowitz stressed, as an example of key takeaway guidance, "that there is no requirement to collect immigration status of an applicant for licensure, or of a family or child, at enrollment." A related PIN may be found [here](#).

She acknowledged misinformation circulating in the current atmosphere of heightened fear and emphasized the role of child care providers as trusted community sources. The CDSS funds a network of direct service providers that offer free immigration legal assistance for families who have questions about their immigration status and related concerns. A list of nonprofit [legal service providers](#) can be found on the CDSS website. Additionally, there are [immigration legal services contractors](#) that provide consultations and direct legal services to immigrants who reside in the state of California ([CDSS, slide 4](#)). Kaimowitz stressed the importance of vetting an immigration service provider and urged the use of a tool like an [attorney locator](#) to see if someone is actually a licensed attorney in California because the Attorney General's Office receives complaints

regarding immigration scams or notary fraud.

CDSS Resources:

[Legal Services Providers Information List](#)

[Immigration Legal Services Contractors List](#)

Mayra E. Alvarez invited members to consider the uncertain times as an opportunity for the Council to work together to do all it can to support California's families. Alvarez noted that the body continues to seek to address many of the comments that came up in the May Joint Advisory Committee meeting about what more it can be doing as a state in today's environment.

Council Discussion

Alvarez opened the floor for Council discussion on Addressing Federal Immigration Action in Early Learning Spaces. The full text of the Council discussion is on pages 18–25 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#). *The themes that emerged from the Council discussion included the following:*

- **Cross-Agency Collaboration:** There was acknowledgment that the CDSS, the CDE, and the DOJ all reference similar model policy frameworks. The CDSS's forthcoming PIN will align with the Attorney General's guidance. Trusted community organizations (e.g., TCP, CLASP) serve as bridges between agencies and providers.
- **Child Care Inclusion in Legislation:** Council members asked why child care centers and family child care homes are omitted from bills like SB 48 and AB 495. Child care providers for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have urged for advocacy to be included in protections.
- **Contribution of Immigrant Families:** Children from immigrant families are not just benefiting from but adding to the state, which is built on its diversity, inclusion, and the tireless work of all people.
- **Data Collection and Privacy:** Providers questioned whether they could "verify but not retain" immigration/citizenship documents to minimize sensitive data on file. (CDSS: Federal requirements sometimes mandate certain documentation and less-burdensome approaches will be explored.)
- **Revenue and Funding:** There was discussion on pausing or reducing large tax expenditures ("shadow budget") to fund child care and immigrant services rather than cutting existing programs. (CDE: Scott Graves noted that tax-break changes require two-thirds legislative votes.)
- **Advocacy for "Sanctuary Child Care":** Council members, especially parent representatives, emphasized child care as foundational education for infants/toddlers and urged including child care in student/protections bills.
- **Preserving Medi-Cal for Undocumented Families:** The Council proposed adding language to reject potential "redesigns" or fee expansions that could limit Medi-Cal access for undocumented children/families. (The CDSS affirmed its commitment to ensuring no requirement for immigration status collection.)

May Revise Budget Updates and Consideration of ECPC Budget Letter

Governor's Budget Proposal

Scott Graves reviewed the [Governor's May Revision fiscal year 2025–26 Budget Proposal](#). Full remarks begin on page 26 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#).

In January, the Governor projected a roughly balanced budget including a \$7 billion withdrawal from a rainy-day fund for the 2025–26 Fiscal Year. However, by May the Governor estimated a \$7.5 billion deficit due to lower revenue and higher spending. The Governor aims to close the \$7.5 billion deficit and also proposed building a \$4.5 billion “discretionary reserve” of General Fund dollars, raising the total budget “solutions” needed to \$12 billion. Graves pointed out that the programs that directly affect families with young children are reliant on the General Fund and noted that the reserve size is policy driven—not constitutionally fixed—but does have to ultimately be agreed upon ([The Budget Center, slides 4–5](#)). Proposed budget actions consist almost entirely of spending cuts, delays, and cost shifts ([The Budget Center, slides 6–7](#)).

Graves outlined the ways key budget proposals will affect families with young children ([The Budget Center, slide 9–11](#)).

Graves reviewed the next steps in the state budget process from now through this fall. The Assembly and Senate are to negotiate a unified budget by June 15 and may hold on many decisions and await clarity on possible deep federal cuts to programs such as the Medicaid/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In late summer, the Governor will sign off on a budget package, and then in early fall state leaders will revise any shortfalls (e.g., if federal cuts materialize) and may require additional state revenue proposals to help backfill lost federal funding ([The Budget Center, slide 13](#)).

California Budget and Policy Center Resources:

[First Look: Understanding the Governor's 2025–26 May Revision](#)

[Federal Policy Information](#)

[Budget Academy Tool](#)

Council Discussion

Karin Bloomer opened the floor for Council discussion on the May Revise Budget Updates. The full text of the Council discussion is on pages 31–32 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#). *Themes that emerged from the Council discussion included the following:*

- **Discretionary Fund:** There were questions asking for clarity on what baseline monies are currently in this fund.
- **Tax Breaks:** In light of the Governor- and Legislature-proposed budget, which will pause, delay, or freeze programs—coupled with potential federal tax cuts—do state leaders have the ability to pause state tax breaks given annually to the wealthiest corporations and individuals to fund critical services?

ECPC Budget Letter/Possible Council Action

ECPC members **Andrea Fernandez Mendoza** and **Donna Sneeringer**

facilitated a review of the [draft budget letter](#) to gather feedback from the Council. Their full remarks begin on page 33 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#).

Fernandez Mendoza explained that the draft budget letter acknowledges new challenges that have arisen since January. The letter advocates to immediately implement a true cost-of-care reimbursement system, to restore and fund cost-of-living adjustments for all child care providers, to fund reimbursement based on enrollment rather than daily attendance per federal requirements, to preserve the timeline to fill the 200,000 Slot Goal for 2025–26 rather than 2026–27, and to reject Emergency Child Care Bridge program cuts to ensure children in foster care have immediate access to child care (“day one” care).

Council Discussion

Bloomer opened the floor for Council discussion on the draft ECPC Budget Letter. The full text of the Council discussion is on pages 34–41 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#). Some examples are listed below.

- Recommendations were made to preserve Medi-Cal access for families without documentation. These recommendations were specifically aiming to reject proposed eligibility restrictions or cost-sharing changes that would limit health coverage for children/families without documentation.
- There were suggestions to explore alternative revenue sources (e.g., pause or roll back certain corporate tax expenditures) to avoid cutting services.
- There was a suggestion to ensure that cost-of-care model reports present 100 percent costs.
- There were comments advocating for “shadow budget” transparency (i.e., annual review of tax breaks).

Possible Action

Fernandez Mendoza polled the Council for any members abstaining from supporting the letter. Abstentions from Council members who work for the administration were acknowledged. A voice vote of endorsement was then taken.

Update on Rate Reform

Jacqueline Barocio shared a rate reform update. Full remarks begin on page 43 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#).

Barocio noted that the alternative methodology cost outputs presented today were shared at the April and May 2025 Rate and Quality Advisory Panel (RQAP) meetings. Additional RQAP meeting details can be found in the meeting materials (see the [RQAP April PowerPoint](#) and [RQAP May PowerPoint](#)). Barocio explained that the alternative methodology cost model is based on various rate elements: “It generates initial annual cost per child outputs. These initial per child cost outputs are not proposed new rates, but rather the alternative methodology will be used to inform rate setting. Rate setting is a separate process that's subject to the budget and for family child care providers, the

collective bargaining process as well.”

Barocio reviewed a series of charts representing the 100 percent annual cost per child output findings for each regulatory type, further delineated by regional groupings and broken down by age groups. The outputs generally increase across the regions, and infant outputs tend to be the highest, followed by preschool and then school age ([CDSS, slides 3–9](#)). Actual reimbursement rates are subject to the upcoming budget, collective bargaining (for family child care), and regulatory approval. The next RQAP meeting is scheduled for June 12.

Information about rate reform is on the [CDSS Rate Reform and Quality webpage](#).

Council Questions

Bloomer opened the floor to questions from the Council on Barocio’s presentation. The full text of Council questions is on pages 45–49 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#).

Themes emerging from the Council questions included the following:

- **Regions:** There was a request for clarification on which counties are represented by the “regions” and concern about the regional breakdown that may require adjustment.
- **Categories and Criteria:** There was concern “that the criteria, particularly the inclusion of TK age children in School Age Category and the benching of the FFN at 50% of FCC are cost containment proposals and have nothing to do with the wages and working conditions of our child care workforce.”
- **True Cost of Care and Final Report:** Multiple council members emphasized the urgency of implementing a new rate system for early child care educators because current operating conditions are detrimental to the ECE workforce, the parents and families, the economy, and the survival of child care. The CDSS final cost estimation model report must show the true costs of care, not “what we can afford.”
- **Call to Action:** There was an invitation to attend the Child Care Providers United rally on June 11 at the Capitol to urge immediate rate reform and uphold the child care industry as essential infrastructure to the economy.

General Public Comment

Before the meeting adjourned, the Chair invited verbal public comment. The partial text of public comments is on pages 50–51 of the [ECPC May 29 transcript](#).

Adjourn

Chair Ramsey thanked the public, the Council, and Advisory Committee members for attending. The next ECPC meeting is scheduled for August 27.

Meeting adjourned.