



Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) Meeting Summary: November 16, 2021

Attendees: Kim Johnson, Mayra E. Alvarez, Antoinette Jacobs, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Cheryl Schroeder, Dean Tagawa, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Debra Ward, Donna Sneeringer, Khydeeja Alam, Kim Patillo Brownson, Laura Ruhstaller, Lissete Frausto, Lupe Jaime, Mary Ignatius, Miren Algorri, Natali Gaxiola, Patricia Lozano, Patrick MacFarlane, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Stephanie Myers, Sonia Jaramillo, Tonia McMillian, Virginia Eigen, Zoila Carolina Toma, Janet Zamudio

1. Welcome and Introductions (Kim Johnson)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Kim Johnson welcomed the Council and members of the public to the meeting. Chair Johnson presented an overview of the meeting structure and the meeting's focus on infants and toddlers.
- Chair Johnson welcomed Council member Khydeeja Alam to provide an update on an approach to better incorporate equity into ongoing Council discussions. Racial and economic equity will be a standing agenda item at ECPC meetings starting in January 2022. The proposed focus in the first year will be the creation of an equity screening tool that is data driven, impact focused, and by which the Council can make recommendations. A two-person team will set specific agenda items and proposals, as was done for the budget letter this past year.
- Chair Johnson introduced Council members Yenni Rivera and Zoila Carolina Toma to elevate voices and perspectives from the field. Rivera emphasized the stress families are facing through the pandemic and the need for expanded access to wraparound services. She also described the importance of empathy training for state-level staff working directly with families. Toma shared a story of a child care provider who didn't have access to adequate health care and sadly passed away. She underscored the importance of health care as a top priority for the early childhood workforce.



2. Advisory Committee Report Out

- ECPC Workforce Advisory Committee Chair, Tonia McMillian, presented an overview of the November 9, 2021 Committee meeting. The meeting centered around panel presentations and discussions by national, state, and local experts on child care unionization. Panelists Michelle Sorza (child care provider) and Patty Bailey presented on challenges/needs in the workforce; panelists Donise Keller and Alexa Frankenberg presented on state-level perspectives about the opportunities/impacts of unionization; and panelists Nancy Wyatt (child care provider) and Oscar Tang presented on challenges and solutions specific to serving infants and toddlers.
- ECPC Parent Advisory Committee Chair, Mary Ignatius, presented an overview of the November 3, 2021 meeting of which infant and toddler care was the topic of focus. The discussion elevated personal experiences and presentations from the Parent Voices Transition Parent Advisory Committee regarding findings from their four parent-focus groups on three key themes:
 - **Trust:** The need for parents to trust providers and how this can relate to historical experiences and trauma, especially within the Native American community.
 - **Compassion:** The importance of empathy from workers at all levels of the social services and child care system.
 - **Communication:** The importance of proactive messages so families are not expected to know what to ask for, but instead told what they need to know.

3. Child Care Program Transition Quarterly Report

Deputy Director of the Child Care and Development Division at the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham, presented an update on the transition of child care and development programs from the California Department of Education to CDSS. This included updates on the following topics: staffing, high-level stakeholder feedback, budget investments, and upcoming child care bulletins and events.



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4. Vaccinate All 58

- Sonia Harris from the California Department of Public Health provided key updates on California’s Vaccinate All 58 campaign and addressed some concerns as we head into the winter and the importance of communicating to the necessity of the vaccine to families.
- To improve vaccine equity, the campaign developed a vaccine equity metric used to gauge progress in access to the most vulnerable communities. Harris discussed the expansion in eligibility to children five and older and the access points for the vaccine, including MyTurn (the statewide one-stop shop), as well as support from the campaign to facilitate access through a hotline.
- Harris noted that the campaign’s core strategy is conversations with families through key trusted messengers and a focus on core messages. Lastly, Harris shared several resources they’ve prepared, including material on misinformation and disinformation, an ambassador program to reach communities with lower literacy rates and/or those that prefer verbal communication, and a video series providing information in various languages.

5. Discussion on Infants and Toddlers

- This agenda item centered around a panel discussion with national experts Dr. Gigliana Melzi and Dr. Alison Gopnik. Dr. Melzi described the prevailing approach to the early development of young Latina children as focused on filling in the gaps in skills using the “glass half empty” analogy. Also referred to as a “deficit view.” In her presentation, she argued that an approach focused on uncovering family practices that support learning would be more equitable (i.e., “glass half full”) and described practices spanning the following domains: socio-emotional development, support for bilingualism and biculturalism, deep oral traditions, and whole family supports.



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- Dr. Melzi also talked about her recent work in “family math.” Based upon interviews with parents, she noted a few key ways families may influence math skills: (1) early engagement in math related activities (e.g., counting things, etc.); (2) discussion of math exposing children to math vocabulary early; and (3) fostering positive mindsets about math to promote “math identities.”
- Dr. Gopnik began by discussing the link between the length of childhood and dependence and overall intelligence. She then moved on to discussing the types of things children are learning in the early years of development, noting that this includes things like language and basic math concepts, but also importantly learning about other people. Finally, Dr. Gopnik shared that recent research underscores just how important early development is to outcomes later in life, that supportive caregivers who create an environment for safe exploration is critical in the early stages, and that community is essential to development—particularly having supportive, loving caregivers.

A high-level, thematic summary of Council discussion and public comments received during the meeting can be found in the following pages.



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Summary of Comments and Questions by ECPC Council Members and the Public

The following sections provide a high-level overview of themes from the November 16, 2021 ECPC meeting.

The ECPC is an advisory body to the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide early learning, care, and child development. It will provide recommendations on (1) all aspects of the state’s early childhood system, including equity—with consideration for demographic, geographic, and economic diversity—focusing on family-centered, two-generation approaches; (2) opportunities to incorporate a support model of accountability—as opposed to a compliance model of accountability—into the state’s early childhood education system; and (3) ways that the State’s Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the 2019 California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education’s (ECE) Final Report can be updated and improved.

This meeting focused on the following key topics:

- Integration of racial and economic equity into ECPC meetings
- Elevation of voices from the field on the topics of wraparound services to families and provider access to support and services
- Provision of updates on ongoing work, including
 - the transition of child care and development to CDSS; and
 - the Vaccinate All 58 campaign
- Panel discussion on infants and toddlers, including two key topics: opportunities for improvement in approaches to Latina children’s early development and new ideas in cognitive and brain science for young children

The following sections provide a high-level overview Council discussions and public comments.



Integration of racial and economic equity into ECPC meetings

Questions and comments

- One member asked how these efforts might intersect with the work of the new equity lead at CDSS; Chair Johnson noted that the regular quarterly updates from CDSS on the transition may create opportunities to maximize and leverage the Council's time for these overarching efforts.
- One member asked for clarification and Khydeeja clarified that the term "racial and economic equity" is the topic that will have a standing agenda item, that the Chair will determine the specific process, and that any suggestions on these or other topic should be shared.
- Others commented that this focus must be paired with action, rather than only conversation.

Elevation of voices from the field on the topics of wraparound services to families and provider access to support and services

Questions and comments

- Members echoed the issues shared by Yenni regarding sensitivity and empathy on the part of county workers and CDSS staff, noting the current emotional toll on many families.
- One member asked about updates related to healthcare insurance access for providers; Zoila indicated that currently the barrier to this being put forward is available funds and that efforts are ongoing to highlight investment in this area as a critical priority through the sharing of personal stories. Chair Johnson also clarified that this intersects with discussions between the state and Child Care Providers United (CCPU) through joint labor management committees.
 - Another member underscored the importance of this issue with a personal story about her challenges with accessing affordable health care and the impact on her health.



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Provision of updates on ongoing work

The transition of child care and development to CDSS (Lupe Jaime-Mileham)

Questions and comments

- One member asked how CDSS plans to get the word out to providers about the block grant (i.e., infrastructure grant), particularly about the application materials for family child care. Lupe shared that once the Resource Family Approval Program (RFA) is out, CDSS will leverage trusted messengers such as CCPU as well as associations, resource and referral agencies, and alternative payment programs. CDSS will also leverage existing partnerships to provide regular updates within their standing meetings with providers and using their listserv.
- Another member asked for Lupe's thoughts on ensuring the whole-child approach in the work of the transition. Lupe started by calling out the work of the ECPC, particularly the inclusion of different voices. She also suggested that the integration of equity discussed during this meeting would be a natural on-ramp for whole-child conversations.

The Vaccinate All 58 campaign (Sonya Harris)

Questions and comments

- One member commented that the rules around quarantining students with mild symptoms that may be unrelated to COVID-19 are a struggle for family child care providers, though acknowledged the concerns heading into winter.
- Another member asked if there was an update on when the below five kids will be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Harris noted that clinical trials are underway; some may speculate vaccination will be possible in late spring.
- Another member asked about the potential for additional mandates and the Chair noted no additional mandates are expected at this time.



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Panel discussion on infants and toddlers, including two key topics: opportunities for improvement in approaches to Latina children’s early development and new ideas in cognitive and brain science for young children

Questions and comments

- Several members expressed support for the presenters and a desire to use the information shared in the work of the ECPC.
- One member asked specifically how the State is using the information presented in its work.
 - Sarah Neville-Morgan noted that the education budget includes investments in professional learning and training for kindergarten and TK teachers, including specific callouts for equity and anti-bias inclusion training. She noted that the funds flow through the local educational agencies. She also pointed to efforts to collect more information about languages spoken in preschool settings and their support for bilingual preschool programs.
 - Lupe Jaime-Mileham also noted that CDSS also has a few investments in professional development planned. And that they are looking at investments to ensure current contractors really make sense for the current workforce.
- A few members commented on the importance of meeting a child where they are and giving parents options to find the child care situation that is the best fit.