



## **Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC)**

### **Summary Report**

Tuesday, July 19, 2022: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

#### **Agenda:**

##### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Welcome
- Budget Update
- Equity Update
- Voices From the Field
- Council Questions and Discussion
- Public Comment

##### **2. Report Out from Advisory Committees**

- Joint report out from Parent Advisory Committee and Workforce Advisory Committee
- Council questions and discussion
- Public comment

##### **3. Child Care Transition Quarterly Report**

- Update from the California Department of Social Services on the transition of child care programs
- Council questions and discussion
- Public comment

##### **4. California Department of Education Update**

- Update on universal prekindergarten and preschool through third grade (P-3) initiatives
- Council questions and discussion
- Public comment

## 5. Home Visitation: Family-Centered, Two-Generation Approaches

- Conversation with a panel on home visitation
- Council questions and discussion
- Public comment

## 6. Adjourn

**ECPC members:** Kim Johnson, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Dean Tagawa, Janet Zamudio, Kay Ruhstaller, Mary Ignatius, Mayra Alvarez, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Stephanie Myers, Sonia Jaramillo, Robin Layton, Natali Gaxiola, Kim Patillo Brownson, Paula Merrigan, Antoinette Jacobs, Tonia McMillian, Miren Algorri, Lupe Jaime-Mileham

**Advisory Committee members:** Deborah Corley-Marzett, Patricia Alexander, Patricia Lozano, Virginia Eigen

**Guests:** Claudia Aguilar, Darrin Andrus, Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Debi Silverman, Jane Troglia, Gina Gordon, Kristina Meza, Michelle Carpio, Sarah Brothers

The meeting started with opening remarks from Kim Johnson, Director of the California Department of Social Services and chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC). She thanked everyone present in-person and online for joining and went through the agenda for the day. After that, she introduced ECPC member and CEO of YourMimi, Inc., Antoinette Jacobs.

### Summary Report

#### Voices From the Field, Antoinette Jacobs:

Ms. Jacobs introduced herself and her longtime friend and business partner Sarah Brothers before explaining the idea behind their company. YourMimi is an infant care service targeted at addressing the gap in infant/toddler care and services in corporate workplaces. While there are a plethora of services for children ages two and older, there are very limited options for younger kids. YourMimi provides a “bring your baby to work with you” experience by creating designated space for infant and toddler care at corporate offices. The company also helps businesses improve their compliance with Assembly Bill 1976, which requires employers to provide space and time for expressing breastmilk. Currently, these spaces are often “pretty much little closets. It has a cute little chair and a little refrigerator.” The goal of YourMimi is to create a homelike environment for employees who need to express their milk.

The company has held conversations with large corporations in the oil, entertainment, and medical industries who were interested in adding YourMimi’s services to their employee benefits packages to increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

However, as employees transitioned to work-from-home or hybrid schedules during the COVID-19 pandemic, these conversations went into gridlock.

Ms. Jacobs also shared how seeing her daughters go through struggles in taking care of their infants while working and her personal experience as a grandmother helping to care for a one-year-old who was born during the pandemic has influenced YourMimi's mission.

Ms. Jacobs decided the company should address issues that create these new parent struggles: exaggerated waiting lists and inflated costs for infant care, parents' guilt at the "abandonment" of their children, and challenges of continuing to nurse. The company advocates for offering new strategies for the growing remote hybrid workforce by increasing the number of daycares that offer infant care, a burden which often falls on grandmothers or strangers and adds another layer of anxiety. The company promotes hybrid work schedules with infant care for government offices and advocates for infant care spaces on military bases and at educational institutions. Another idea is to create a tax incentive for corporations if they decide to provide infant care in their benefits packages.

### **Voices From the Field, Michelle Carpio:**

The next speaker was Michelle Carpio, Parent Advisory member from Early Edge California, who shared some of her experiences as a mother.

Ms. Carpio spoke about the impact of her local First 5 center: "[M]y husband and I are so grateful for local centers, such as our First 5 center, where we've been able to take advantage of classes and workshops, where we were able to learn on how we can help our girls, what stages they are going through, what we can do as parents to take advantage of what they are learning at the moment and help them excel." Ms. Carpio explained that she and her husband were inexperienced when it came to raising a child and needed support to build essential parenting knowledge. Their First 5 center provided that support and connected them with parents from diverse backgrounds who shared the same struggles and experiences.

Ms. Carpio talked about the role the First 5 center played in finding child care when she decided to go back to work after a year and a half. She was able to secure child care services via [cocokids.org](http://cocokids.org) and expressed her gratitude to the child care center and the preschool she ended up with.

### **Budget Updates, Kim Johnson**

After Voices From the Field, the chair provided budget updates on the Education Parents Agenda, as well as Health and Human Services. She highlighted several major investments, starting with \$120.5 million for urgent needs and emergent issues in Children's Behavioral Health, following a \$4.4 billion investment made the previous

year. She also discussed Department of Developmental Services' investments, including \$65.5 million this year to support children who have intellectual or developmental disabilities in the transition from Early Start to the school system. Ms. Johnson explained the importance of support through this transition: "I know we've talked a lot to families who had that experience where they've been in Early Start, they've had the supports they need in that space, but for the transition to school, things change—different offerings and services. So there are some additional investments to really work on to make that transition streamlined and ensure the services are still in place."

Another package of investments is from the Department of Social Services (DSS). With DSS's continued focus on economic impacts, support, and recovery, the Governor and the Legislature have agreed to increase grant amounts for those participating in CalWORKs program. It's effective from October 1<sup>st</sup> and it becomes an 11 percent ongoing increase plus 10 percent. DSS is also working with the Department of Child Support to ensure that dollars intended to support the child are doing so rather than being recouped as part of the safety net. DSS has also authorized an additional 36,000 child care subsidies and slots for the next year. In addition, the Emergency Child Care Bridge for Foster Families has received another \$35 million to ensure resource families are available. DSS also has \$100.2 million to support the creation of the Health and Retirement Benefits Trust, a milestone for the state. DSS also has additional funding supported for infrastructure such as child care facilities, \$100 million for 2022-33.

The chair noted that the pattern of large investments, \$12 billion last year, is continuing this year. One example is the multi-year investments in housing and homelessness: "continuing to address the needs in helping those that are unsheltered meeting their housing goals, a lot of which we have specific programs dedicated to specific populations like families, like older adults, etc.. And those will be continuing, moving forward."

After the update, the floor was open for discussion and questions from the audience. The primary topic of discussion was hiring and retaining staff in early childhood programs. The main issue related to retention raised during this conversation was early childhood providers switching to transitional kindergarten, which was described as more lucrative, secure, and stable. The chair noted that a \$1 billion multi-year investment was made for rate increases and supplemental payments for child care providers. She described these investments as tremendous, historic, and unprecedented.

#### **Discussion of the Children and Equity Topic, Carola Oliva Olson:**

Ms. Olson discussed the council's plans to raise potential topics related to equity, access, and inclusion that the council would benefit from learning about. She also expressed an idea of having a member of a state-based organization, similar to Advancement Project California, who could present what a statewide equity index can

look like for early childhood programs. Ms. Olson discussed Dr. Shantel Meek's presentation on the Children's Equity Project's report "Start With Equity: From the Early Years to the Early Grades" at one of last year's meetings, which highlighted the report's findings of specific inequities faced by millions of children from historically marginalized communities across the United States:

- Harsh discipline, particularly with Black children
- Lack of inclusion for students with disabilities in general classrooms
- Inequitable access for dual language learners

The project has also worked on a follow-up report that focuses on addressing the state of inequity in California's early care and education systems. The report provides California-specific policy items for an agenda that informs the state's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and gives recommendations for more equitable systems for the state's youngest learners.

After the brief talk, Ms. Olson opened the floor for input and suggestions on the topic. A comment was made by Kim Pattillo Brownson about the importance of seeing the mentioned problem not only in terms of the child care system but in the broader system that California wants to build for children in the future. Ms. Olson agreed and mentioned the case of dual language learners as an example of needing a more systemic approach versus compartmentalization: "Just like when we talk about dual language learners, not understanding that dual language learners or children who use varieties of languages in the home and community. So we're talking about dialects, vernacular, heritage, and native languages when the goal is language preservation, revitalization, so bringing it back to the families."

After the discussion Chair Johnson invited Tonia McMillian and Mary Ignatius to discuss the advisory meeting held on June 21<sup>st</sup> to commemorate Juneteenth. They briefly summarized the topics of presentations from the meeting and shared their impressions and observations.

### **Child Care and Development Division Quarterly Transition Update, Lupe Jaime-Mileham**

Dr. Maria Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Deputy Director for the Child Care and Development Division (CCDD), gave a detailed transition update from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

This month marks the one-year anniversary of the CCDD and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) transition. Over this past year, child care and nutrition programs have found a new home at CDSS, and many efforts have been made in pursuit of reforming the state's child care and development system to be more responsive to the needs of families and child care providers.

CDSS approaches this journey with the understanding that California's child care and development system is only as resilient as the child care and development providers who serve as caregivers, teachers, and sources of stability in the lives of children.

CDSS is working to develop substantive rate and quality reforms in partnership with providers, contractors, parents, Child Care Providers United (CCPU), the Governor's office, and the Legislature. On January 1, 2022, rate changes were implemented as part of a historic agreement between the State of California and CCPU. In addition to these initiatives, CDSS is investing in programs that can increase the ranks of California's child care and development workforce and develop their capacity to provide high-quality infant and toddler care.

CDSS is also working to increase access to child care for families who live in child care deserts and high-poverty areas and who work non-traditional hours. To maximize access to child care and unify CalWORKs program policies, CDSS has implemented a new policy allowing parents whose children are enrolled in a subsidized voucher program to access license-exempt, in-home care if they sign a self-attestation that they are the primary employer of their child care provider. Previously, contractors were asked to deny access to in-home care if a family's voucher and fee payments did not meet applicable labor laws and minimum wage requirements.

Also, while self-attestation is an option for CalWORKs Stage One, the requirements for other programs have historically been different. Previously, this same flexibility did not apply to other child care and development programs. This change makes the process less administratively burdensome and supports parent choice—in alignment with federal laws governing the Child Care and Development Fund.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham noted that a major part of CDSS work this past quarter was supplemental rate payments. She highlighted the progress made with CCPU partners to land a bargaining agreement:

- A bargaining agreement between the state and CCPU was ratified on July 26, 2021.
- As part of this agreement, CDSS is facilitating the issuance of one-time supplemental rate payments to eligible family child care providers ranging from \$1,500 to \$10,000.
- Licensed private centers that serve children enrolled in a voucher-based, subsidized child care program will also receive a supplemental rate payment.

This quarter, the Department also awarded \$207 million in General Child Care and Development Program (CCTR) Expansion Funding to 106 CCTR programs located in areas with a low supply of child care.

CCTR is a subsidized child care program that serves children ages birth to three years and provides afterschool care for elementary-school-aged children. Families can qualify

for the program based on their income or if they are unemployed, pursuing their education, or unhoused.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham also talked about the Child Care Infrastructure Grant Program from last year's budget. The grant program will fund major and minor renovations. Funding will be used to expand and preserve access to child care and development opportunities for children up to five years of age, with a focus on child care deserts.

The Department is currently reviewing applications, and applicants will be notified of their status during Summer 2022. CDSS anticipates releasing the New Construction and Major Renovation Application in late Summer/early Fall 2022. To reach a larger and more diverse population and to ensure language access, the Department has the RFA and application available in the three most common languages of Californians—English, Spanish, and written Chinese.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham also shared brief updates on the CACFP, which also transferred over to CDSS:

- Jessie Rosales was appointed the Branch Chief over the CACFP program this quarter.
- The CACFP Branch has submitted to the USDA a suite of COVID-19 waivers related to on-site monitoring, meal service time, and parent/guardian meal service pick-up to mitigate the impacts of transitioning back to “normal” operations. These waivers will allow the state to more flexibly respond to any future COVID-19 waves.
- CDSS also finalized procurement of the Brighton online training platform. Through this platform, CDSS will offer over 50 courses that support practices to enhance the quality of meal service experience and comply with CACFP requirements. The platform offers trainings in English and Spanish, and in subsequent years, the training platform will expand to other languages.

### **Expanding Access to Early Education Through Universal Prekindergarten, Sarah Neville-Morgan:**

The chair introduced Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Department of Education, for the presentation “Expanding Access to Early Education through Universal Prekindergarten (UPK).”

One of the major things that has happened in the budget is transforming California’s public school and educational system. The state administration, as well as the legislators, wanted to work with the State Superintendent and create the opportunity to transform our schools. There are several key areas where the state decided to invest with that purpose in mind: universal meals, universal preschool, community schools, professional development, anti-racism training, mental health programs, and expanded

learning programs. Investments in most of these areas/programs started in last year's budget and were continued this year.

California was the first state to move forward with legislative action to allow every public school student to have access to two meals a day. A few other states now are following California, and CDE sees it as a big equity piece of transforming schools. There is also the expanded learning opportunities piece that supports transitional kindergarten through sixth grade to have nine hours of programming.

Ms. Neville-Morgan talked about the interconnectedness of these different investments and how they answer contemporary needs of students, parents, and educators: "California's educational system was grounded in historically old practices and that all of these things are wrapping around now to create an educational system that focuses on our students, our children, and our families and what they need in 2020 and beyond. Not the system from 1950, not the system from 2019, but really what families need now to participate in a public educational system that helps them thrive and soar and creates the workforce that we need in California to stay very competitive in an international market."

She also pointed out that there is a lot of research that shows alignment in coherence from preschool through third grade supports student learning and helps teachers engage in a curriculum that aligns with professional learning opportunities. The preschool through third grade (P-3) vision is that all children have a strong and early start to inclusive education through high-quality, joyful, rigorous, developmentally informed, and coherent P-3 learning opportunities to ensure they thrive in school and in life and are college and career ready.

Ms. Neville-Morgan also talked about UPK and what it stands for. UPK will bring together programs across early learning and transitional kindergarten through 12th Grade (TK-12), relying heavily on Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK) and California State Preschool Program (CSPP), as well as Head Start, private preschool, and other subsidized and non-subsidized programs that offer a preschool learning experience such as community-based organizations (CBOs) and family child care.

UPK means that by 2025–26—regardless of background, race, ZIP code, immigration status, or income level—every child has access to a quality learning experience the year before kindergarten. She also pointed out that only UTK is funded to be truly universal.

Ms. Neville-Morgan also discussed the alignment among TK, UPK, and P-3. CDE hopes to have more opportunities for shared professional learning in other pieces moving forward and to make sure that there are opportunities for P-3 components where they're nested in their learning, use of curriculum, and use of assessments. The projects are focused on the preschool learning foundations and updated to create a bridge or



framework from preschool up through third grade: “[Y]ou’ll see some components in our preschool learning foundations that do that. And then looking at our Desired Results Developmental Profile, or DRDP and child observations, doing some additional work in that to support teachers and their use of it. We all know that it’s wonderful to have a rich system, but if teachers aren’t using it to inform their curriculum and how they’re supporting children, then we’re really missing a key opportunity and a key component of quality there.” This also means some embedded, additional assessments; direct assessments that would look at language, literacy, and math; and creating some pieces that would align. That means having something from preschool and then up through second grade in that area.

Ms. Neville-Morgan also highlighted investments for UPK planning and implementation:

- \$300 million for UPK planning and implementation for districts that have kindergarten enrollment (and therefore are expected to have TK enrollment) and county offices of education for county-level efforts.
- \$18.3 million per year for three years for California Universal Preschool Planning Grant Program to support preschool planning in mixed delivery system. Funds go to Local Planning Councils (LPCs) or Resource and Referral Agencies (if LPC is not interested).

The 2022–23 budget also advances the goals of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, which means: 1) Expanded eligibility (State Meeting Income increase, which is 85 percent and the goal is to reach 100 percent), 2) Family stability (24-month eligibility), and 3) Inclusive programs (categorical eligibility). The investments also include additional support for children with disabilities:

- CSPP contractors are required to reserve 5 percent of funded enrollment for children with disabilities in 2022–23, moving to 7.5 percent in 2023–24 and 10 percent in 2024–25. Contractors will be fully funded for that enrollment, regardless of attendance.
- CDE is required to review data and provide technical assistance to support increasing inclusion. The accountability process starts in 2026–27.
- \$250 million is provided to expand the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program
- \$2 million is provided for CDE to develop a process and tools for early identification of children at risk for developmental delays and/or learning disabilities.

For her last remarks, Ms. Neville-Morgan noted that California serves only 13 percent of three-year-olds in the state, and their goal is to close the gap between those who are eligible and those who are receiving services.

## **Home Visitation: Family-Centered, Two-Generation Approaches, Moderated by Mayra Alvarez**

In the final part of the agenda, Mayra Alvarez moderated a discussion panel about two-generation approaches for family-centered home visitations.

### **Mayra Alvarez**

Ms. Alvarez opened the panel by summarizing the state's work for the past four years in terms of expanded public funding for home visiting services: "[I]t's these investments that are truly reflecting this increased awareness and understanding about the science of early childhood and brain development and why it matters that we are supporting our families, our parents, but also recognizing the impacts of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress and, more importantly, the opportunity we have to intervene. This is especially critical as we consider the COVID-19 pandemic and the exacerbated stress, isolation, and mental health concerns among families with young children." She pointed out that it is crucial to identify ways to support families, build their resiliency, and surround them with support and services. It is at this moment that we know home visiting is an ever more incredibly important service.

The first question directed to the panel: "Give us a high-level overview of the home visitation program and models. Whom are we trying to serve with these programs, and specifically, what are notable successes or outcomes? This is family-centered, two-generation approach. Why is it so important during this early childhood period that we have it available?"

Stephanie Myers, California Head Start State Collaboration Office:

Head Start programs are funded from the Office of Head Start at the federal level to local grantees. The Home-Based Option is for families who qualify and are eligible for Head Start services. There are a variety of settings.

The first begins with prenatal services and continues through age three. There's also an Early Head Start program and, for Head Start, there's a preschool program for children ages three to five. The Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Model is a grant that partners with child care programs to provide resources and support to benefit children and families. Head Start Home-Based Options are services and supports offered in the family's home. In this model, home visitors work with families to determine what is best for the child. In once weekly meetings in the home, the family and home visitor collaboratively plan supports and help the child by using parent-child interactions, focusing on daily routines and everyday activities. In many instances, the home visitor will help support socialization activities with other families and children in the Home-Based Option. In California, the Office of Head Start Region 9 reports that 69 agencies, organizations, school districts, and other service centers currently have Head Start Home-Based Option grants.

**Kristina Meza, chief of the CalWORKs and Family Resilience Branch:**

While CalWORKs supervises the Home Visiting Program (HVP) at the state level, the program is administered at the county level by participating county welfare departments or partners. As of right now, the CalWORKs HVP serves families across 41 participating counties. Every county has the option to engage with a provider and a model, and at least one of the approved evidence-based home visiting models is being utilized within those counties.

These models include the Early Head Start Home-Based Option, Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, and the Nurse–Family Partnership. For county partners who administer CalWORKs HVP for recipients, CalWORKs requires programs be evidence-based, as demonstrated through the use of one of the models. They are also required to provide culturally competent services, and counties are required to speak to that as part of their plan submitted to the state every two years. The program must also be voluntary for CalWORKs recipients, and it must pair parents of children ages two and under with a nurse or other trained professional who makes regular visits to the home, either in person or through virtual services. Participants who elect to participate in the CalWORKs HVP will have access to information and strategies to help improve their family’s health.

Ms. Meza also shared information to highlight the general population that CalWORKs serves. Since the implementation of the program in 2019, CalWORKs has enrolled 8,700 families to the program, which has resulted in over 7,000 parents and caretakers receiving a first-time home visit and just under 8,000 children receiving a first home visit. Among those accessing services, over 28,000 referrals for services were made. CalWORKs also conducted a robust evaluation of the implementation of the program. That evaluation report went live in January of this year. Over a thousand families were surveyed for the evaluation:

- 92 percent responded that those who had concerns about their child’s health or development consistently reported that CalWORKs HVP services helped them address concerns about their child.
- 82 percent responded that they had concerns about their own health or their family’s health and well-being. And they reported that HVP helped them with food security and mental health to address those concerns.
- 71 percent of respondents share that home visiting services were helpful with physical health or access to critical domestic violence and intimate partner violence services and resources, and also identified connections to other critical safety net benefits like CalFresh.
- Less than 1 percent of home visiting families within that timeframe were referred to Child Welfare Services, which is a significantly lower referral rate than among the broader population across CalWORKs.

**Jane Troglia, Chief of the California Home Visiting Program at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH):**

CDPH primarily supports three evidence-based home visiting models, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers. The models differ slightly from each other in regard to the home visitor–family ratio, eligibility criteria, frequency of home visits, and cost.

The target populations vary across local programs; in general, the program is designed for overburdened and at-risk families who face the greatest health and social inequities and are at risk for ACEs, including domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, and child abuse and neglect. The program has several notable successes:

- In 2022 CHPP is celebrating its ten-year anniversary.
- The program had an expansion in 2019, which led to new local health jurisdictions and added a new evidence-based home visiting model. Another expansion will take place in 2022.
- CDPH is now funding 11 health jurisdictions through innovative home visiting projects. These projects address issues that existed prior to and have been exacerbated through the pandemic.

**Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, First 5 Network:**

While several counties have invested in home visiting for over ten years, California has seen an explosion in funding since 2019. Half of the county commissions have invested in home visiting for over 10 years, and the First 5 commissions have invested an average of \$60 million annually in both evidence-based and promising local prenatal and early childhood home visiting programs, with data showing an annual reach of up to 60,000 caregivers and 40,000 children ages birth through five.

In addition, commissions report an increasing investment in perinatal and infant and toddler pediatric supports, which are home-visiting-like services conducted in the office of a medical professional. Examples of programs that fall into this category include Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone (DULCE) and Healthy Steps. Comprehensive support is provided by 35 percent of the commissions, including of funding local community-based organizations and other entities that provide services.

Home visiting started as an investment by First 5 commissions over 10 years ago initially to address maltreatment. However, since then they've learned that home visits can be an effective tool for positive impacts on other child and family outcomes, including prenatal health, postpartum depression, children's physical health, immunizations, well-child visits, dental visits, and preparing children and families for school readiness.

First 5 commissions dedicate a portion of their budgets to support home visiting because they recognize how important an influence home visiting can have on child and family outcomes. Today, one-third of all home visiting programs in California are funded in total or in part by local commissions, either expanding services supported by other funding or providing infrastructure training and coordination activities that are unavailable or insufficiently funded through other sources.

### **Mayra Alvarez**

The next topic shifted focus to what it is like on the ground, from the parents' point of view. Ms. Alvarez addressed her question to Darrin Andrus, a single father, and Claudia Aguilar, Child Care Resource Center, who works with Darrin and his son. “[There’s] a wealth of information regarding the various funding streams that support home visiting services... But what does that actually mean on the ground?”

### **Darrin Andrus:**

“I’ve learned a lot from this program. This program has a lot of tools, the tools which have helped many of us. I’m sure in this program, especially during the pandemic, when we were confused and full of anxiety, this program stepped in and had balance. But I learned something else today. Listening to you women target all the issues in which we’re having with children, I didn’t even know—I’m even more grateful—I didn’t know all these different programs were connected to one body, moving one and two arms to reach out, so I’m grateful to be a part of this...”

“[T]his program is very flexible. I’ve been able to communicate with other fathers like myself, single parents who feel they’re not seen, not because of no reason other than they believe that, and it was, that women have had a lot to deal with parenting without fathers around. And so now their fathers are trying to get their foot up under themselves and be men. This program is great for them. This program would be great for everyone but especially some of the fathers who are afraid to ask for help.

“Christopher was born during the pandemic, and I have a senior, my mother, who’s 80. And so, I was faced with a lot of virtue, but the program put me at ease. It is a wonderful program....”

“And thank Claudia Aguilar for our encouragement, and Gladys, for telling me about the Head Start program for Christopher and how much it’ll be for him. And I’m thinking about our communities later, what Christopher would give to our community, how this program will be in his life to tell others... And so this program is not just good for me; it’s good for society because of the children which it’s instilling in.”

**Claudia Aguilar:**

“I would say the home visiting program definitely helps parents build self-sufficiency and really encourages parents to take ownership that they are their child's first teacher... and help them to strengthen the strengths that are sometimes unknown to them in their own ways, and really helps the parents to get connected and develop those strong, secure attachments with their child, so that way, they can pass on those same strengths to their child and also reflect...”

It's really a partnership that holds each other accountable.... So, it really is a give-and-take relationship. It's a true partnership with us, really stepping in that gap sometimes because some parents don't have as much support as maybe they would like. Sometimes, for some parents, this is the only support that they have, so we're stepping in and filling in.”

Ms. Aguilar also wanted to highlight how the program benefits the families: “[W]e provide health and wellness screenings, developmental screenings for children, and then health and wellness screenings for the parents. I work for the DPSS Home Visiting Program, so we get a material good fund that parents can use for things to meet basic needs like clothing, and help for paying utility bills, among other different items that they can get with that.”

Ms. Aguilar noted that the Child Care Resource Center received a CFR grant, which parents can use for COVID-related items: “Let's say parents have been experiencing isolation, they can buy a bike for their child, so that way they can ride to the park and get some of those motor activities in. We do, through the CalWORKs program, a mental health referral program, so they can have almost immediate access to seeing a mental health therapist if they choose to go down that route. The last time I referred someone, within two weeks, they were speaking to a therapist. So, it's a quick connection that they have with mental health services, through the home visiting program.”

**Mayra Alvarez**

Ms. Alvarez followed up, asking Ms. Aguilar to speak more about the approaches to connecting families to mentioned services and what that referral process looks like.

**Claudia Aguilar**

Ms. Aguilar pointed out that the center has health and wellness screenings, which provide parents solid evidence and support to give to their doctor, if needed. If the child is scoring within normal limits, requires additional monitoring, or needs a referral, they provide the parent with the summary they can present to their doctor to build a foundation, or the center can directly refer them to the Los Angeles Regional Center.

Ms. Aguilar explained that communication is key: “Sometimes it's helping them remember the appointments, asking about, ‘Did the specialist call you? When is your

appointment?’ Really assess the family and talk to them about, what are their needs? What do they think their needs are? And then help them connect to the different resources that we have available to us. For example, through the Childcare Resource Center, we have another organization called ‘Baby to Baby’ that donates items to us. So I’ll put in a request—my family needs diapers, they need clothing—and then our communications department will give me those donations to go drop off to parents.”

**Gina Gordon, California Home Visiting Program (CDPH):**

The discussion then moved to Gina Gordon, who spoke about the approaches to offering services to the families.

All three of the evidence-based home visiting models that CDPH supports have standardized assessments and referral processes in place that require evidence-based and evidence-informed tools and timeframes. The home visitors do the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) in conjunction with parents at different timeframes in their baby’s lives and then refer to regional centers or their equivalents. They also help support the families in making those connections, meeting with their pediatricians, and really following up on those referrals.

There are other similar referral processes in place for tobacco cessation, maternal mental health concerns, and intimate partner violence. There are several key areas that all the models require and CDPH requires that these processes are in place to support the referrals to community organizations.

**Kristina Meza:**

Ms. Meza addressed the question from the panel about creating spaces for connection and uplifting parents, partners, and teachers as allies and as sources of inspiration to each other, as well as how all the mentioned come alive in the CalWORKs HVP.

“I think we had a really great opportunity to do that through our evaluation report, where we were able to obtain quite a bit of qualitative data from our families and participants who are currently engaged in home visiting, and we’ve been able to adjust and make some changes to the program to be responsive to those needs. One of the things we just heard from Claudia is the benefit of having that material good fund in the CalWORKs [HVP], which is essentially \$500 that each family has access to, to purchase really critical needs that the family may have...[I]n that qualitative data is that there are needs for more expensive items like car seats and strollers. And what we’ve done and what we saw through the budget process was we were able to increase that threshold to a thousand dollars. “

**Darrin Andrus:**

For the final topic of discussion, Ms. Alvarez asked Mr. Andrus to share his personal experience with the past two years, the challenges related to parenting in the pandemic, and what home visiting programs do in addressing those challenges.

“Christopher was born during the pandemic, and [the pandemic] tested us, our state, and our country. It was difficult. When I met Claudia, I spoke to her about the village, because I knew it was going to take more than a father. So a father can take care of Christopher, but the program was helping me so I can take care of Christopher.

“And I just look forward to seeing what extensive work you all continue to do. There's no barrier. If there are barriers, it would be a word about consistency... [W]hat I see, all parents have an opportunity to have any tools, any educator, are a phone call away in their home....

“So the program not only had the tools, it had the educators who understand people. It was very easy for me to communicate and have a relationship. [Claudia's] people skill was tremendous. I thought for a minute we were building friendships, but we're building on children, and she's doing a great job. Christopher is really a great kid. I believe he is going to be that anyway, but with Claudia's help, he just expanded sooner. It's not taking till he is four years old to do these things. He'll be two on September 21st. And he's already acting as if he's four. And so those are the things that I just wanted to say, Mayra, again, and just support everyone. He wants to be a part of it. He loves it. So, say thank you. Say thank you.”

After the discussion panel, the audience shared their comments and impressions of the meeting. Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting by thanking the participants and giving information about the upcoming ECPC event in September.