



Early Childhood Policy Council Workforce Advisory Committee Meeting

Summary Report

Thursday, September 8, 2022, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Physical Meeting Information:

- 1000 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 WestEd, 5th floor, Old Town Room

Agenda

1. Welcome

- Welcome
- Public comment

2. Making Sense of What's Coming Out of Washington, D.C., and Sacramento: Policies Affecting the Early Childhood Workforce

- Guest speakers
- Committee discussion
- Public comment

3. Adjourn

Attendance:

- **ECPC Members:** Kim Johnson, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Miren Algorri, Robin Layton, Stephanie Myers
- **ECPC Workforce Advisory Committee Members:** Tonia McMillian, Amelia Soto, Debra Ward, Zoila Toma
- **Guest speakers:** Kim Kruckel, Mary Beth Testa, Laurie Furstenfeld
- **Support staff:** Karin Bloomer, David Burchiel, Margarete Lee
- **Interpreters:** Diana Orozco, Giovanna Wormsbecker, Sarah Sun, Ya-Nan Chou

Summary Report:

The Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) Workforce Advisory Committee Meeting started with opening remarks from committee chair Tonia McMillian. The main topic of the meeting was “Making Sense of What’s Coming Out of Washington, D.C. and Sacramento: Policies Affecting the Early Childhood Workforce.” To address the topic, the chair introduced Kim Krunkle and Laurie Furstenfeld of the Child Care Law Center and Mary Beth Salamon Testa of MBST Solutions.

Kim Kruckel, Child Care Law Center

Ms. Kruckel started a presentation that provided a breakdown of the differences between federal and state policy, legislation, and budget:

Child care is essential for strong, thriving families and just communities, and the government should guarantee that every family has access to quality, affordable, healthy, and safe child care. Ms. Kruckel noted that this has been increasingly recognized in recent years by Congress and even the president of the United States, and some broad, transformational proposals have been brought to the surface in the last year.

Ms. Kruckel then listed all the federal policies that impact California (i.e., those that provide funding and change policies in the state):

- Child Care and Development Block Grant
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and Part C
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Preschool Development Grants
- Budget and Appropriations
- Reconciliation

After that, Ms. Kruckel listed all the state actions and policies impacting child care programs:

- State budget
- Eligibility policy and provider payment policy for child care assistance
- Health and safety standards
 - Who follows what regulations
 - Who enforces the regulations and how they do so
- Preschool and transitional kindergarten (TK)
- QRIS & “quality initiatives”
- Professional development, training, and education requirements

Mary Beth Testa, MBST Solutions

Ms. Testa reflected that at the start of the pandemic it was clear that economic expectations would not be met without child care: “We were not going to be able to go to work in the middle of a pandemic. But also, how do we go to work in the middle of a pandemic? And what is it we're asking of the early childhood workforce in the middle of a pandemic? And gosh, the way we fund things doesn't work out when it's a pandemic.” Because of these challenges, there was an urgent need to invest. As a result, Congress passed three rounds of relief packages and large pieces of legislation, including relief funding for child care.

The American Rescue Plan Act was already “in play” by March of 2021. This broad relief package included approximately \$5 billion for child care in California. This offered state leaders a chance to address the issues caused or amplified by the pandemic that were getting more pressing every single day. With input from the field, partners, and families, the state used the federal funding to make key investments in wages, retirement, and health benefits to support the workforce; fee relief and additional vouchers for families; and renovation, infrastructure, and workforce development grants.

Another big challenge in the pandemic was stabilizing child care enrollment. This issue was among those addressed in the American Families Plan, which the Biden administration released to the public in early 2021: “In August of 2021, Congress decided on some rules of the game [for the American Families Plan], and they started using this word reconciliation. Lots of us had to learn what that word meant very quickly. What it means is a process that ensures that different committees in Congress that usually work in separate silos needed to work together, that we were going to pre-approve an amount of investment.” At that point, it was expected that \$400 billion would be invested in early child care.

Ms. Testa provided additional background on legislative developments related to child care funding. By November, the U.S. House of Representatives had passed what they called the Build Back Better legislation, but there were challenges to the bill in the Senate: “That challenge persisted all spring and into the summer. And advocates from across the country continued to make the case that child care was crucial, that we could not do any of the other things we sought for this country without addressing child care.”

The final reconciliation that was passed and signed by the president in August 2022 didn't include anything for child care: “It took them a year, and we went from \$400 billion worth of ideas to zero and to looking around at our relief funds to say, okay, what do we do? So that's a heavy and hard story and one that I would also say is not over because the need has not disappeared. And the need to talk about it has not disappeared, and the need to build something equitable is still present.”

Ms. Testa also mentioned the annual federal funding process through what is called appropriations. As part of this annual process, child care system professionals make their case for funds for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Birth to Five Preschool Development Grants. The House and Senate did see fit to increase funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start by \$1 billion each. The deadline to make these decisions into legislative pieces is September 30, but as Ms. Testa explained, it is very rare that legislators meet the deadline. The expectation is that they will extend it till December 16. Ms. Testa noted that the process may be impacted by November's midterm elections.

During her presentation, Ms. Testa also discussed the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides childhood programs, Head Start centers, and family child care with reimbursement for providing two meals and a snack daily. The Child Nutrition act, under which the program is authorized, has been due for a review or a reauthorization for years. The last review was done in December of 2010: "Babies who were in child care the last time Congress looked at this started seventh grade this year. That's a long time to not review and not consider some of these policies that help young children to eat and help them to thrive and help their caregivers to afford to make that possible." In Congress, the House Education and Labor Committee passed the renewal bill called the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act, but it remains to be seen whether the House and Senate will make time for a full vote on this.

Kim Kruckel, Child Care Law Center

After Ms. Testa finished her federal policy updates, Ms. Kruckel again took the floor to discuss the situation in Sacramento. Ms. Kruckel reminded the audience that almost all funding for child care in California comes from the federal government, with a very small amount of state money supporting child care. Ms. Kruckel gave a quick recap on the child care funding for the past few years.

There has been a growing movement for a mixed-delivery approach to include a wider variety of services—family child care, child care centers, more Head Start programs—in the universal public child care preschool system. This approach has been increasing in popularity because "everybody knows that every family is different and every child is different, and families should have the child care that best meets their needs and the needs of their children."

Child Care Providers United has negotiated stipends for all child care providers, regardless of whether they were in the subsidized system or not. They have also advocated for and successfully won health insurance and retirement contributions for child care providers caring for children supported with subsidies. Other federal resources available for child care in California include minor and major renovation grants and spaces available through centers or vouchers."

Laurie Furstenfeld, Child Care Law Center

Ms. Furstenfeld continued discussion of state-level issues, noting that final bills are out of the legislature, and the governor is deciding whether each bill will be signed, vetoed, or allowed to pass without signature. The state budget was also passed on July 1, and several trailer budget bills that impact child care are being passed as well.

Members of the Legislative Women's Caucus (LWC) advocate uplifting their priorities and other caucuses within the legislature to ensure that child care and policies that elevate providers and parents are included in the state budget. This year, the Legislative Women's Caucus had the following priorities:

- Child care providers must be paid more;
- The healthcare and retirement plans for Child Care Providers United must be included in the budget;
- Providers are paid when families cannot attend child care, meaning the subsidy payment for an enrolled child is not contingent on the child's actual attendance.

The LWC also focused on increased money for state preschool, which allows family fees to be waived and provides grants to upgrade child care programs and facilities, including centers, family child care homes, and preschools.

After the overview of the situation in Sacramento, Ms. Furstenfeld opened the floor for questions and comments regarding budget and policy legislation. In a quick exchange, audience members discussed whether the budget bill addresses the money that will be needed to implement the policy that's on the table, or if it is vice versa. Ms. Furstenfeld gave an extensive answer:

Public policy bills change state laws, such as creating and modifying programs, eligibility requirements for programs, and state-administered services. And they also can raise or lower taxes. Most legislation moves through the policy process where bills are heard in committees. For example, if there is a child care bill impacting rates, that bill starts in the house where its author is a member. An Assembly member carrying a bill means it will be heard first in the Assembly and assigned to committee based on its subject matter. Typically, child care bills are referred to Health and Human Services, Human Services, and/or Education. A bill may go to a couple of other committees if it impacts other subject areas. Then they also go through appropriations. The bill will then go to the floor, and if it passes its vote, it goes to the next house.

The state budget is also a bill. The difference between a budget bill and a policy bill is that a single budget bill authorizes spending across many different programs, and the spending is authorized for one fiscal year. A policy bill can be a multi-year implementation. The other difference is that budget bills have a separate timeline from

the policy bill deadlines. These deadlines are mandated through the California constitution.

Policy bills that cost money must have their funding approved via the state budget. So, when advocates propose a policy that costs money, they typically work with the budget committee, attend hearings, and track the budget process to help ensure that their bills are included in the final budget bill. The same goes for the author who is carrying the bill.

The governor and legislators draft and pass the state's annual budget according to the rules outlined in the state constitution. Sometimes these rules may change through ballot measures where proposed changes are sent to the voters. It is important to note that a budget is not just about money; it impacts individuals, communities, and programs, and it changes policy.

After an extensive breakdown of the differences, Ms. Furstenfeld also talked about the mandated deadlines of the budget. As the final takeaway, she reminded the audience that many things are happening on the legislative level related to child care: “The takeaway is it's fabulous that there is so much going on. There was a day when there was very little going on. So, it's great that there are so many things moving forward on so many fronts, and it's just a testament to the passion and dedication and commitment and skill and expertise of everybody here.”

During the discussion, ECPC member Robin Layton expressed frustration with the current funding priorities of the state administration: “[I]t really has been frustrating—over my career, but especially the last three or four years during this administration—because the priority is to fund TK through 12, not ECE. And so, we just need to call that out, because it is not their priority. It is our priority, and it is the Legislative Women's Caucus's priority, and it is most of the Assembly and most of the Senate, but not this administration.”

Tonia McMillian added that this prioritization is another symptom of systemic racism: “It still points to how comfortable folks are with the institutional and systemic racism that lies beneath everything that has taken place, especially when it comes to this particular workforce [ECE] that is mostly female, mostly women of color. It totally shows how deeply rooted things still are.”

Ms. Furstenfeld commented on the issue of systemic racism saying, “As white allies, it's really a lot on us to also raise the racial justice issues and systemic racism in child care policies, and it should not be on the women of color to try to fix the system when it's the white dominant culture that has created these policies that are very racist. And so I want to encourage, as white advocates and allies, to do our part in raising these issues and

having uncomfortable conversations with our legislators because it's what we need to do.”

After the discussion, Ms. McMillian made closing remarks, thanking the speakers and audience for their involvement in the discussion, and adjourned the meeting.