



Early Childhood Policy Council

Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary Report

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - Welcome
 - Voices from the field
 - Public comment
2. 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
3. California Department of Education Updates
 - Report on early childhood updates
 - Council questions and discussion
 - Public comment
4. Budget Recommendations
 - Council discussion
 - Public comment
5. Looking Back at 2022 – Looking Ahead to 2023
 - Council discussion
 - Public comment
6. Adjourn

Attendance:

Amelia Soto, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Antionette Jacobs, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Dean Tagawa, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Kate MoheyEldin, Kim Johnson, Kim Patillo Brownson, Khydeeja Alam Javid, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Lisete Frausto, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Mary Ignatius, Mayra Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Naima Facih, Natali Gaxiola, Patricia Alexander, Patricia Lozano, Patrick MacFarlane, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Sonia Jaramillo, Stephanie Myers, Stephen Propheter, Yenni Rivera

Summary Report:**Kim Johnson, ECPC Chair**

Kim Johnson, director of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) welcomed everyone to the fourth Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting of 2022. She shared her appreciation for the work of ECPC, the advisory committee members, members of the public, and all who are engaged in supporting children and families across California every day.

Ms. Johnson gave a brief overview of the agenda and welcomed Natali Gaxiola, a preschool teacher for the Lennox School District.

Natali Gaxiola

Ms. Gaxiola has over 20 years of teaching experience, and she acknowledged several ongoing challenges in the field:

- Getting the needed support
- The push for continuing education and professional development
- The promise of change

Transitional kindergarten (TK) implementation brought a lot decisions within the district that impacted the preschool program. They lost 14 teachers last year. While they were able to bring back four, there were over 50 families from communities of high need on a wait list when the school year started. With the pandemic, children have not been able to build foundational and social skills, and they have greater needs. They are still developing toileting and communication skills more than prior years. Classrooms are not receiving enough direct support. Related to funding, she has seen her class grow from an average of no more than sixteen children to a full classroom of twenty-one children, ages three to almost five years. Some children are missing two weeks at a time related to COVID. There is a huge need for substitutes as well. Staff illnesses are causing classes to be merged or leaving a less experienced teacher to lead a class. The combination of these factors has resulted in children not making progress at the expected rate. A lot of qualified, experienced, and truly passionate early childhood teachers have left or are considering leaving the field. And some who are joining the field, find that it is not a match and quickly move on. Retaining staff has been a huge challenge, and if something is not done now, people will continue to leave, and children will suffer.

Ms. Johnson thanked Ms. Gaxiola for sharing her direct knowledge of the immediate needs of the workforce, noting that it was a very helpful, powerful, and impactful message. She then introduced council member Dean Tagawa to share his perspective as a parent and educator.

Dean Tagawa, Executive Director, Los Angeles Unified School District, Early Childhood Education Division

Mr. Tagawa comes from a long line of educators. He shared that as a parent of children with special needs, early childhood supports were critical for his family. His experiences accessing such supports continue to affect the work he does today.

His early education background helped him recognize when one of his young twins was having difficulty making eye contact and being able to reciprocate at 14 months old. By age two the child had been diagnosed as having autism. About six months later, the other twin was also diagnosed. Mr. Tagawa's family leaned on the regional centers for support, and then the twins became part of Head Start. They were among the small percentage of Head Start students with special needs, and the teachers were great. Even as an educator himself, Mr. Tagawa appreciated the teachers' help in understanding and navigating the transition from having an IFSP through the regional center to an IEP within the district. During a meeting about the 30-day IEP, his head was spinning. At the time he was an assistant principal, and what he learned as a parent transferred to his efforts to help other parents understand the system.

Within LA Unified, every time there is an incident on campus, it is reported and placed in the I STAR system. It is important that parents know and that staff understand the children. There was a fourth-grade teacher who, after one child had a meltdown, brought their class together to ask if any of them were interested in learning how to help the child. Most of the class stayed after school to learn about him. For the rest of the year, he was supported by his peers.

In his role now, Mr. Tagawa has been able to expand preschool collaborative classrooms. Originally there were about 43 classrooms in the early education centers. Now, all 86 early education centers have a preschool collaborative classroom staffed by early childhood general education and special education teachers and aides. These settings help move children from special education services to reduced services in general education settings. So far, the data shows that 82 percent of children who receive special education services through a collaborative classroom have been able to transition to a general education classroom for kindergarten. Transitional kindergarten programs have added 120 collaborative classrooms, each with 16 or 18 general education students and 8 children with IEPs.

Mr. Tagawa shared his belief that the early childhood workforce needs significant training in several areas:

- How to help and support families
- What resources are available
- Building connections with local school districts

Having contacts with local districts is important because they are eventually going to be providing services and making referrals if children need services outside their current placements.

Mr. Tagawa wondered whether these networks are in place. "Does everybody who's a provider know who to contact in early childhood special ed to make that connection? Because I think for many of our families, eventually they're going to end up in a public

school, and they need to have that support, and they need to know who to contact, and they need to have a relationship with that person as they make that transition.”

Mr. Tagawa’s children are both 18 years old and in college now. “One started at Cal State LA this year as an art major, and one is a civil engineering major at Cal Poly Pomona,” he shared. “This whole next phase of life..., learning about the Department of Rehab and the different support systems that are at the institutes of higher education, is a whole other learning piece. I have to say it was those early years... that made all the difference for the boys.” Mr. Tagawa also pointed out that the work of ECPC has long-term effects, and early investments can pay dividends.

Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Tagawa for sharing his family’s story and successes. She related that she is the aunt of an autistic 23-year-old who is receiving good supports from the Department of Rehab and offered appreciation to its staff. She then invited fellow council member, Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham, to provide a brief update on the transition of the child care and development programs at CDSS.

Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Deputy Director, California Department of Social Services, Child Care and Development Division

Dr. Jaime-Mileham shared that CDSS has partnered with Parent Voices, Child Care Providers United, the Child Care Law Center, the Low Income Investment Fund, and many others to capture \$1 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funding, impacting both providers and parents. Local Planning Councils play a role in local child care planning and governance and share in an increased investment that CDSS has made to ensure that accurate child care data is gathered for decision-making. Dr. Jaime-Mileham shared that since the start of the pandemic, California has dispersed several rounds of ARPA funding (totalling \$1.2 billion) to child care providers. This includes:

- \$205.5 million for a \$600 per child stipend
- \$3.2 million for license incentive payments
- \$177 million for licensing stabilization stipends
- \$320 million for a CDSS stipend, estimated to be \$1042, to come this fall

She then shared stories about the impact of CDSS investments, which were gathered through Child Care Law Center listening sessions. “One provider said that the stipend was helpful because so many of her clients lost their jobs in 2020 and had to pause their childcare. Another provider said that she used the stipend to pay her bills after nine of the children she’d cared for stopped coming to her daycare.” Dr. Jaime-Mileham also shared some direct quotes from Child Care Providers United members:

Anonymous Provider:

"I'm a provider of my grandchildren. I am licensed exempt, and I have five grandchildren who I take care of when my children work full-time. With all the help that I received, it really has helped a lot. I have gone to buy a lot of things to help my grandchildren learn. I've also been able to take them on little field trips to the park, picnic, and have been able to do artwork with them. It really helped me a lot and I really want to say thank you for all the help. Even though I am licensed exempt and I do take care of my grandchildren, I feel it's the same as having my own daycare. I love it. I feel safe with my grandchildren in my care. They learn a lot. They learn the world."

Anonymous Provider:

"The stipend has been an essential factor in allowing me to stay open. The benefit has covered expensive cleaning supplies, masks, toys, equipment, books, blankets, cribs, play pens, carpet, towels, sleeping and eating materials, repair. Most of all, lost income from too many children who were out sick and leaving daycare."

Dr. Jaime-Mileham then discussed the effects of the governor's COVID-19 State of Emergency declaration on March 4, 2020. "Since August 31, 2020, family fees—which represent a parent/guardian's share of childcare costs—have been waived. The providers in the Child Care Law Center listening session said that the waiver helped stabilize their business, and families receiving the fee waived were steadily clients that they would have been before the fee waiver. One provider said that if the fee waiver were made permanent, she would be willing to take more subsidized children."

Dr. Jaime-Mileham also shared stories on the impact of family fee waivers from Parent Voices. "Maria lives in San Francisco. After two years of family fee waivers, she was able to use money that she would have paid toward the fee to pay off her most predatory credit card, increasing her credit score and moving her family into a safer home... Marisol was paying \$500 per month in family fees before the pandemic fee waiver. Without the financial stress of the payment, she paid her debt down, increasing her credit score by 20 points. She enrolled her children in dance class, which has helped ease the isolation that they experienced during the pandemic."

Dr. Jaime-Mileham offered her thanks to focus group participants for sharing their stories and then proceeded to provide brief updates on several other topics.

On August 1, 2020, administrative responsibility for the Preschool Development Grant Renewal (PDG-R) transitioned from California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) to CDSS. The PDG-R activities integrate with other CDSS whole-child/whole-family programs. PDG-R-funded staff from CalHHS have transitioned to the Child Care and Development Division (CCDD) to continue to manage and administer the grant. All PDG-R contract supports—the invoicing, amendments, and federal reporting—will continue to be led by CalHHS partners in collaboration with the CCDD team and the CDSS administrative division, which includes accounting, federal reporting unit, and others.

Composed of parents, providers, public agency representatives, and community members, Local Planning Councils (LPCs) in each California county plan for child care and development services based on the needs of their communities. In 2008, funding for LPCs was reduced. This meant many LPCs were unable to maintain a full-time coordinator and struggled to attract and retain qualified staffers. Integration of the child care data they gathered also suffered. CDSS is reinstating an annualized LPC contract in fiscal year 22/23 with Child Care Development Funds quality funding. This annualized funding will provide LPCs in all 58 counties with funding for one full-time staff person and aid CDSS in meeting one of the policy objectives of the transition: "to leverage data-driven decisions to enhance the allocation of child care resources."

The Child and Adult Care Food Program Branch (CACFPB) strategic plan was finalized and posted to the CDSS website in October. The strategic plan details ongoing priorities for the program. These include proactively engaging with internal and external partners to focus on common goals that support the program and ensuring equitable access to

healthy meals for infants, children, and adults in California. In addition, CACFPB is working with the CACFP Roundtable and the Nutrition Policy Institute at the University of California, Berkeley to analyze how the U.S. Department of Agriculture's changes to reimbursements for family child care homes have impacted communities and the children they serve. The CACFPB resumed in-person trainings for nutrition program operators in October. Training topics focused on program integrity, operations, and quality program improvement.

During the Brilliant Beginnings community-of-interest meeting on October 11, 2022, MyChildCarePlan.org was launched live to over 500 interested parties. The website includes a map-based search for over 3,200 licensed providers, education resources, and live support. CDSS is partnering with the Child Care Resource and Referral Network (the Network) on the website, and the Network has a marketing campaign that is driving over 1,000 Californians to the site each day.

Ms. Johnson thanked Dr. Jaime-Mileham for her overview and invited questions.

Council Questions and Discussion

Deborah Corley-Marzett commented that the provider child care bulletins regarding COVID days need more specific language. She noted that child care bulletin 2229 stated providers could not use "COVID dates for cleaning," and pointed out that if a provider is home sick, the last thing they're going to be able to do is disinfect and clean. So while the additional 16 days between September 27, 2022 and June 30, 2023 are appreciated, the language needs to be more specific to support providers following policies. She offered another example: "I had a provider even call and say 'my agency is asking me for a note that I gave my parents,' and that shouldn't even have been asked to her. It's not even asked in a child care bulletin. So with the policies that are out there, we appreciate the policies, great job, but when there's certain language that's missing, providers' backs are up against the wall."

Ms. Johnson and Dr. Jaime-Mileham thanked Ms. Corley-Marzett for her feedback.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham remembered that the language was tied to self-quarantine and self-isolation and asked for time to review it and reconnect with Ms. Corley-Marzett.

Mary Ignatius appreciated the presentation slide that detailed the \$1.2 billion in ARPA funding. She asked if CDSS has slides or information detailing the full distribution of the ARPA dollars that can be shared with the committee.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham said she could make the request and was confident there was information to share. She also recognized that there may be some things not reflected in the slide that perhaps should be showcased. She said that she would meet with the team before the next meeting to discuss how to develop an infographic to show the investments.

Ms. Ignatius thanked Dr. Jaime-Mileham and noted that the transparency would be helpful, as it is hard to know if every dollar has been spent or if there is anything left to advocate for.

Ms. Johnson then welcomed council member Sarah Neville-Morgan.

Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education, Opportunities for All Branch

Ms. Neville-Morgan introduced herself as a representative for the California Department of Education (CDE), along with Stephen Propheter, director of the Early Education Division under the Opportunities for All Branch (OFAB) at CDE, and Kate MoheyEldin, child development consultant in CDE's Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK).

She reiterated CDE's vision for all children to have a strong and early start to inclusive education with high-quality, joyful, rigorous, developmentally informed and coherent preschool through third grade learning opportunities to ensure they thrive in school and in life and are college or career ready. Although preK–3 is a focus, CDE is leaning in on transitions across educational systems. Through this vision, CDE is working to build and support culturally affirming programs, schools, and teachers as they work, volunteer, and engage in California's education and care system and beyond. There is still a lot of work to be done with specific demographics and in specific areas of the state, including California's tribes as sovereign nations.

UPK is an expansion of the state's mixed-delivery system. Ms. Neville-Morgan clarified that in this case, the state is the Legislature and the governor's office as reflected in the California budget process. To expand the mixed-delivery system to meet the educational needs of three- and four-year-old children and their families, the state invested in TK, and by 2025-26, it will be available for free for all four-year-old children.

Ms. Neville-Morgan discussed UPK as consisting of far more than TK. It relies on many other programs to ensure all families have access to high-quality learning opportunities for their preschoolers. This includes California's State Preschool Program (CSPP), which has recently undergone expansion and changes to requirements to ensure it is fundamentally part of UPK.

CDE envisions a California where each child enters school thriving and ready to succeed in their educational journey, not just because of their UPK experience, but because of all the other work the state has been doing, particularly with Black and Brown, indigenous, and multilingual communities and those historically marginalized.

A concentrated, statewide approach is the right way, and the administration's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care says that "high-quality preschool programs can increase levels of school readiness at kindergarten re-entry and can improve long-term school performance." With a strong foundation in math and reading—which helps support success in elementary school and beyond, while also reducing the need for special education services—a child is more likely to advance through school on time with their peers, have greater long-term success in higher education and financial outcomes, and experience less interaction with the criminal justice system.

Ms. Neville-Morgan also shared that recent research shows higher civic engagement rates: "So when we invest in our little kids, they're actually more likely to engage in the process and vote and do other things around civic engagement later on." CDE also appreciates leaning in with all ECPC partners because it takes multiple systems shifting to meet this challenge and to address the gaps around the entire piece.

Ms. Neville-Morgan then asked Stephen Propheter to share more specifics of the UPK state-level workgroup.

Stephen Propheeter: Director, Early Education Division, OFAB at CDE

As part of this year's budget, Assembly Bill 185 requires CDE—in consultation with the director of Social Services and the executive director of the State Board of Education—to convene a statewide workgroup on UPK mixed delivery, quality, and access. They also welcomed the executive director of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as part of the collaborative team. The statute explicitly outlines that the charge of the UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup is to provide recommendations in two areas: 1) best practices for increasing high-quality universal preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children offered through a mixed-delivery model that provides equitable learning experiences across a variety of settings, and 2) to provide recommendations to update preschool standards related to Education Code Section 8203, which provides standards to support equitable access to high-quality preschool and TK programs through the mixed-delivery model across all appropriate settings and funding sources. The statute defines a mixed-delivery system as a system of early childhood education services that is delivered through a variety of providers, programs, and settings—including Head Start; public, private, or proprietary agencies (e.g., community-based organizations, public schools, local education agencies) that offer center-based child care, preschool programs, tribal child care, and preschool in family child care, through a family child care home education network. CDE's role is to implement the state law, not to create or set state law. The law's definition is a bit more limited and does not include every early learning and care provider. However, CDE believes that high-quality preschool experience can be provided in any setting.

Because of the narrow focus described in statute, the workgroup is also meant to address the following:

- How can programs currently under Title 5 implement best practices to increase access, including through partnerships with the broader early learning and care community?
- How can early learning and care providers who want to meet these requirements be supported to do so?
- How can changes to education code support both increased access and quality?

The workgroup is being convened under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act of 1967, allowing the public to listen and provide comment. Until at least July of 2023, the meetings will be held virtually, via Zoom. Agendas will be posted on the CDE website, and the first meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2023. Subsequent meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of each month. Researchers, child development experts, data experts, and others will be invited to present on various topics to inform the workgroup's discussions and, ultimately, its recommendations.

State law also provides a list of the entities required to have membership in the workgroup, including interest holders with experience and expertise related to preschool quality and access, state appointees identified through individual referrals, and individuals identified through an open application process meant to ensure a diverse and representative group of individuals. The state-appointed members were chosen based on experience in issues of preschool quality and access and their roles in key organizations working on these issues in California. For workgroup members chosen through the open application process, CDE developed a widely disseminated survey application form. Applicant members were chosen based on several factors including

both work and lived experiences. To avoid limitations under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and to ensure a broader diversity of representation, opinions, and experiences, the state prioritized participants who were not already members of other state-level councils or public workgroups. There were nearly 300 applicants. Members were selected and notified in mid-November, and the workgroup was established by the statutory deadline of December 1, 2022.

Mr. Propheter introduced Kate MoheyEldin to review more of AB185 and the Mixed Delivery Planning Grant, a local funding piece.

Kate MoheyEldin, Child Development Consultant, CDE Universal Pre-Kindergarten Office

Ms. MoheyEldin shared that the fiscal year 22/23 Budget Act created the California Universal Preschool Planning Grant, or UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grant, codified in Education Code 8320. The grant's goal is to expand access universally to high-quality preschool programs, meeting standards in Education Code 8203 and Title 5 quality standards for three and four-year-old children across the state. There will be \$18.3 million in fiscal year 22/23, and if funds are available for the 23/24 and 24/25 fiscal years, existing grantees may apply for a renewal grant. The grant funding is an allocation and not competitive for LPCs and R&Rs. The letter of intent was released and due to CDE on December 6, 2022. CDE is in consultation with CDSS as the documents needed for this grant are shared. Grantees are required to coordinate with the County Office of Education and partner with the local education agencies who received funding from the California PreKindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant, to align and coordinate plans for the following activities:

- Partner and plan for high-quality universal preschool options
- Meet Ed Code 8203 and Title 5 quality standards for three and four-year-old children through a mixed-delivery system that ensures access to high-quality, full- and part-day learning experiences, including coordinated services and referrals for families to access health and social-emotional support services

Planning should address increasing inclusion of children with disabilities in universal preschool, assisting existing and aspiring ECE staff to increase the staff pipeline, and providing outreach services and enrollment to support children and meet families' needs. The grantees will be partnering with tribes as sovereign nations to reflect tribal family and community needs. Grantees will present their plan at a County Office of Education public meeting on or before June 30, 2023 to address how all four-year-old children and an increased number of three-year-olds in the county may access full-day learning programs before kindergarten that meet the needs of parents utilizing the mixed-delivery system and expanded learning options. Lastly, grantees must form a local workgroup with the entities that make up the county's mixed-delivery system and engage in community level coordination to ensure collaboration and planning for the expansion of UPK in the mixed delivery system.

Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Propheter and Ms. MoheyEldin for their updates and opened the floor for questions.

Questions and Discussion

AnnLouise Bonnitto noted that because a lot of tribes are under three major tribal agencies, coordinated outreach and communication is needed.

Sonia Jaramillo raised three topics of concern:

- The California Head Start Association needs an extension of the Associate Teacher Permit Waiver, perhaps past the current limit of 10 years, as some staff transition into the TK world. Workforce development is needed to ensure assistant teachers and associate teachers are able to work after their waiver expires.
- If parents must enroll their child in TK, will they continue to have the choice to place their kids in preschools not connected to LEAs? Looking at the timelines, will that financial impact give the option by 2025.
- Does AB 185 include all of the Head Start programs and all preschool programs that are not currently state funded? A past issue has been part-day programs that are only Head Start funded and blended state-funded and Head Start programs. In the part-day programs, staff do not qualify for the services provided by the state because they are not state funded.

Ms. Neville-Morgan responded to the questions and shared that CDE will be working with tribes and a representative on the workgroup to dive more deeply into tribal expression of quality. There is also a UPK accelerated pathway in development to access the permit faster, including credit for experience. Kate Brown, a CTC Commissioner and community college faculty member is also in the workgroup to make sure the teacher component is woven throughout

Mr. Propheter added that the TK statute is written in such a way that a child age eligible for TK, is also age eligible for the California State Preschool Program. And providers who do not receive subsidies are identified as part of the local workgroup.

Paula Merrigan was in a meeting with Berkeley Children's Department where Mr. Tagawa mentioned that there were tens of thousands of age-eligible children who were not being served in LA Unified boundaries alone. She asked if "research is being done to help support the LEAs to determine why families are not taking advantage of UPK through the mixed-delivery system? Is it because they don't know about it? Is it they choose to do private? Is it they don't have the resources, it's not in proximity?"

Ms. Neville-Morgan stated they are unaware of research in that area. CDE serves eight percent of eligible three-year-old children, so there is a long way to go in making sure eligible children in California are served. She also noted that while numbers have improved, state preschool programs (and likely Head Start) have not had all families return to in-person attendance. It is not known where all these families have gone.

Robin Layton asked about the impact of TK expansion. She noted that a lot of private-sector child care is closing due to lack of four-year-olds while districts are struggling to serve four-year-olds and parents need full-day care. She shared that she is against waivers for teachers, as they lower the standards for the most vulnerable children who deserve qualified educators.

Ms. Neville-Morgan stated there are a multitude of factors around educator shortages. She noted there are shortages in every workforce sector, including food service workers for the meal programs or mental health workers to address some of the investments made in the state. There are unserved three- and four-year-olds despite an increased rate for three-year-olds. CDE wants to support increased access for three-year-olds in high-quality TK.

Ms. Neville-Morgan agreed that 12 ECE units is not sufficient and 10 years is too long to say "You're part of a high-quality Pre-K program with that low amount of educational background." Educational attainment, increasing practice, and knowledge and supports informing practice are important.

Ms. Corley-Marzett wanted clarity on which family child care providers are included. The Network was mentioned but it does not seem that all providers are in the mixed-delivery system referenced.

Ms. Neville Morgan clarified that licensed family child care needed to be part of a family child care network (FCCN).

Ms. Corley-Marzett acknowledged that all early learning educators and providers are not included, but that for the whole child to be represented, a mixed-delivery system should include all providers.

Mr. Propheter shared that there are two different workgroups, state and local. The local work group includes family child care providers per the statute. He offered a reminder that CDE does not write law; therefore, they are limited with who engages in the workgroup to inform recommendations.

Ms. Corley-Marzett reiterated that not truly including all providers is an issue, and Ms. Neville-Morgan shared language from the statute, which is very specific to family child care through a Family Child Care Home Education Network.

Donna Sneeringer spoke to inclusion of Head Start programs and the fact that Head Start has a whole-child/whole-family support model, which is very different than what happens in TK classrooms. Some districts in her service area are moving children with identified special needs to TK and away from the supportive services that are in Head Start. There is work to be done in identifying the best environment for children and giving families the information required to make an informed choice. She was also in agreement with Ms. Corley-Marzett that the broader family child care voice should be included in these conversations and local meetings. She stressed that whatever could be done by the department to ensure that the county offices engage family child care would be critical. Lastly she reiterated that families need full-day, full-year care and many of the families are not engaging in programs because the hours do not meet their needs: "There are valiant efforts underway for expanded learning and more services on site, but the three- and four-year-olds of today, tomorrow, next year, and the year after are not connected. As part of the Preschool Development Grant, CCRC held feedback sessions with parents around transitional kindergarten and recorded videos, found on the [CCRC website](#). The parents are pretty eloquent in their comments about TK."

Janet Zamudio reiterated the importance of including all programs in planning. Oftentimes, family child care and private centers are the hardest hit and left out. She suggested guidance for LEAs on including all programs in a successful partnership, noting that it is important to define success with departments and at the local level.

She also addressed the teacher pipeline in Santa Clara County where she works. There have been efforts by the county, and possibly statewide, to bring child care educators and preschool teachers into UPK and TK. While this is a great opportunity for teachers to receive support going into TK, there are gaps left in child care. One of the biggest issues and points of frustration for child care programs is seeing coordinated efforts for TK job announcements and recruitment, but no recruitment for child care. Stanford University has six campus child care centers and struggles most with hiring for the

infant and toddler age group. The saving grace for that age group is oftentimes family child care providers. There is a lot of work to do to elevate the child care sector and the importance of its work: valuing educators, paying them a livable wage, ensuring they have medical benefits, total teacher compensation, and more. Continued efforts to bring teachers into UPK and TK without bringing more people into child care will leave child care decimated in the near future.

Ms. Neville-Morgan responded that partnerships and relationships on both sides are needed: “We have phenomenal LEAs. Paula [Merrigan], who is one of our members on here, I cannot shout out enough for the intentionality she has in being developmentally informed and supportive as a TK teacher. So same thing both ways. I can then say Dean [Tagawa] and his program and Sonia [Jaramillo] and what she runs, there are amazing programs across California. I cannot... put our early learning, our child care and our CSPP and Head Start against TK. These are all valuable. All of this educational continuum needs to really work together and not do an us-versus-them but try to think child first. What is it that we need, and how do we create what California needs moving forward?” She noted that children are not exiting school ready to thrive in the workforce, college, or career. The physical, mental, and social-emotional health of children, families, and our early educators are important. It is hard-to-impossible for providers to be fully present and supportive of the children in their program. Gaps in care and addressing programming are the goal.

Mr. Propheter added that the Family Child Care Home Education Network is required to meet Title 5 standards. The workgroup is also charged with discussing how to create more access to more settings that meet those standards. “It's not exclusive. It's like how do we get more? How do we expand more so that more settings are included?”

Ms. Jaramillo asked about the possibility of waiving parent fees permanently to end that competition: “Because once they see the fee and there's access to free preschool services, most of our families will go to the free.”

Dr. Jaime-Mileham introduced the next agenda item: state budget investments the ECPC wants to communicate to the governor and Legislature. Councilmembers Robin Layton and Mary Ignatius led the effort to gather the Council's recommendations.

Robin Layton, ECPC Member, Educational Enrichment Systems

Mary Ignatius, Chair, ECPC Parent Advisory Committee

Ms. Layton shared her pride in the council being proactive by sending a letter prior to the January release of the governor's proposed budget. The contents of the letter come from the last two years of public comments, ECPC members' discussions during meetings, the Parent Advisory Committee, and the Workforce Advisory Committee. The advisory committees endorsed the draft letter at their December meeting, and the letter is now being brought to the full council for consideration and endorsement.

Ms. Ignatius shared that the council has been trying to have a more advisory role with the Legislature, the administration, and the lead agencies and departments that administer relevant programs. The goal is to implement a process for following up after the budget has been released and then again for the May revision.

The draft letter is also posted as a link on the ECPC webpage.

Ms. Ignatius walked through the contents of the letter, which also reflect budget context provided by Scott Moore of the California Budget and Policy Center to the joint meeting of the Workforce and Parent Subcommittees .

The letter thanks the administration for hearing the policy needs expressed by both families and the workforce to survive the pandemic. The administration's establishment of the Rate and Quality Workgroup to address the woefully inadequate reimbursement rate structure for the essential child care workforce is addressed. The letter acknowledges the harms caused by systemic injustices and racism, and the recommendations in the letter are intended to mitigate those harms. Considering the potential deficit that Mr. Moore discussed, the asks are concise:

- Protecting and preserving access to quality affordable child care, which includes making permanent the state's COVID-19 policies, such as hold harmless, family fee waivers, and COVID-19 sick days set to expire June 30, 2023;
- Maintaining the governor and Legislature's commitment to expand access to child care, 200,000 slots by 2025;
- Protecting and expanding the early care workforce, including recommendations of the governor's Rate and Quality Workgroup; and
- Ensuring that any of the governor's investments, previous or new, related to behavioral health, mental health, and supports for children with special needs— inclusive of early childhood and care that begins at birth—are kept.

There are revenue solutions to be explored before any conversations about cuts.

The group would like to meet with the governor in early 2023 to discuss these investments. Without an early child care policy representative now, ECPC's voice is important in making children a priority.

Ms. Ignatius noted that how mixed-delivery is defined is not included but should also be mentioned.

Public Comment

Mayra Alvarez wanted to follow up on the COVID-19 policies that were put into place during the pandemic and the flexibilities and approaches to policy allowed in a public health emergency. She noted that when the public health emergency ends, families will be in a very difficult position regarding nutrition and health care, and she asked if COVID policies are permanent and if there are opportunities to address them more broadly. For example, there are many children whose families did not have to prove their eligibility during this pandemic and the state has committed to doing that until 2025.

Ms. Layton confirmed including a request to make all COVID-19 policies permanent and recognized the benefits of these policies, including family fee exemptions.

Ms. Alvarez agreed and suggested including nutrition, housing, child care, etc.

Ms. Ignatius acknowledged the suggestions and reminded everyone that the day's goal was to come to agreement so the letter gets to the governor's office before the January budget draft is issued. Any major changes would interfere with this timeline since the letter is written and appears on the website. She reiterated that the current letter does address the urgent issues and that the members of the board can make suggestions. It was agreed to add the word "make" regarding the current policies becoming permanent.

Ms. Ignatius and Ms. Layton moved the group to a vote to adopt the letter with minor changes.

Per the Zoom call, eligible participants raised their hands, or virtual hands, in agreement. There were no oppositions. Ms. Johnson, Ms. Neville-Morgan, and Stephanie Myers abstained from voting due to their positions.

Ms. Johnson moved the agenda forward, asking members of the board and the committee about their suggested focus areas for 2023. She also reviewed the group's position and purpose—per a 2019 law, the board advises the governor, Legislature, and State Public Instruction Superintendent on the policies of early learning and care, including planning, implementation, and assessment of the State's Master Plan. In 2022, topics were:

- Early brain development and the impacts of trauma
- The whole child, supporting the physical needs of children's behavior development
- Families and care providers sharing improvements they needed

Additionally, investments were made in the workforce and funding resources, to make sure more options are available for all families in California.

The conversation was moved to suggestions for 2023.

Ms. Sneeringer encouraged the group not to lose sight of the unique support needs of parents with very young children—the most difficult, expensive, and challenging care to find. The most challenging transitions that a family faces are during the first years.

Ms. Alvarez suggested thinking about association with BIPOC leadership organizations working on and prioritizing racial justice, nutrition education, housing, and social justice. She also acknowledged the leadership in California (i.e., CDSS and DHCS) and efforts being made to prioritize young children.

Ms. Gaxiola suggested looking at the messaging strategy—what systems are being put together to support the big picture, the state's vision, and the implementation process at the local levels.

In the chat were suggestions regarding dual language learners and children with special needs.

Paula Merrigan suggested the group find greatest pain points in the system and use either a gender, economic, or racial lens in addressing them. She shared that parent fees are inconsistent and inequitable and suggested a screening law could be passed.

Ms. Ignatius reiterated the need for a campaign about the educational benefits when children start early; to support students who are learning two languages and see them as valuable; and protect providers and help them to understand the different stages in the oral language development of young children.

Mr. Tagawa added how great it would be to see ads during the Super Bowl, sharing all the benefits we have for our children.

Ms. Ignatius suggested reviewing income options to sustain benefits in the field. She also suggested looking at other states to identify practices California can integrate. She pointed to a new constitutional amendment in New Mexico to fund early education, as well as programs in Washington, D.C. and New York.

Ms. Johnson moved the group to general public comment.

Public Comment

Maria Gomez, family child care home provider, shared the success of her program and sending children to school with advanced skills for their age. While she provides her children with a variety of experiences, including a big backyard where children can spend time outside, she does not have subsidized parents and therefore does not receive any of the benefits of those funds. Families with subsidies do not come to her area, despite her willingness to accept subsidies. It is important to remember the wide variety of providers and families. Parents need to be in these discussions.

Samantha Thompson affirmed Ms. Corley-Marzett's earlier comment about mixed-delivery service and lack of access. She reiterated the importance of listening to families and making sure they understand the options available to them as they make the most important choices. She also emphasized that data collected has to be accessible for families and used in a way that is not harming marginalized groups. Finally, she pointed out the need for accountability in conversations, decision-making, and policy recommendations to make sure there is continuity in creating this accessible system.

Ms. Johnson echoed everyone's gratitude for the progress made, voices heard, and the many contributions all year long before closing the meeting.