



Early Childhood Policy Council

Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary Report

Thursday, March 30, 2023
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Physical Meeting: 1000 G St, Sacramento, CA 95814, WestEd, Floor 5, Capitol Room

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. Progress on the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

- Presentation
- Council discussion
- Public comment

5. Future ECPC Meetings and Discussion Topics

- Review of meeting dates and topics
- Council discussion
- Public comment

6. Adjourn

Attendance:

ECPC Council Members: Kim Johnson, Antoinette Jacobs, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Dean Tagawa, Donna Sneeringer, Khydeeja Alam Javid, Kim Patillo-Brownson, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Mayra E. Alvarez, Natali Gaxiola, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Sonia Jaramillo, Janet Zamudio, Tonia McMillian, Miren Algorri, Lisete Frausto, Mary Ignatius

Parent Advisory Committee Members: Deborah Corley-Marzett, Naima Facih, Lisete Frausto, Mary Ignatius, Patricia Lozano, Patrick MacFarlane Yenni Rivera, Cheryl Schroeder

Workforce Advisory Committee Members: Miren Algorri, Patricia Alexander, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Tonia McMillian, Virginia Eigen, Amelia Soto, Zoila Toma, Debra Ward, Latonda Williams

Summary Report:

Welcome and Introductions: Kim Johnson, ECPC Chair

Kim Johnson, director of the Department of Social Services (CDSS), welcomed everyone to the first Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting of 2023. She shared her appreciation for the work of the council, the advisory committee, members of the public, and all who are engaged in supporting children and families across California.

Director Johnson acknowledged the significant community needs created by California's ongoing weather events. She noted that the [Disaster Help Center on the CDSS website](#) includes safety net resources and guides that may be valuable for the early learning and care workforce and the families they serve. She also expressed concern about the impacts of gun violence as evidenced by the recent school shooting in Nashville.

Director Johnson announced the resignations of ECPC members Alicia Lieberman and Stephanie Myers and expressed her appreciation for their service on the council and in the field. Ms. Myers will be returning to the California Department of Education (CDE) and the council looks forward to continued collaboration with CDE and the Head Start Collaboration Office. There are now three vacancies on the council, and Director Johnson encouraged interested parties to apply. To be considered for appointment to the council by Governor Newsom, [submit an online application](#).

Director Johnson thanked the council's support team and the council members for their work in 2022. The [ECPC annual report](#) provides an overview of the council's conversations, priorities, and focus areas over the course of an eventful year of work supporting California's children and families.

After a brief overview of the agenda, Director Johnson invited **Kay Ruhstaller**, executive director of the Family Resource and Referral Center to introduce the first guest.

Ms. Ruhstaller thanked Director Johnson on behalf of alternative payment provider organizations in California for her leadership within CDSS and on the council and

expressed appreciation for her testimony to the Legislature's budget subcommittees on behalf of the families CalWORKs serves.

In the 2022-23 budget, CalWORKs continued funding 110,500 subsidized child care slots created under the 2021 Budget Act, as well as 36,000 newly created slots. The state's current goal is to reach 200,000 total additional subsidized child care slots. Like colleagues across the state, CalWORKs has been actively conducting outreach to families to fill these slots.

Ms. Ruhstaller pointed out the well-documented fact that caregiving is significantly more likely to impact women's employment than men's. When caregiving removes women from the workforce, it both harms the overall economy and threatens women's self-sufficiency. Parents wait-listed for years have arrived to enrollment appointments and broken down in tears of disbelief and joy. One parent called back the week after their enrollment to make sure it was not a mistake.

Ms. Ruhstaller introduced San Joaquin resident **Kendra Allen** to share her experience as a parent.

Ms. Allen introduced herself, sharing that she is a newer recipient of subsidized child care via the Family Resource Center of San Joaquin. She expressed how thankful she is to have the opportunity to obtain affordable childcare, especially in this economy: "It's done wonders for me, not only just for me and my career. I have the opportunity to kind of center with myself again, I would say. My daughter is one-and-a-half years old, and I've been with her ever since birth, every single day. And I've been working from home and juggling the two. And it definitely has been a very big challenge mentally. So to be able to have childcare and to be able to afford it comfortably every month has been such a blessing to me."

Ms. Allen detailed how access to care has impacted her ability to support her family. "This has also given me an opportunity to advance in my career eventually because now I am able to report to work in person when need be without any obstacles in front of me now. When I was offered the subsidized daycare referral... I had an option to choose the daycare that I was actually comfortable with. And I'm very blessed to have a whole team of other women that work at my daughter's daycare that I can trust and have that peace of mind that my daughter is being taken care of."

Ms. Allen shared her belief that subsidized child care is a "very necessary program" reiterating that "this opportunity to have affordable childcare will help me provide for my family, have a peace of mind that my child is in good hands, and also just support me in a healthy mental health."

Director Johnson thanked Ms. Allen for sharing her experience and advocating for parents. She then shared that the council had invited Anne Louise Bonito to provide tribal voice and perspective at the meeting, but urgent issues prevented her attendance. Director Johnson also thanked Ms. Ruhstaller for her opening remarks before moving the group to public comment.

**Child Care Transition Quarterly Report:
Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Deputy Director, Child Care and Development Division,
California Department of Social Services**

At Director Johnson's invitation, **Dr. Jaime-Mileham** provided an update on the progress of the child care and development transition to CDSS as it approaches its two-year anniversary on June 30. CDSS is working to ensure California's child care and development system is more equitable through implicit bias training, expanded access to childcare, parent cafés throughout the state, and supplemental rate payments to child care providers.

One objective of the child care and development transition is to ensure all children and their families have access to trauma-informed, culturally responsive child care that is free from bias, hate, and racism. The Master Plan for Early Learning and Care mandates that the state develop professional development materials on anti-bias and trauma-informed care. This quarter CDSS launched two free online modules on these topics:

- *Creating Brave Spaces: Disrupting Implicit Bias in Early Care and Education*
- *Trauma-Informed Practice: Culturally Responsive Strategies for Early Care and Education.*

The self-paced modules—which were shaped by feedback from family child care home providers, academic researchers, tribal representatives, trauma-informed experts and advocates—are available in both English and Spanish on [California Early Childhood Online \(CECO\)](#). A Childcare and Development Quality Initiative, CECO houses state-approved online professional development resources on an easy to navigate website. While all modules housed on CECO are self-paced, CDSS has found that some groups are taking the implicit bias and trauma-informed practice courses as a cohort with facilitators.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham discussed the significant investments that the 2021 and 2022 Budget Acts made in expanding access to child care facilities, subsidized child care, and development programs. The General Child Care and Development program (CCTR) is a subsidized child care program open to children from birth to 12 years old, as well as older children with exceptional needs. The application for CCTR expansion funding for the 2022-23 fiscal year was opened in November 2022, and applications were due on December 30, 2022. Child care centers, contractors who operate a licensed family child care home educational network, and public agencies such as school districts and LEAs were eligible to apply. The expansion funding could be used to expand existing CCTR programs or open a new program. Programs that serve infants and toddlers were given priority due to lower availability of care for the youngest children. In February, CDSS notified applicants with a passing score of 70 percent and above that their programs will be funded. CDSS will release funding to awardees with active licenses to provide full-day, full-year services in April.

On July 23, 2021, Governor Newsom and the Legislature enacted the Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant. Since then, CDSS has awarded over 2,000 applicants with funds for minor renovation and repair projects. CDSS continues to notify

grantees and, if all paperwork is submitted, disburse funds on a rolling basis. The Department is also providing technical assistance to support applicants in completing their grant package if anything was missing.

The application period for New Construction and Major Renovation grants closed on January 31, 2023. Of the total 8,850 applications received, 1,216 were licensed family child care home providers and 634 were centers. The applications are distributed throughout the state, with submissions from 52 of California's 58 counties. The great need for this funding is evident, as CDSS received requests for a total of \$658 million in funding, greatly exceeding the \$150 million available. Funding is anticipated to be disbursed in late Fall 2023.

From April, 2022 to July, 2022, CDSS worked with the Foundation for California Community Colleges and CCPU (Child Care Providers United) to issue supplemental rate payments to family child care home providers who served children enrolled in subsidized child care. The lump sum payments were based on licensed capacity:

- \$10,000 for large license – 7,403 recipients
- \$8,000 for small license – 5,249 recipients
- \$1,500 for license exempt family, friend, and neighbor providers – 10,207 recipients

Monthly supplemental rate payments were made to 21,373 providers from July, 2022 to December, 2022. Like the lump sum payments, these payments were informed by licensed capacity:

- \$900 for large license – 7,618 recipients
- \$750 for small license – 5,202 recipients
- \$125 for license exempt family, friend, and neighbor providers – 8,553 recipients

CDSS continues to work with the Foundation for California Community Colleges and CCPU to issue monthly supplemental rate payments, with final payments scheduled for June 2023. The CDSS website provides [more information about the supplemental rate payments](#).

Dr. Jaime-Mileham continued with additional updates:

Enacted in 2021, AB 131 requires California to (1) develop a Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) including the state and child care provider union, CCPU of California, and (2) convene a rate and quality community of interest workgroup to inform the JLMC and policy makers' recommendations for a reimbursement rate structure that addresses quality standards for equity and accessibility while supporting positive learning and developmental outcomes for children. In August 2022, the workgroup's recommendations were submitted to the JLMC and made available publicly. Recognized the historic bias and structural racism underlining the original market rate, the workgroup recommended replacing the current methodology (using a market price survey to set rates) with an alternate methodology that employs cost study and cost estimates to understand the actual cost of delivering child care and early learning in

order to set base rates. In November 2022, the JLMC submitted its findings to the Department of Finance and the Governor's office concurring with the recommendations. On March 29, CDSS submitted an official letter requesting Administration for Children and Families (ACF) pre-approval for California to move to the alternative methodology to inform the state child care subsidized rates. CDSS is working with national experts, Prenatal to Five (P5) Fiscal Strategies, to design and implement the proposed methodology.

P5 Fiscal Strategies and CDSS will consult and engage with a diverse group of early childhood education entities and partners—including parents and early child care educators across the state—to collect data, validate a model assumption, and create a model for the methodology. ECPC will generate regular reports and looks forward to receiving input in regards to this process.

Since 2019, \$4.8 million in Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funding has been used to host parent cafés across California. Parent cafés provide a small-group setting where parents can share the joy and stresses of their caregiving journey. The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) has led coordination of the parent cafés across the state and also leveraged PDG-R funding to partner with the University of Georgia to research how the parent cafés impact male caregivers. Working with CCPU, the CCRC has adapted the café model to host structured conversations around trauma-informed care for the child care and development workforce. Nearly 6,000 parents have attended parent cafés hosted by 47 resource and referral agencies in their counties. To adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, cafés have been held in person and remotely. There are 150 parent cafés planned for 2023.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham expressed appreciation to CDSS partners. She encouraged participants to visit the CDSS website to [learn more about the transition](#) and to consider [joining the CDSS-CCDD listserv](#).

Director Johnson thanked Dr. Jaime-Mileham for her overview of these milestones and expressed appreciation for all partners' voices and work to identify their communities' needs during the state's historic reform and investment. She then invited questions from the council.

Sonia Jaramillo asked for more details on the ACF process, or the impact and benefit of the new methodology.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham explained that traditionally the state has done a market survey to set rates. ACF regulations offer a couple options, which the first workgroup reviewed. Option one, continuing the market survey, was rejected by the group. Option two is to continue the market survey and add a narrow cost analysis through an alternative methodology. Option three is to skip the market survey altogether and implement an alternative methodology. However, this option requires a pre-approval from ACF to make sure the plan fulfills all the requirements. The primary issue for the proposed methodology is making sure there is sufficient engagement to support a cost analysis at the end. CDSS has submitted a letter explaining they are not going to do a market survey for this next round and will move forward with the alternative methodology. Currently, CDSS working with ACF to address any follow-up questions.

Robin Layton acknowledged public comments regarding the wait for funds. She stated that providers and direct service contractors need more funding, and conversations are ongoing in Sacramento. She reminded attendees that ECPC is an advisory to the Legislature and Governor, not a decision-making body, and emphasized that ECPC takes all public comments very seriously.

Selected public comments:

- “We’ve been waiting for 9 months for our latest stipend. Money we desperately need for catching up on bills, like heat, which many of us have had to let stack up because our rates aren’t high enough to keep up with inflation and natural gas prices.”
- “For nine months, we’ve been waiting on a check that has already been approved by the state, but they just haven’t gotten around to sending us. Our bills don’t wait. They don’t care that California just doesn’t think child care providers are a priority. They want their money, and we want ours.”
- “Providers like me are once again waiting on band-aids from the state when they know what the real solution is. We need our late stipend payment, but we also need higher reimbursement rates based on the true cost of care, and we need them now. Inflation is crushing us all and yet our rates do not reflect that.”
- “We’re waiting on short term fixes when what we need are long-term solutions. For nine months California has been sitting on money they agreed to pay family child care providers, yet here we are asking where it is. However, what we REALLY need is our rates to increase to reflect the cost of care so we can continue to provide care and not go into debt doing it.”
- “I am a provider from Van Nuys, CA and it gets cold during the winter. Gas prices have made it so hard to keep my places heated and at the same time, afford my heating bill. This stipend money would make a world of difference, but it’s just sitting there, not being sent out. Meanwhile, we don’t see an end in sight to the current economic issues and the only solution is coming up with a long-term plan to raise our rates to the true cost of care. Stipends help, but they are not a sustainable solution.”
- “Can we get an update too on those who were granted a minor renovations grant who have received grant letter but no funds have been received. It’s been a year since program applications were submitted what is the delay on grant funds?????”
- “For months we’ve received updated questionnaires to fill out in order to qualify for the agreed upon funds. We’ve done our part, now do yours and release our funds!”
- “In order to remain in compliance with licensing staffing ratios we have hired assistants. We need our stipend in order to pay our staff.”
- “Disappointed that faith-based centers were denied an application for major renovation grants.”

Ms. Layton also elevated two questions for Dr. Jaime-Mileham and Director Johnson:

- What is the status of a response to the budget letter ECPC sent to the Governor in January inviting him to join an ECPC meeting?

- If an additional study is required, what is the expected timeline for ACF approval and the rate change?

Director Johnson responded to the first question, expressing appreciation to the council for its recommendations on additional investments and priorities the Governor and Legislature should continue to consider. She pointed out that creating the budget requires a deliberation process. The Governor released his initial budget proposal on January 10 and is engaging with the Legislature to develop a revised proposal. The next official step is the release of that revised proposal in mid-May, followed by negotiation between the Legislature and the Governor to formally adopt a budget by June 30.

There is no update related to the Governor coming to visit the council, but this can be revisited for future meetings. Director Johnson reiterated that, based on the May revision, the council can generate a response related to its request for the Governor to participate in a meeting.

Through pandemic recovery, there were great opportunity over the last few years for additional investments and good and solid revenues across the state. Director Johnson reminded attendees that this year has not seen the same kind of revenue surplus and directed them to the Department of Finance webpage for [more information about revenues](#).

Dr. Jaime-Mileham responded to the question about ACF approval of the alternative methodology for subsidized child care rates. She reiterated that alternate methodology will replace the market survey, which is typically done in spring. CDSS is preparing to meet with the different groups to continue to inform the methodology and what data is collected. In contrast to previous efforts, the alternative methodology requires a narrow cost analysis—for instance, comparing one zip code to another—to make sure to it calculates a true cost of care. The survey will be expanded to capture that information.

The goal is to finalize the alternative methodology within a timeframe that allows the data compiled to inform the next state plan scheduled for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Deborah Corley-Marzett expressed support for Kendra Allen stating “I’m very happy for you and [your daughter] on now having affordable childcare. I’m thankful for you that you will also have peace of mind knowing that your child will be taken care of professionally. And again, I’m also happy for you that you were given a choice to choose your provider, which is very, very important. And now you’ll be able to reach your dreams and the goals that you look forward for you and your family.”

Ms. Corley-Marzett then brought up several additional points. She expressed thanks to CDSS for the parent cafés and suggested holding an open webinar for conversation with family daycare providers in California, creating a safe place for providers to express their concerns and their issues. She asked if there is information or support regarding reimbursement for providers who were impacted by flooding. She noted that there shouldn’t be pressure to stay open in order to receive stipends when their home flooded, and providers also should not have to draw on their 10 non-operational days, which are their vacation days, in order to be reimbursed. Finally, she asked for clarification on the move to an alternative methodology for calculating determining state

subsidized rates, wondering if the current plan means the state is discarding the work of CCPU, JLMC, P5 and the workgroup.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham responded to the question about alternative methodology, explaining that CDSS is building upon the prior work and will continue working from the input of CCPU, JLMC, P5 and the workgroup to create the survey, along with input from the Blue Ribbon Commission, the Master Plan, and others. She noted that it was a huge momentum moment just to be able to contribute to this here.

Director Johnson thanked Ms. Corley-Marzett for her feedback and addressed her question about disasters. Referencing comments about inflation and the cost of doing business, Director Johnson explained that the Affordable Connectivity Program helps pay for online expenses and connection, and that information about the program was included in a recent Child Care Bulletin. She directed people to complete the program's [online application](#) or to call 888-662-4011 for more information. Director Johnson also noted that additional relief measures have been put in place for small businesses impacted by the storms, and much of the early childhood workforce are eligible for these resources. CDSS will make sure that information is out and disseminated to all. She thanked Deborah again for raising concerns and acknowledged the impact on providers and families.

Deborah Corley-Marzett noted that the alternative methodology and rate change is time sensitive and the 2024-25 goal means providers have to wait again.

Mary Ignatius agreed with the frustrations expressed regarding delayed payments. She referred to Ms. Corley-Marzett's remarks at a 2022 Stand for Children: as much as our early educators love and bring so much passion to the work, love doesn't pay the bills. Ms. Ignatius stated that providers deserve answers about when they can expect to receive delayed payments because they are continuing to care for children every day and need these supports.

"Many families like Kendra Allen's who received child care subsidies over the last couple of years, have never paid a family fee," Ms. Ignatius continued. "Many probably do not even know that family fees exist, which is good because it shows the good work done to suspend them. But many families are about to have a very, very rude awakening when they find out that they are going to have to pay anywhere from \$60 a month to \$600 a month starting July 1. We spoke to a family recently who is at the high end of subsidized child care and her fee will be somewhere between \$550 and \$600 a month. Even though she [has a] high income, she is still working paycheck to paycheck, and that \$600 is everything. It is all of the stability that she has been able to create in the last two years because she has not had to pay fees."

Ms. Ignatius asked what CDSS plans to do to mitigate "wave of pain" that is coming if there family fees are reinstated for those earning below 75% the state's median income. She notes great strides have been made in providing no-cost universal transitional kindergarten (UTK), and there are efforts to try and eliminate UTK fees for families. A holistic, whole child, whole family view is needed, and family fees should be eliminated regardless of their early childhood program.

Director Johnson acknowledged the impact of the family fee waiver to stabilize families. She shared that this topic was part of the conversation in the Assembly Education Finance Sub Committee recently:

“The Governor's January budget proposal doesn't...continue waiving those fees. There are certain policies and regulations at the federal level in terms of having a fee schedule. The fee schedule is then determined by states, and changes could be included from the May budget deliberation process. In the final negotiations of the budget, ECPC anticipates this will be part of the conversation for the submission of the next state plan. Recommendations are welcomed from council members, from community, from stakeholders on what they would like to see moving forward in this space.”

Ms. Ignatius asked whether there is a way to amend the current state plan if the May budget revision or further deliberations result in continued family fees waivers.

Director Johnson stated that technically states can amend their plans if they have changes to what is currently proposed, but because there are dollars associated with the collection of family fees that are then scored to the larger child care and development system for service, it is a budget conversation. Should something change in the May revision or through subsequent conversation with the Legislature, then CDSS would essentially be directed to submit an amendment to the state plan so any changes would take effect sooner.

ECPC member **Dean Tagawa** voiced his agreement with Mary's concern about family fees, offering two main reasons:

- Many families have now never faced a fee, and returning to fees could have an unintended consequence. Instead of generating revenue, families may disenroll or be discouraged from enrolling. A stop gap for this year would be to continue to waive family fees. If universal preschool is the goal, California needs to consider waiving all fees for families who are income eligible because for many families, that additional \$100 to \$600 a month is a lot of money.
- Because this is a mixed-delivery system that includes UTK, it seems a mismatch that families can go to UTK for no fee, but our lowest income families would have a fee for subsidized child care. By reinstating fees, we're actually creating inequity amongst programs.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham addressed the numerous questions regarding the delay in providers receiving stipends. With contracts being finalized, the hope is that stipends will be delivered in the spring. CDSS is in the final steps, but finalized contract have to go to the Foundation for California Community Colleges, which then distributes out to the alternative payment programs. At that point, stipends will be issued. At a closer date, CDSS will issue a Child Care Bulletin and will continue to provide updates.

**California Department of Education Early Childhood Updates:
Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction**

Director Johnson welcomed **Sarah Neville-Morgan**, who introduced her team members in attendance:

- Linda Morales, Education Administrator, Program Quality Implementation, CDE South Office
- Sascha Mowrey, Education Research and Evaluation Consultant, CDE Early Education Policy Office

Ms. Neville-Morgan opened by noting how much is underway at CDE, and that there is one area she is particularly proud of and wanted to delve into. As discussed in the family fee conversation, UPK is a major focus. CDE currently has a large UPK mixed-delivery quality and access workgroup in place, as legislatively required in 2022-23 budget. The workgroup is operating in consultation with CDSS, the State Board of Education, and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

CDE's vision is to provide a strong and early start to inclusive education through high-quality, joyful, rigorous, developmentally informed, and coherent P-3 learning opportunities to ensure children thrive in school and in life and are college and career ready. Through incredible state investments in UPK, there is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform California's early care and education system. These investments are exciting, yet they are still not enough. The California State Preschool Program (CSPP) is a critical component of statewide efforts to ensure UPK access to all four-year-olds, and there is a target to reach many more three-year-olds. Right now, CSPP serves 8.5 percent of eligible three-year-olds, leaving a huge segment of three-year-olds unserved by high-quality public pre-K. While some are in Head Start, it is not nearly the number who are eligible for services. As part their UPK efforts, CDE has committed to building on the current strengths of CSPP and identifying areas of improvement in order to be better able to craft policies, provide guidance, and ensure CSPP is promoting school readiness, a sense of belonging, and healthy development. In 2023-24 budget also marked a turning-point toward truly inclusive pre-K programs to make sure that all children with disabilities are supported in state pre-K.

Ms. Neville-Morgan then asked Linda Morales to share more about the multiple sessions that held with CSPP contractors, administrators, teachers, family child care home education network providers, and other interest holders to find ways, ideas, and suggestions to improve and strengthen the state preschool program.

Ms. Morales explained that the CSPP improvement process began by reviewing available data on CSPP implementation and the vision to "UPK holistically" in order to identify potential areas of improvement. CDE used the data to identify five priority areas on which to focus their work:

- Serving more 3-year-olds in CSPP programs
- Moving to full inclusion of children with disabilities
- Reducing income segregation

- Supporting mixed income programs and more bilingual programs
- Supporting family child care providers in CSPP

In Fall 2022, CDE held focus groups aligned to these priority areas to gather input from practitioners who are implementing programs. The purposes of these sessions were to (1) unpack opportunities and barriers to meeting children’s and families’ needs, and (2) identify potential strategies and supports the state can provide to better support programs to make enhancements. After the sessions, CDE aggregated and summarized the thoughts, ideas, and suggestions collected across all focus groups.

The whole process was supported by an exploratory team of external partners—including practitioners and researchers—who helped design questions, attended focus groups as listeners, and helped identify key recommendations. CDE then worked internally to prioritize recommendations for implementation, develop action plans, and begin to implement improvements.

Sascha Mowrey shared some of the data that informed both the exploratory team and focus groups.

- More than 300,000 three-year-olds eligible to enroll in CSPP in 2021-22, but only about 26,000 (8.5 percent) were enrolled as of October of 2021.
- Approximately 340,000 three-year-olds are eligible for CSPP in 2022-23. The increase is due partially to changes in eligibility thresholds and partially to the number of children with exceptional needs being added.
- The addition of an adjustment factor for three-year-olds has meant contractors receive more support to serve three-year-olds in their programs.
- In 2021-22, CSPP programs served fewer than 4,000 children with IEPs, accounting for only 4.3 percent of enrollment.

CSPP programs now have a 5 percent funded enrollment set-aside for children with disabilities, which increases to 7.5 percent in fiscal year 2023-24 and 10 percent in 2024-25. While CSPP is not yet meeting those set-aside goals, some programs are finding success enrolling children with disabilities. But there is room for improvement, and many contractors need support to increase their success in this area.

Table 1. Distribution of children with disabilities enrolled across 655 contractors

Percent of Children with Disabilities Enrolled	Percent of Contractors
0%	45.8%
.01% to 4.99%	24.58%
5% to 7.49%	10.69%
7.5% to 9.99%	7.33%
10% to 20%	9.01%
20.01% to 30%	1.98%
30.01% to 40%	0.46%
40.01% to 50%	0.15%

CDE also looked at data for dual language learners (DLL), as children who can learn in both (or all) their languages show stronger learning gains over time.

- 60% of children under the age of five years are DLLs
- 62% of children enrolled in CSPP have a primary language of English, while 38% identify a language other than English as their primary home language.

CDE wants to serve more DLLs because, as the data shows, there is a greater proportion of California children who speak a language other than English at home than are represented in CSPPs. Under AB 321, which went into effect January 1, DLLs are prioritized for CSPP enrollment right after children with disabilities. The hope is this will support programs to improve these numbers.

Ms. Morales noted that, at this time, there is no available data about how many or which programs use a bilingual program. However, with the rollout of the Preschool Language Information System (PLIS), CDE will be collecting information about both DLLs, the languages used in classrooms by children and staff, and classrooms' participation in a dual language program. Based on the current timeline, the first complete PLIS dataset is anticipated for Summer of 2023.

Ms. Morales provided additional details how CDE engaged focus groups. Focus group feedback informed the identification of priority areas, which were shared with CSPP contractors in a virtual focus group meeting the week of October 31, 2022. Participants helped identify barriers and strategies for CSPP improvements in each priority areas. Focus group membership represented every region in the state, and participants responded to 50 polls and 25 specific questions. CDE staff facilitated and synthesized breakout sessions, and CDE leads developed summaries and identified three to six recommendations for each priority area.

Since the CSPP contractor focus groups, CDE has weighed capacity and authority considerations to further narrow its focus on specific recommendations and developed action plans to implement at least one recommendation for each area. Planned activities include:

- Developing toileting solutions guidance
- Exploring inclusion data to better support guidance on inclusion practices
- Management Bulletin 23-02 on CSPP and children with disabilities
- Management Bulletin 23-03 with guidance on the identification of DLLs
- Planning a DLL webinar series, including developing a webpage to archive webinars and related resources
- Developing a process to use forthcoming PLIS data to inform guidance and policies for DLLs in CSPP
- Guidance and webinars to improve understanding of how to operate family childcare home education networks, geared toward current and prospective providers

Director Johnson thanked the CDE representatives and invited questions from the council.

Natali Gaxiola expressed support for all of CDE's work, especially the efforts to gather feedback from focus groups and people working directly in these programs and supporting children. As a CSPP teacher herself, Ms. Gaxiola has personally seen an increasing number of three-year-olds joining her program as soon as they turn three, and she raised two questions:

- Does CDE have specific findings regarding the targeted supports needed to help families with three-year-olds?
- Has there been any thought of adjusting the adult to child ratio or reevaluating some of the regulations regarding how many children are in a classroom?

Ms. Neville-Morgan noted the increased adjustment factor to serve three-year-olds included in the 2022-23 budget, and said that CDE is exploring whether there are other best practices to lift up. She referenced Head Start's smaller adult-child ratio when three-year-olds are the majority in the classroom, compared to CSPP's static ratio of one adult per eight children. She also mentioned the transition from IDEA part C to part B as a natural place to support children transitioning to CSPP. She highlighted the importance of connecting with families to regional centers and ensuring children are making timely transitions into CSPP because research shows better outcomes with two years of high-quality pre-K. Families whose children enroll at age three may be willing to stay with their CSPP because of the relationship built, providing continuity for the family.

Ms. Morales acknowledged the staffing shortages as one factor for challenging the adult-child ratio. She also mentioned three-year-olds' toileting as a prevalent issue and CDE has asked the contractor the focus group to provide guidance. CDE is also exploring how to support teachers while making sure to keep in ratio.

Ms. Layton expressed concerns about the Pre-K and TK expansion, stating that attention the attention given TK expansion and staffing brings up frustration and anger. With the state providing school districts with funding to implement, plan for, expand TK, CSPPs are losing staff that they have trained to TK programs. She called out the need for honesty about questions of equity in the system:

"For example, four-year-olds in TK, they get free access with no income or need requirements, but they also do not get access to full-day, year-round childcare... to get that, they have to enroll in CSPP or CCTR. And then the districts get more dollars to offer less than what a direct service Title V provider's required to do... And so I just think that we just need to go on record here and be honest that The state must fund CSPP the same as it's funding TK in order for both to survive and succeed. And please, when the Department of Education is talking and doing these hearings, I really don't like that TK and CSPP are separated, because for some reason they're really hearing the staffing crisis in the K-12 world or TK-12 world, but they have yet to hear ours [in the earlier years]."

Ms. Neville-Morgan clarified that hearing agendas are not set by agencies and suggested that those who want to discuss the agenda reach out to legislative staff who

decide what components are shared at each hearing. While CSPP gets shifted on the agenda, CDE tries to weave in comments even when it's not on the agenda.

Ms. Ignatius commented Parent Voices has so many members whose children have special needs that a whole subcommittee was created. She expressed confusion around potentially relaxing licensing restrictions and changing ratios in order to serve more three-year-olds and children with special needs. She asked for clarification as to where CDE stands on these issues when considering the health and safety of children who need more support and supervision.

Ms. Neville-Morgan addressed the ratio and group size question, pointing to Ms. Morales' earlier comment about a staffing crisis. She has heard the situation is improving and noted that there are staffing issues across sectors, including truck drivers for nutrition services. She clarified that reducing ratio size was not something CDE was recommending, though it is something Head Start does when they have majority three-year-olds. The UPK mixed-delivery quality and access workgroup will review the data and come up with recommendations for programs standards for ratios. She further explained that many preschool children with disabilities are served through LEAs (local educational agency). As they transition to preschool and qualify for part B, school districts often have self-contained preschool programs for them. As those are not under licensing, the majority of children with disabilities are most likely not in licensed care settings right now. LEAs must meet a lot of health and safety requirements, and CDE's policy office is working on an updated a chart that shows the distinctions. Some of CDE's recommendations include addressing barriers due to duplication of requirements.

Carola Oliva-Olson acknowledged the challenges in gathering specific data specific on DLL programs, especially which ones are true bilingual or dual language, or implementing a dual language model. She noted that implementation grants might offer some information on early learning classrooms, but not all children are not included in that pipeline. SVP classrooms have not been included, And children have already had experiences of losing their home language. So when looking at DLL specific data, it's not just about how many classrooms, but where are these classrooms, and are they part of programs looking into building the pathways.

Ms. Neville-Morgan stated that she wished CDE had more money for DLL in each year's budget for the DLL. It was exciting to see more and more schools, including the SVPs, want to move to a dual language immersion model. That's another area that needs more special education teachers, at all ages, and more teachers who can support bilingual and multilingual programs, both home language support and English language development.

Ms. Corley-Marzett shared that when home-based educators who are not a part of an FCCHEN are excluded from preschool, UPK, UTK, and other settings, it sends the message that their work is subpar. She asked why they are not included. She further shared that there are about 300,000 3 and 4-year-olds eligible for UPK and asked CDE to consider, "Where are these children at now? Where are they going, if a parent is at work and they're not in... a state free school, where, by chance, are these kids? They're in family daycare. And what damage and what effect would this have on all family daycares, not just those in networks? How... do we work together?"

Ms. Neville-Morgan responded CSPPs, by law, must come through a FCCHEN, which helps support quality standards and other components to provide continuity and support. The UPK quality and access workgroup is in statute as well.

Ms. Corley-Marzett asked if CDE can think of a way to support the other providers because change is possible.

Ms. Neville-Morgan said CDE's recommendation would be for those who want to be part of CSPP to reach out to the FCCHEN and determine if participation is a good fit. The other pathway is to work with the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network and with CDSS, which has programs and services separate from CSPP.

Deborah Corley-Marzett expressed that she hopes this information brings clarity.

Zoila Carolina Toma said that she does not perceive there to be support for family child care providers and early childhood educators as she sees a lot of providers losing children to this transition. She has experienced parents saying their child is too young for a "regular school," and they want a more family-like setting, but reconsidering the free public school option of TK rather than paying for family child care. She stated that there are not enough family child care providers included in processes and conversations, outside of the FCCHEN members. There is so much talk of needing educators, and many family child care providers are experienced and have well over 12 units of education. So why are they being ignored? Families need to have options that meet their family's needs, and working together can get them what they need. Family child care providers should not still be fighting to be included when they have the background, knowledge, and love for the field. She expressed the need for something to be done.

Ms. Neville-Morgan mentioned that various members in the system can improve the communication between state and local levels, supporting information sharing and awareness. She added that the 2022-23 budget has funds counties can use to convene a mixed-delivery UPK workgroup. CDE encourages providers to reach out to that workgroup and engage in the planning process as well.

Naima Facih expressed gratitude for all the presentations and what has been done to support the CSPP. She inquired about CSPP offerings for children with special needs, specifically those transitioning from the Regional Center, and whether they are prioritized for services, programs, and curricula because there are significant differences between what Regional Centers and districts have to offer.

According to **Ms. Neville-Morgan**, CDE continues to explore inclusive early education expansion programs and the lessons learned from CSPPs. CDE also plans a \$50 million investment in programs across the state—especially community-based programs—to make sure they the resources to best support children with disabilities. She agreed with Ms. Facih's point, noting that the Legislature and Governor wanted to provide more funding and directives around inclusion of children with disabilities in programs like CSPP because inclusion matters for all children. Whether it be income, race, language, or ability, all CSPPs should provide a sense of belonging. She assured attendees that CDE will continue the work and ask for more feedback to address issues

and ensure things are done well, noting ECPC member Dean Tagawa's program at LAUSD as a great model.

Paula Merrigan commented on LEAs choosing to rollout TK early, accepting three-year-olds who would be eligible in 2025-26. This brings up the toileting issue. In TK classrooms with three- and four-year-olds, not all children are coming to school fully potty-trained. This need to be considered when planning supports. Additionally, she noted that early enrollment impacts staffing ratios. The 1:8 adult-child ratio is not being met in TK, and school services informs LEAs they can maintain a 2:24 adult-child ratio. The goal is 2:20 and meeting this goal is a challenge, as well as a conflict with the messaging of 2:24.

Ms. Neville-Morgan clarified that three-year-olds are not eligible for TK. Some LEA programs are mixing TK with CSPP or engaging other ways to serve three-year-olds. There is also a two-week allowance for children turning four by September 1. The toileting issue has been noticed across multiple program types and ages, including CSPP. Additionally, coming out of the pandemic, more children are presenting with a limited focus and other behaviors similar to ADHD. CDE surmises that some of this is due to trauma experienced within families and communities, whether directly related to the pandemic or linked with the many other recent emergencies and disasters. Families in all types of programs need more support, as do teachers and educators. In a recent hearing, CDE acknowledged that higher ratios contribute to teacher turnover and burnout, while lower ratios encourage teachers to join and stay in programs.

Miren Algorri thanked the other commenters for highlighting issues that family child care providers encounter and where support is lacking exists. Ms. Algorri stated that some issues are being simplified when they are very complex. She shared her personal experience as a family child care provider: "I was on the wait list for nine years, and I met the requirements. I had a high score on my FCCERS and more. So when we're told, 'Reach out and make sure that you are part of those work groups,' it's not that simple. The information is not coming to us. We understand that it is our duty to provide the best quality of learning and child care services to our students, but when we are not given the tools, the resources, the flexibility, those obstacles are very hard to overcome. Also, we wear every single hat here. We don't have a director of curriculum, we are it. We don't have an administrator. We are it. Diaper changing? Here. Cook? Here. Server? Here. Every single role is played by the same staff, which is not a complaint, and it's not trying to victimize family child care providers. We just want to highlight the type of support that we have and the type of support that other entities have for whatever circumstances."

She shared that a lack of resources and flexibility does a disservice to the children served. There are many more obstacles, such as not being paid for the true cost of the services being provided. The workforce is shrinking, and families do not really have choices. They feel that family child care best meets their needs, but are forced to leave the setting. This isn't appreciated from a parent or a provider's perspective.

Patricia Lozano recognized and expressed thanks for the efforts to support DLLs and children with special needs, as well as the great efforts to serve more three-year-olds. She looks forward to continuing to find ways to support DLLs.

Janet Zamudio spotlighted the need to focus on building the workforce, especially through compensation, and to view the workforce as including family, friend, and neighbor providers and those who go into families' homes. There's been a lot of conversation across the many programs that are funded, and there's additional funding to help support the exempt workforce. With more talk about child care at the federal level, it would be good to hear more in California as well.

Every community and conversation needs to continue surfacing the need to support early care and education, to increase workforce efforts and value the work. Ms. Zamudio shared her own experience with family child care as an emotional support for families: "I had the ability to call my provider and ask her to keep my children when I was held over for work. That was the saving grace to me, to our field, to the work we're doing together."

Ms. Zamudio expressed her concern that many districts in the state need help understanding the "how" and best practices for UPK/UTK rollout, including bringing partners in the discussions. Despite planning grants to support overall planning efforts, much more information is needed to support the UPK/UTK effort. Additionally, she asked CDE to direct districts to provide information about child care when children are being enrolled in TK. This can include how to find childcare, how to find preschool programs, and referring them to MyChildCarePlan.org, which she doesn't currently see happening. Families need to understand the differences between TK and preschool in an objective way—hours, schedules, and more—as they make a decision.

Patricia Alexander thanked the previous comments and shared her story as a family child care provider: "I've been a provider for 53 years. I've watched changes over 53 years and been a part of most of it. But I'll have to admit that my business is taking a very scary role right now for enrollment because subsidy families or if families have to pay parent fees, they're going to go for the free programs. Why stay with me? Five of my kids are promoting to kindergarten. Five other ones are turning four before September. I don't know what's going to happen. And that's the only kids I have, and it could wipe me out. I want to retire being in this business. I don't want to be forced out of it. So all this is pretty scary for me right now, along with a whole lot of other providers that I talk to on a daily basis. But in the meantime, our three- and four-year-olds, if they go into the public school system, they're going to have a lot on their hands. They're a lot for me, with two of us with 12 of them. So I don't know what our future holds. And I have my degree, and I have my permits, but they're not going to hire me. I'm 72. They're not going to hire me. And I don't have a beyond education to be credentialed or anything like that. So I'm going to be flopping out in the breeze here."

Director Johnson expressed appreciation for the conversation and the passion and commitment everyone brings to this work. While acknowledging Ms. Alexander's last comment, she expressed tremendous appreciation for the workforce who are supporting children and families every day and the phenomenal community-building work being done together. She encouraged continued engagement and input on the overall state plan and transitioned to the next agenda item.

Progress on the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: Kim Johnson, ECPC Chair

Director Johnson explained that the Master Plan was developed with contributions from ECPC and published in December of 2020. The effort was driven by a desire for quality, equity, social justice, improved life outcomes for all young children, and the social and economic well-being of families. The four overarching goals of the Master Plan are based on recommendations made by the Assembly's Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education, the Lifting Children Out of Poverty Taskforce, Children's Transforming the Workforce, Rate Reform Workgroup, and many other voices.

Estimates for implementing the 10-year Master Plan ranged from \$2 billion to \$12 billion dollars to implement. This was the Governor's charge to develop, and significant federal investment helped the progress. Director Johnson invited attendees to lift up the work done together that has been most impactful and point out what else needs to be done.

One public comment noted that: "While it is impressive to hear about the 'progress' report on issues under the Master Plan, the connection to the reality of how providers feel this progress is not clear. The lives of family child providers have not changed. They continue to be underfunded, disrespected, and now feeling threatened with losing kids because of changing policy that disfavors them. In order to really understand the progress, we need some accountability with data analysis that shows things are better for them."

By law, ECPC advises the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide early learning policy, including planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Master Plan. Noting this shared charge, Director Johnson encouraged all attendees to review the [Progress on the Master Plan presentation](#). She also referred them to Master Plan website to learn more [goal areas and related strategies](#).

Director Johnson described the four goals, the underlying strategies, and progress to date.

Goal 1: Programs – Unify and strengthen programs and services to support children's learning and development.

Strategies:

- Infant and toddler care
- Universal preschool
- Paid family leave
- Equitable treatment of children.

Progress:

California has expanded access to paid family leave. Previously only those employed by organizations with 20 or more employees had guaranteed paid family leave. The expansion now covers any organization with five or more employees.

The Governor and Legislature have agreed to 200,000 new subsidized child care slots, now over a six-year timeline as opposed to the original five-year proposal. There is also continued work on universal preschool and transitional kindergarten expansion, and families have more options and opportunities to access various programs. While the subsidy process takes time, a historic expansion has occurred in a very short period.

Several legislation components that address equity have been passed and chaptered, including rules for giving DLLs second priority for child care subsidies. The state is also aligning the terms and definitions of DLLs so everyone shares the same understanding of who the population is and the indicators of quality and focus needed to support them. Additionally, AB 2806 requires particular programs and contractors to reduce suspensions and expulsions of children for services. This aligns with continued conversations about developing anti-racist systems, workforce competencies, and ensuring the workforce is supported and informed to support children in the best ways. There has also been the significant investment in expansion of inclusive settings, especially for children with disabilities.

Goal 2: Workforce – Support children’s learning and development by enhancing educator competence, incentivizing and funding career pathways, and implementing supportive program standards.

Strategies:

- Workforce competency
- Career pathways
- Program standards

Progress:

The Governor and CCPU agreed to a \$40 million joint training partnership fund, which is being launched to the workforce, including family child care and license exempt in-home providers. Expansion of the Child Care Initiative Project allows for more work in recruiting and retaining new members of the workforce. There have also been additional resources and investment in early childhood mental health consultation to support children, families, and the workforce, as well as supports specifically focused on workforce capacity of TK.

PDG funding has afforded several investments. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing authorized a one-year emergency specialist teaching permit for TK. First 5 California is leading a quality equity project, conducting 42 focus groups in multiple languages throughout the state to look at policies and practice, with focused participation from those who have historically been underrepresented in the designing of the quality rating system. The Office of the California Surgeon General published a module on trauma-informed care, providing additional support for creating a trauma-informed system that recognize the impacts of adverse childhood experiences. Workforce Development Pathways for tribal child care providers also launched with PDG funding, and in collaboration with First 5 California, online modules for home- and center-based providers are being created.

Goal 3: Funding – Unify Funding to advance equity and opportunity.

Strategies:

- Sliding Scale Fee
- Reimbursement Rate

Progress:

CDSS is moving towards a streamlined single-rate system. Historically there were two rate structures, but the methodology is changing to look at the true cost of care to inform a single-rate structure. As discussed earlier in the meeting, the rate and quality reform workgroup is reviewing new methodologies that analyze the cost of care and how the state's framework and structure for rates is established. A request was submitted to the federal government, as required, to allow work to begin on modifying surveys and practices.

There have been historic rate increases over the last several years. Previously there had been sequential years with no rate increases or with reductions, so repeated increases can be attributed to the great work being done and provider voices being heard.

It's also important to recognize the work of CCPU in the agreement for supplemental payments to providers.

Goal 4: Administration – Streamline early childhood governance and administration to improve equity

Strategies:

- Streamlined eligibility
- Integrated Data System
- Data Use
- Facilities
- Shared service networks

Progress:

The Child Care and Development and Nutrition programs have moved to CDSS, and the Department has been reviewing feedback from the field on strengths, successes, and improvements to be made, including payment and authorizing direct deposit (a \$9 million investment). There has also been investment in state-level child care data infrastructure to inform where gaps exist and track progress over time.

Successful legislation expanded eligibility to programs, the efforts are underway to ensure that accessing and applying for one safety net program provides families with a more streamlined connection to a childcare subsidy. There has been a lot of investment

in facilities—new construction, repair, and renovation—which is key for supporting local education entities in preschool and TK planning.

Director Johnson then invited attendees share other examples of progress and success and opened discussion to the council.

Sonia Jaramillo suggested ongoing advocacy from both CDE and CDSS focused on special needs inclusion and DLL, two of the major subgroups in the educational system.

Ms. Ignatius asked if the group will be submitting letter regarding the May budget revision.

Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller seconded Ms. Layton earlier point regarding prioritizing attention on TK is impacting CSPP programs. She also suggested looking at strengths that family child care providers can add to mixed-delivery systems.

Khydeeja Alam Javid brought up AB 2832, the Whole Child Community Equity Legislation, which charges CDSS, CDE, as well as the council, and the early childhood community, to create a whole child community equity screening tool and framework. She asked how the agencies are thinking about moving forward.

Director Johnson commented that CDSS and CDE can put this topic on the list for future ECPC conversation and/or work with Khydeeja to give an update.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham said that CDSS will provide a deeper update at the next ECPC meeting. The workgroup application is currently in development, and that workgroup will be able to provide recommendations regarding the Child Equity Index.

Mr. Tagawa gave recognition to the diverse group of interest holders convened over the last few years, including the Master Plan and Blue Ribbon Commission. He noted that legislation passed for DLLs, including tracking and supports, is a good win for California. He also praised the Master Plan for allowing better conversations and shared ideas about quality and the desire for universal preschool to happen in California.

Ms. Corley-Marzett recognized the opportunity for family daycare providers to organize and unionize as a sign of progress. The second union contract is being prepared, and there is hope family daycare providers will be included in the new rate methodology.

Director Johnson thanked Ms. Corley-Marzett, stating that the day's conversations will be prioritized. She asked again if council members see additional priority focus areas for the Master Plan.

Ms. Jaramillo expressed gratitude for the focus and the support provided and stated that she sees a lot of advocacy from CDSS and CDE. She acknowledged that change is not easy and a lot work needs to be done. She continues to hear that child care funding needs to be equitable to TK, and she reflected on her own TK work as a principal and teacher. There is disconnect and lack of understanding in the TK world about impacts, the needs of children, and the difference in services, and she encourages further advocacy so that families see the benefit.

Ms. Jaramillo noted that equitable funding would help programs survive because by there will be big shifts in enrollment populations when districts have TK implemented by 2025. The change is happening gradually, but it will become drastic. She also recognized the importance continuing conversations about the needs of home-based providers, including extending reimbursement flexibility and continuing hold harmless funding. These allow providers to focus on changes needed as programs rather than releasing staff because there is no funding.

She noted that many Monterey County providers are experiencing homelessness or struggling to survive without the income they'd been receiving as home-based providers. She offered to convene the county's home- and center-based providers to share questions and supports.

Director Johnson promised to follow up with Ms. Jaramillo. She noted that she was in Pajaro on Friday will be working with the communities to provide additional support.

Future ECPC Meetings and Discussion Topics

Director Johnson noted that a survey will be sent to ECPC members to support planning the schedule and topics of upcoming meetings.

Zoila Carolina Toma expressed her gratitude for being part of this group and for the existence of a platform to come together and discuss issues as a state, as parents, and as teachers and educators. She reiterated points made to prioritize waiving family fees, disbursing stipends, and including family educators in conversations and decision-making.

She stated that family child care providers have proven to be a great tool, even staying open when other options were closed during the pandemic. "We got in this industry understanding, or learning about the issues and problems that our industry face, but we're happy to do our job, we just need the support." Noting references to a lack of teachers, she said, "you don't have lack of teachers. We are here. We are teachers. You guys are looking in the wrong places sometimes, unfortunately. But please take us in consideration. Why do we have to fight for something that is here in front of the state, in front of you, in everybody. And if you look from the parents' perspective, they have a lot good stuff to say about us over the years. But it's fees or tuition versus free. This is what we are going through right now."

Ms. Ignatius underscored Mr. Tagawa's point regarding the diversity of ECPC and its constituencies. She expressed hope that ECPC can be a sounding board to help understand and mitigate unintentional consequences before new legislation or new program reforms are introduced. "If we don't get the opportunity to participate in that conversation, then those consequences are actually intentional. And we also just don't want to be adversaries in this. We don't want to be pit against one another. This is really the children, the families, and the early educators are depending on us to work together, to work with urgency, and to work in the most effective way, so that we can get out of their way to do what they need to do." She expressed hope to draft and submit a May budget revision letter as quickly as possible.

Director Johnson accepted Ms. Ignatius' suggestion to draft a budget revision letter as a motion for an ad hoc committee and invited Ms. Ignatius and Ms. Layton to bring it to the council. She thanked Ms. Ignatius for her comments and moved the group to public comment.

Public Comment

Cathy Gill expressed her pleasure at being part of this setting. She shared her gratitude for being a provider and teacher for over 28 years and an ordained minister who holds degrees in different areas. She said that children have been her heart and she is “a little troubled with moving them from us so soon, when they're in a warm and learning environment.” She shared that her oldest child now is a traveling nurse who owns two homes and is not quite 30 years old. Children leave her program advanced and ready for school — public or private. “We've given our heart, our love and protection, to these children. We are compensated through hard work of the union, and still today, what should have been a winter stipend, is now spring... If the funds are there, why not give it to the providers that's getting up every day, keeping the houses warm, taking the kids to school because we have kids that stay in our care, and others that we get to school. That's a cost.”

Kim Johnson expressed appreciation for the comments and said she will make sure disaster relief and information on small business is shared. She stated that CDSS is committed to getting stipends out as soon as possible. Contracts are at their final stages, and funds will be released in spring. CDSS appreciates and recognizes all that providers are doing and the urgency needed for payment.

She thanked council members for their continued engagement and commitment to serving children, families, and the workforce who they have the privilege to work with every day. She also thanked the public for joining, the interpreters, and the staff teams. She reiterated that a follow-up survey will be sent.

Meeting adjourned.