



2022 Early Childhood Policy Council Annual Report

Introduction

The Early Childhood Policy Council (Council) had a productive year in 2022, as the California (CA) early learning and care (ELC) system continued to emerge from the global pandemic. Three years after the onset of COVID-19, federal and state partnerships that support CA's policies and systems for young children, families, and the early childhood education (ECE) workforce are stronger than ever. CA continues to transform its early childhood landscape, improving and connecting systems and expanding access to quality services for over three million children ages birth through five years (B–5). On June 30, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed CA's State Budget Act, including AB 181 (education omnibus budget trailer bill) and AB 210 (early childhood). This budget continued historic investments and opportunities for transformative work, such as prioritizing equity for CA's ELC system and supporting the health and well-being of CA's youngest children. Included in the State Budget Act is \$1.5 billion for ELC workforce development. This one-time investment, to be spread over three years, will support key areas such as coaching and mentoring, instruction and education programs for dual language learners, and new professional learning networks for educators.

CA has made significant progress toward the vision established by the Governor's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for All Kids (MPELC) (Alcala et al., 2020). MPELC serves as the state's Strategic Plan for improving the B–5 mixed delivery system and acts as a roadmap for expanding equitable access and improving ELC quality, especially amid the devastating challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through federal funding investments, CA will continue prioritizing supports for children farthest from opportunity and building state and local cross-system capacity. In addition, CA will continue transforming its ELC workforce. The recent adoption of a PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential supports the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing's contributions to the state's Universal Transitional Kindergarten and MPELC efforts.

In addition, CA Governor Gavin Newsom issued an Executive Order (EO) on September 13, 2022 focused on advancing equity and tackling systemic disparities. The Governor's new EO directs state agencies to take additional critical actions to embed equity analysis and considerations in their missions, policies, and practices in order to further advance equity. This action will help expand opportunity for all by addressing

2022 Early Childhood Policy Council Annual Report

disparities for historically underserved and marginalized communities. Addressing unequal circumstances helps drive equal outcomes, giving all Californians the chance to reach their full potential and lead healthy, rewarding lives and helping CA communities thrive and prosper. The Governor's order also establishes the state's first Racial Equity Commission, charged to produce a Racial Equity Framework consisting of resources and tools to promote racial equity and address structural racism. More broadly, the Commission will recommend tools, methodologies, and opportunities to advance racial equity and will be available to provide direct assistance to state agencies in reviewing and updating policies and practices upon request (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 2022).

Within this context, the Council convened quarterly in 2022 to elevate the needs of young children and their families and to advise the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide early learning, care, and child development issues. The meetings were held on January 25, July 19, September 14, and December 14. The Council's two advisory committees—the Parent Advisory Committee and Workforce Advisory Committee—also convened to give voice to these two essential constituency groups. The advisory committees held three joint meetings in 2022: January 19, June 21, and December 6. In addition, the Parent Advisory Committee convened on August 31, and the Workforce Advisory Committee convened on September 8. All Council meetings were well-attended; an average of 600 members of the public registered for each meeting, with many participating in public comment. Meeting summaries and materials can be found on the [Early Childhood Policy Council web page](#).

Background

The Council was established in law via Senate Bill 75 (Chapter 51, Statutes of 2019). Its purpose is to advise the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide ELC policy, including the planning for and implementation and evaluation of the State's MPELC and the 2019 California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education Final Report. Specifically, the Council's role is to:

- advise the Governor and perform activities required pursuant to Title 42, Section 9837b of the United States Code;
- prepare a formal public annual report on the work of the Council; and
- provide specific recommendations directly to the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent on all aspects of the state's ECE system, including the following topics:
 - Equity, with consideration for demographic, geographic, and economic diversity and a focus on family-centered, two-generation approaches

2022 Early Childhood Policy Council Annual Report

- Opportunities to incorporate a support model of accountability, as opposed to a compliance model, into the state's ECE system
- Ways that the MPELC and the 2019 California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education Final Report can be updated and improved

The Council is a 27-member body, with members appointed as follows:

- Fourteen members appointed by the Governor, including those required pursuant to Title 42, Section 9837b of the United States Code. One of the Governor's appointees is chair of the Council.
- Four members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.
- Four members appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.
- One member appointed by the Superintendent.
- Two members of the Workforce Advisory Committee, appointed by that committee.
- Two members of the Parent Advisory Committee, appointed by that committee.

Members of the Council serve three-year terms, and no member may serve more than two terms. Members of the Council include stakeholder representatives reflecting the comprehensive childcare system and the geographic, ethnic, racial, and language diversity of the state, including those communities separated from opportunity due to poverty, bias, isolation, disability, and other factors.

In 2022, the Council established a Children and Equity Subcommittee, composed of two Council members, with a focus on equity efforts and solutions to systemic barriers that children face in the early childhood systems.

2022 Standing Meeting Topics

Meetings of the Council in 2022 integrated both standing agenda items and in-depth discussion items. Standing agenda items included:

- Voices from the Field: At the start of each meeting, the Council invited members to elevate the voices and lived experiences of parents and of ECE providers.
- Child Care Transition Quarterly Report: The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) reported on progress related to transitioning child care programs from the California Department of Education (CDE) to CDSS.
- CDE Updates: CDE kept Council members apprised of program and policy developments related to early childhood care and learning.

2022 Early Childhood Policy Council Annual Report

- Advisory Committee Briefings: Chairs of the Parent Advisory Committee and Workforce Advisory Committee summarized the topics of recent committee meetings and their reflections on the discussions.

2022 In-depth Discussion Topics

Each meeting of the ECPC focused on an in-depth discussion topic, as follows:

January 25, 2022: Infants and Toddlers

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California Surgeon General, shared an update on the findings from *Baby's First Years*, a study report released in December of 2021. The study is the first in the United States to assess the impact of poverty reduction on family life and infants' and toddlers' cognitive, emotional, and brain development. Dr. Burke Harris highlighted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's deliberation on administering vaccinations for children and the effects of COVID-19, specifically the increase of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Dr. Andrew Meltzoff, the Co-Director for the Institute of Learning and Brain Sciences at the University of Washington, presented research on the B–5 age range and the role of sociocultural input in affecting the brain.

July 19, 2022: Home Visitation—Family-Centered, Two-Generation Approaches

Council member Mayra Alvarez moderated a discussion panel about two-generation approaches for family-centered home visitations. Ms. Alvarez opened the panel summarizing CA's work from the past four years to expand public funding for home visiting services.

Ms. Alvarez pointed out that home visiting is, now more than ever, a critically important service and it is crucial to identify ways to support families, build their resiliency, and surround them with support and services. The following topics were covered:

- High-level overview of the home visitation program and models
- Who these programs serve and some successes and outcomes
- Why having a two-generation approach is important during early childhood
- Approaches to connecting families to services and what the referral process entails

The following panelists participated in the discussion:

- Stephanie Myers, California Head Start State Collaboration Office

2022 Early Childhood Policy Council Annual Report

- Kristina Meza, CalWORKs and Family Resilience Branch
- Jane Troglia, California Home Visiting Program at the California Department of Public Health
- Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, First 5 California
- Gina Gordon, California Home Visiting Program at the California Department of Public Health
- Darrin Andrus, Parent
- Claudia Aguilar, Child Care Resource Center

September 14, 2022: Supporting Children’s Physical, Behavioral, and Developmental Health

A three-member guest panel joined the Council for a discussion about supporting children’s physical, behavioral, and developmental health. Panelists included:

- Melissa Stafford Jones, Director, Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, California Health and Human Services Agency
- Dr. Pamela Riley, Chief Health Equity Officer, Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)
- Brian Winfield, Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Dr. Riley gave an overview of DHCS’s Medi-Cal strategy to support health and opportunity for children and families. The strategy was born out of recognizing the insufficient primary and preventative care for children, the prevalence of health disparities among Black and Latinx children, increasing behavioral health concerns for children and adolescents, and a lack of clear internal structure in DHCS’ children’s initiatives.

Melissa Stafford Jones presented the work of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, a cornerstone of Governor Newsom’s Master Plan for Kids’ Mental Health.

The Initiative—a five-year, \$4.4 billion investment passed in the prior year’s State Budget Act—was in year one of work to re-imagine systems and supports for social-emotional well-being and behavioral health for children and youth, birth to age 25.

Brian Winfield shared the services that DDS and Regional Centers offer children and their families to help diagnose developmental disabilities and offer service supports to those children.

December 14, 2022 – Budget Recommendations

In its final meeting of 2022, the Council finalized a letter to the Governor and Legislature outlining its recommendations regarding State Budget Act investments in ELC.

Councilmembers Robin Layton and Mary Ignatius had shepherded the process, inviting input from the Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees, and drawing upon themes from the quarterly Council discussions to draft a letter for Council's refinement and endorsement.

The letter included the following recommendations:

1. Protect and preserve access to quality affordable child care, which includes making permanent the COVID-19 policies set to expire June 30, 2023, such as hold harmless, family fee waivers, and COVID-19 sick days.
2. Maintain the Administration and Legislature's commitment to expanding access to child care by 200,000 slots by 2025.
3. Protect and expand the early care workforce, including recommendations of the Governor's Rate and Quality Workgroup.
4. Keep any of the Governor's previous or new investments related to behavioral health, mental health, and supports for children with special needs, inclusive of early childhood and care that begins at birth. There are revenue solutions to be explored before any conversations about cuts.

Revisiting the Year and Looking to the Future

In the final meeting of 2022, the Council revisited the group's position, purpose, and responsibilities and reflected on the year's accomplishments. The year began with a rich discussion on early brain development and the impacts of trauma, then continued with a focus on home visiting and two-generation family approaches. The Council heard from parents about the impact of the program models being implemented statewide and discussed approaches to supporting the whole child, including the physical and social-emotional needs of children and families still experiencing impacts of the pandemic and systemic inequities.

While significant investments are being made in many of these areas, members of the Council acknowledged there remain ongoing and growing needs of families and care providers. As Council members looked ahead to 2023, they and members of the public offered suggestions for focus areas, with the following topics receiving the most support: 1) Workforce development and the new Early Education Credential, 2) the unique needs of infants and toddlers in the early care environment, and 3) supporting young multilingual learners and their families. There is much important work ahead.

2022 Early Childhood Policy Council Members

Kimberly Johnson, Chair and Director, California Department of Social Services;
Alicia Lieberman, University of California, San Francisco;
Khydeeja Alam, Advancement Project;
Miren Algorri, Algorri Family Child Care;
Mayra Alvarez, The Children's Partnership;
Kim Pattillo Brownson, First 5 Los Angeles;
Lissete Frausto, Kidango Child Care;
Natali Gaxiola, Felton State Preschool;
Mary Ignatius, Parent Voices CA;
Antoinette Jacobs, YourMiMi, Inc.;
Sonia P. Jaramillo, Gonzales Unified School District;
Robin Layton, Educational Enrichment Services;
Tonia McMillian, Kiddie Depot Family Child Care;
Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Ed.D., California Department of Social Services;
Paula Merrigan, Castro Valley Unified School District;
Scott Moore, Kidango;
Sarah Neville-Morgan, California Department of Education;
Stephanie Myers, California Department of Social Services;
Carola Oliva-Olson, Institute for Racial Equity and Excellence;
Cheryl Polk, High Scope Educational Research and Foundation;
Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Family Resource and Referral Center of San Joaquin County;
Sheryl Shushan, Patagonia;
Donna Sneeringer, Child Care Resource Center;
Dean Tagawa, Los Angeles Unified School District;

Janet Zamudio, Worklife Office, Stanford University;
Tonia McMillian, Kiddie Depot Family Childcare;
Miren Algorri, Algorri Family Child Care

2022 Parent Advisory Committee Members

Mary Ignatius, Chair, Parent Voices CA;
Naima Facih, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services Advisory Board Member;
Lissete Frausto, Kidango Child Care;
Patricia Lozano, Early Edge California;
Deborah Corley-Marzett, Family daycare provider;
Patrick D. MacFarlane, Child Care Resource Center;
Yenni Rivera, People Assisting the Homeless;
Cheryl Schroeder, Resource parent, foster care educator and advocate

2022 Workforce Advisory Committee Members

Tonia McMillian, Chair, Kiddie Depot Family Child Care;
Miren Algorri, Algorri Family Childcare;
Patricia Alexander, Licensed in-home family childcare provider;
AnnLouise Bonnitto, California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc.;
Virginia Eigen, Campbell Union School District;
Amelia Soto, Mexican American Opportunity Foundation;
Zoila Carolina Toma, Fun Minds Inc.;
Debra Ward, Cerritos College Child Development Center;
Latonda Williams, Plaza del Raza Child Development Services