



Early Childhood Policy Council

Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary Report

Thursday, December 21, 2023

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Physical Meeting: 1000 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 WestEd, 5th floor, Old Towne Room

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction
 - Welcome
 - Voices from the field
 - Report out from chairs of Advisory Committees
 - Public comment
2. Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update
 - Status update
 - Council questions
 - Public comment
3. Review Draft Budget Letter
 - Share proposed approach
 - Share draft ECPC budget letter and solicit input
 - Seek Council endorsement
 - Public comment
4. Solicit Input on 2025–27 Child Care and Development Fund State Plan
 - Presentation
 - Share feedback from Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees
 - Solicit input from Council members

- Public comment
- 5. Early Childhood Update from the California Department of Education
 - Presentation
 - Council questions
 - Public comment
- 6. Child Care Transition Quarterly Report
 - Update from the California Department of Social Services on the transition of child care programs
 - Council questions
 - Public comment
- 7. Looking Ahead to 2024
 - Preview ECPC in 2024
 - Council questions
 - Public comment
- 8. Adjourn

Attendance:

ECPC Council Members: Antoinette Jacobs, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Kim Johnson, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Miren Algorri, Natali Gaxiola, Paula Merrigan, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sonia Jaramillo, Tonia McMillian, Mary Ignatius

Parent Advisory Committee Members: Deborah Corley-Marzett, Naima Facih, Mary Ignatius, Patrick McFarlane, Cherie Schroeder

Workforce Advisory Committee Members: Miren Algorri, Tonia McMillian, Zoila Toma

Guests: Ellen Veselak (provider), Inna Pavlova (provider), Maria Antoinetta Jandres (Parent Voices), Stephen Propheter (CDE), Steve Zimmer (CDE), Vanessa Macias (LIIF)

Summary Report:

Welcome and Introduction: Kim Johnson, Chair

Full welcoming remarks are recorded in pages 3 – 10 of the [ECPC December 21 meeting transcript](#).

Kim Johnson, Director of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), opened the fourth and final Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting of 2023. She welcomed attendees and thanked the public for their engagement and participation.

Director Johnson expressed appreciation for the Council and Advisory Committee's work throughout the year, pointing to joint investments made in support of children and families across California. Director Johnson also acknowledged early educators among the Council, Advisory Committees, and attendees and expressed gratitude for their work. She then reviewed the agenda.

Voices from the Field:

Director Johnson invited Mary Ignatius, chair of the Parent Advisory Committee, to introduce the first of three speakers to share as voices from the field.

Ms. Ignatius introduced Maria Antoinetta Jandres, longtime Parent Voices chapter member. Through her experience and knowledge as a mom, Ms. Jandres has helped Parent Voices change child care eligibility policies to be more family friendly, ensure CalWORKs' Stage One child care program brings more stability to families, and most recently, has participated in the collective effort to transform family fees.

Ms. Jandres thanked Ms. Ignatius for the introduction. She explained that in her work with Parent Voices San Francisco, she has built leadership skills, been seen and heard, and helped create better experiences for other families. She is proud to be a representative for other families who have benefited from recent policy wins on affordable child care.

Ms. Jandres shared her personal experience as a beneficiary of the family fee waiver. As a mother working three jobs to sustain her family financially, the fee waiver gave her a sense of "financial freedom" and allowed her to invest in her family. With the \$350 per month that she did not have to spend on child care, she was able to enroll her seven-year-old son in extracurricular activities, pay off a car, and reduce her credit card debt. She believes her improved credit could help her fulfill her dream of owning a home. For other families, the fee waiver has helped parents take time off with their families, give their children a vacation experience, and enroll children in educational enrichment activities that support better outcomes.

Ms. Jandres shared that she is teaching her child financial skills to be debt free. She believes it is important to honor families who work hard and live on a budget, and policies like the family fee waiver allows families to gain financial freedom, give back to the community, and have a higher quality of life.

Director Johnson thanked Ms. Jandres for sharing her experience as a change maker and the impact of family fee waivers. "Many of us have been working many years around making access to early learning and child care development services more

affordable. This was a huge, huge piece of that.” She then invited Vanessa Macias, Early Childcare and Education (ECE) Program Manager at Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), to introduce two voices from the field who have been recipients of infrastructure grants.

Vanessa Macias thanked Director Johnson for the introduction and described the history and mission of LIIF. As a community development financial institution, the LIIF mission is to invest and mobilize capital and partners in historically excluded communities including early care and education work. She expressed thanks to the Legislature for passing \$350.5 million in funding for the infrastructure block grant program (IGP) and to CDSS for entrusting LIIF as grant administrator. This funding has been allocated as follows:

- \$200.5 million (\$112 million of which was provided by American Rescue Plan Act funding) for minor construction and renovation. Under this type of grant, family child care homes (FCCHs) could receive a maximum of \$75,000, and centers could receive up to \$249,999. LIIF had about 5,600 applications, was able to reach approximately 3,700 grantees, and is currently working with CDSS to finalize grantees.
- \$150 million for new construction and major renovation. There were approximately 1,200 applications, and CDSS is again working with LIIF to establish those grantees.

LIIF works to foster racial and gender equity, and the majority of IGP grantees are women of color. The early childhood field has very tight margins, and these grants, rather than loans, are needed to support its small business owners.

Ms. Macias introduced two IGP grantees, Inna Pavlova, owner of Our Rainbow Kids Family Child Care, and Ellen Veselak, facility director of the Child Education Center at Caltech.

Inna Pavlova spoke first, thanking Ms. Macias for the introduction and detailing her experience as an FCCH business owner and IGP recipient. Ms. Pavlova expressed gratitude for the \$75,000 minor renovation infrastructure grant which allowed her to make needed repairs at her 16-year-old facility. She explained that while her business is profitable, “maintaining the facility was extremely expensive, and I was not able to save any money for renovations. My family could not keep up with maintenance bills, and we were thinking about selling the property and even shutting down the business or moving to another smaller location.... Margins are slim in the child care sector in general, and IGP money has allowed me to stay in business and prosper and open the door to more vulnerable population on vouchers and government subsidies.”

Our Rainbow Kids Family Child Care supports 14 children from the San Francisco area. With the IGP funds available to address renovation needs, Ms. Pavlova was able to welcome more families who are on government assistance. “That number doubled from

five kids on vouchers and public assistance to eleven currently who are attending my daycare. Within the demographics, we serve infants to transitional kindergartners, preschoolers from age two to probably four at this point. I personally pride myself in offering culturally responsive services. We have predominantly non-native [English] speakers in the facility, and children and families speak various languages from all over the world. Currently, we are able to welcome refugees who fled the war zone from Ukraine, and these clients could not be happier. We are supporting some children with special needs and host occupational therapists, speech therapists, and special needs consultants who are coming on premises all the time.”

She detailed how IGP funds were applied towards renovations and improvements that allowed Our Rainbow Kids to better utilize the space available, extend the square footage to provide more services simultaneously, and improve the building’s integrity and plumbing to support children’s health and safety: “We insulated the child care facility around the perimeter as well as on the floors and put the new siding on the walls, fixed the leaking roof and windows, and adjusted the stairs to accommodate children’s sizes and put the rails for adults and kids with special needs. We rebuilt the decks. ... We also put down filtration system, water filtration system that helped drastically children with severe skin conditions. We also put the new boiler that was over 15 years old and avoided the potential leakage and emergency situation with that.”

Ms. Pavlova expressed her appreciation for the IGP program, stating: “as a small business, (I) could have not been here today if it wouldn’t be for this tremendous help.”

Ellen Veselak spoke next. As part of the Caltech Jet Propulsion Lab community, the Child Education Center (CEC) serves families who have come from around the world. Its 60 staff to care for 180–185 children a day. Ms. Veselak provided details about the CEC facilities and how the \$235,870 grant addressed the center’s needs: “...we are in a 1950s-era elementary school still owned by La Cañada Unified School District, and we are responsible for a lot of those repairs and upkeep ourselves, which we have a hard time keeping up with. There were some things that were really, really needed that this grant helped us accomplish.” Grant funds were applied to a variety of renovations and improvements for the large program, including kitchen and bathroom remodels, new appliances, and some decking and fencing.

She shared that CEC had been pursuing grant funding for the kitchen remodel for over two decades, “and we finally got it done and we are just incredibly overjoyed and grateful that we were able to do this. And you can see [from photos] the difference. It’s a space that everybody loves and wants to come in and use. We were able to get a commercial grade freezer and refrigerator, so now we don’t have food and milk going bad....”

Children’s bathrooms were repaired and aesthetically improved. “We just feel really strongly that children deserve beautiful spaces to be in, including the bathrooms. And I want children to feel that they’re respected and loved walking into any space.” An exterior area for use as outdoor classrooms was redesigned as a full functioning art

area with shade cover for hot days, storage for materials, and space for children to spread out and be creative: “Ninety children use this space, and so we needed to have it big and spacious for them.” Ms. Veselak also noted that by hiring a local contractor, they were able to help maintain their jobs within the community.

She closed by reiterating her gratitude on behalf of CEC and advocating for similar grants for other programs: “I know that there are hundreds and hundreds and thousands of programs out there that need grants like these. ... So, we want to support whatever can be done to help others get this same opportunity.”

Director Johnson thanked Ms. Veselak and Ms. Pavlova for sharing photos and stories to bring to life the impact of the IGP. She also thanked Ms. Macias and LIIF for their partnership. She then welcomed the chairs of the Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees.

Report Out From Chairs of Advisory Committees:

Tonia McMillian, Chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee, announced the recent passing of Deanna Robles, a longtime family child care provider and executive board member representing child care in SEIU Local 99 Education Workers United. [Read the In Memoriam-Deanna Robles announcement on the Local 99 website.](#)

She provided a brief summary of the November 16 Advisory Committee convening, which included (1) a review and expansion of the list of policy topics committee members want to explore further in 2024, (2) input on the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, and (3) input on the draft ECPC budget letter intended for the Governor and Legislature.

Selections From Comment and Chat

“So happy to see the Child Education Center receiving this grant. CEC is such a wonderful program. I used to do site visits there in the 90s and couldn’t be happier to see them here. All California Children deserve these types of improvements in their environment.”

“WOW! Thank you for making this (renovation and improvement) so visible with all the photos. The change is AHHHHHmazing!”

“In the future we would like to see funding and grants available to all ECE programs not just subsidy programs. We all struggle still struggling to keep our doors open.”

Rate and Quality Advisory Panel

Status Update

Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Deputy Director of CDSS Child Care and Development Division, provided an update on rate reform and quality efforts. Full remarks begin on page 10 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Dr. Jaime-Mileham reported that the state continues to build on the efforts of the Rate Reform Work Group, Blue Ribbon Commission, and Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) to move to a single rate structure based on the cost of care. She spotlighted implementation towards next steps:

- In August, the Office of Child Care pre-approved California's March 2023 proposal to move to an alternative methodology by which to set rates in the CCDF fiscal year 2025–27 State Plan.
- In September, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 140, an early childhood education trailer bill that ratified and codified the state's agreement with California Child Care Providers United (CCPU) to develop a roadmap for moving to the single rate structure.
- Between July and October, CDSS, the California Department of Education (CDE), and Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies (P5) completed data collection activities, and the groups are working together to develop the cost estimation model.
- Using the cost estimation model, the JLMC will define the elements of the base rates and any enhanced rate to inform the proposed single rate structure by February 15, 2024. Rates will be subject to mandatory public engagement of the State Plan process.
- Following the February 15, 2024 deadline, CDSS must report to the Senate Health and Human Service Budget Committee, Assembly and Senate Education Budget Committees, and the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) on the progress made to conduct an alternative methodology to the cost estimation model. CDSS is preparing for this deadline.
- The next Rate and Quality Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2024. ([Rate and Quality Advisory Panel meeting schedule.](#))
- CDSS must report the status of the draft State Plan and propose the single rate structure to specific budget subcommittees and the LAO, as referenced in SB 140, no later than May 15, 2024.
- The state will submit information to support the single rate structure utilizing the alternative methodology and its State Plan or amendments to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) no later than July 1, 2024.
- Within 60 days of ACF approval of the State Plan

- The state will provide CCPU an implementation outline of the components for the approved single rate structure.
- CDSS will give the budget subcommittee and LAO an implementation outline for components of the federally approved single rate structure.
- Within 90 days of ACF approval of the State Plan, “Rates” and “Cost of Care Plus Rates” sections of the CCPU agreement will be reopened to negotiate the restructure of the subsidy rates and associated funding being implemented.

Details on rate reform progress available in [CDSS Transition Update December 19, 2023, slide 3](#), and pages 11–12 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

CDSS is working with P5 to design and implement the proposed alternative methodology. As part of this process, P5 and CDSS have been consulting and engaging with diverse early care and education entities and partners, including parents and educators across the state.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham noted that the response rate to the Provider Survey “more than doubled” between the last check in and when the survey closed in October. She celebrated the Rate and Quality Advisory Panel for extending the survey end date to increase participation. She thanked everyone for taking the survey, acknowledging its length, and encouraged participants to give CDSS feedback to improve the process in the future. There were also online surveys, feedback sessions, interviews, and ad hoc groups across the state from October through December. Topics included FCCH educational network, serving children with delays and disabilities, multilingual learners, and providing care on non-traditional hours. The information gathered will also be used to formulate the cost estimation model.

In total, P5 heard from over 10,000 providers. For comparison, a 2022 cost of service study received fewer than 4,000 responses. All 58 counties engaged in survey distribution, and response rates closely mirrored the distribution of licensed programs. Respondents included all types of providers:

- 58 percent family child care home providers
- 27 percent centers-based providers
- 15 percent family, friend, and neighbor providers

See [Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Meeting, December 12 2023, slides 9–10](#).

For more information on rate reform and quality efforts, access the following resources:

- [Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Meeting, December 12, 2023](#)
- [Rate Reform and Quality page](#) on the CDSS website

- [ECPC December 21 transcript](#), pages 11–12

Director Johnson thanked Dr. Jaime-Mileham for her presentation and noted the time and effort that has gone into implementing a single rate structure. She offered her thanks to all who engaged noting that it will “help inform us too for future surveys as our new process of setting rates in California begins.” She invited questions from the Council.

Council Questions

The full text of Council questions is recorded in pages 13–16 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Deborah Corley-Marzett thanked Ms. Jandres for sharing, noting that “what you really shared is about being able to provide a better life for you and your families. And that is so important and empowering, and that’s what the parent fees, getting rid of them, changing them, etc., was all about.” She also thanked Ms. Macias for her work with the IGP and asked a question about grant disbursements: “What is the timeline to have all of the minor grant renovation funds distributed to the providers...who have been approved but yet still waiting for funds?” She thanked the CCPU for advocating so family child care providers could be welcomed as applicants: “It took the voice of CCPU to make sure providers were put in and a part of this grant...my ask is that never ever should family child care providers have to ask to be included in an infrastructure block grant, or any grant for that matter, because... we should always be automatically included in this.”

She thanked Dr. Jaime-Mileham for her presentation on rate reform and conveyed support for the new methodology: “...it’s about the cost of what it takes to provide quality care for the children we serve.” She also expressed interest in obtaining specific data on New Mexico and Washington state: “I have yet to see those, and I wish if P5 can make those available, that would be great. I’m just asking that...the state remains transparent, provides the data, all the data up front”.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham confirmed that the majority of IGP grantees should have received their monies, and CDSS is reviewing the paperwork for the last batch. Disbursements for the remaining grantees are expected in early 2024, and she will provide more detailed timeframes at the next ECPC meeting. In the meantime, she invited providers to contact CDSS for updates on grant processing.

She also said that she would present P5 with Ms. Corley-Marzett’s request for the cost factors from New Mexico and Washington. “I do believe that there are reports [from cost models for] both of those states.”

Sonia Jaramillo speculated on the ratio difference in district-run preschools versus FCCH providers and attendant cost differences. “I’m wondering if there have been

articulation meetings, collaboration meetings, with CDE because as 2025 is fast approaching, [my FCCH has] to go down in terms of services, but I have to continue to provide the salaries for my staff... so, the cost will be the same.”

Dr. Jaime-Mileham acknowledged Ms. Jaramillo’s comment agreeing that more detail is needed and asked her to submit her inquiry as soon as possible so it can be shared with P5.

Miren Algorri expressed her perspective that the JLMC is not receiving feedback on alternative methodology as the 2024 deadlines approach: “How are we supposed to offer feedback on information that is not being shared? How are we to offer honest feedback that comes from analyzing and thoroughly looking at numbers and learning about the indicators if we don’t have this information readily available? And how are we supposed to move forward on this transition if, again, we cannot provide input?”

She advocated for information to be made available “so we can look at it thoroughly. And so whatever recommendations are made are well thought out and are in the best interest of the children of California and, of course, of the early childhood workforce. Because we don’t want to continue to see educators leaving the workforce because they are not making a livable wage because they are not making a thriving wage...”

Ms. Corley-Marzett asked if CDSS would consider an extension for the completion of renovation work for providers who are still waiting for their IGP funds “because I believe that all monies spent from renovation grant has to be [expended] by June 2024, but perhaps we can move that back to the end of September or to the end of 2024 because those providers who are still waiting as things continue to change, they may not be able to get that done by the end of June.”

Dr. Jaime-Mileham acknowledged comments about payment based on enrollment versus attendance.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat

One participant shared her experience as a longtime provider and small business owner regarding payment for services, staff wages, and retaining staff. She specifically called out the impact of rates not being paid if a child isn’t in attendance. “And I know that’s the same for schools as well, but as a small business owner, that makes it impossible to pay the payroll wages that we’re having to deal with because the rate that I give my staff is not a living wage. I feel embarrassed by that, and I’m trying to constantly compete with fast food that can pay more than what I can pay or other industries. It’s been really a challenge to actually keep staff, and I lost one. I have one that’s still committed and we’re trying to figure out creative ways and other ideas that I can implement to bring in money to pay more, pay a living wage... that’s really important. I got in this industry— it’s my third career job— and so this is shocking to me how little we pay for such an important job.”

“Payment support should be paid out securing space at a private preschool for everyday of the week, not on student attendance / we expect our staff to provide quality care every day and need to pay them fair living wages ~ which wages are calculated on year-round projected attendance, once enrollment is secured. Please consider changing.”

“All centers and FCCH need to pay their staff even If children are not present.”

“Everyone needs a livable wage. The same operating cost are needed even if children are absent.”

“...extra time and extension will be helpful...many providers who already got approved [for IGP] and submitted all their paper work have not received their check yet. Beside that estimate and proposal, we made have different prices because have been done months ago. I have paid \$11K from my savings to complete the big items but I was not able to purchase all the small items since now everything cost more now.”

Review Draft Budget Letter

Proposed Approach

Director Johnson reminded the Council that Robin Layton proposed submitting a budget advisory letter for fiscal year 2024–25. The current [draft budget letter](#) is available on the ECPC website and has been made public for any who might want to review it. Director Johnson invited Mary Ignatius to facilitate a review of the draft budget letter to gather feedback from the Council.

Share ECPC Letter and Solicit Input

Ms. Ignatius summarized the development of the draft budget letter to date. Her full remarks begin on page 16 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#), and the full record of Council discussion can be found on pages 18 – 23.

The draft budget letter was shared and input was sought at the November 16 Parent and Workforce Joint Advisory Committee meeting. The letter was amended, sent to ECPC members to review, and posted on the webpage. Many members responded with their support for the draft and proposed edits.

This letter acknowledges the historic investments in child care this year and looks forward to seeing the Governor and Legislature hold true to their commitments in the next budget year. This draft letter takes a different tone, recognizing the “incredible transformation and changes that happened.” The intent was to share these sentiments knowing that the budget process is already underway. With the Governor’s proposed budget to be released on January 10, the Council can revisit the letter at its next meeting.

Ms. Ignatius reviewed the [draft ECPC budget letter](#) with the Council's proposed edits to date and described the revisions made on the following topics:

- Medical coverage protection
- Rate Reform and Quality Group and access to care
- Slot expansion

Karin Bloomer opened the floor for the Council input discussion.

Ms. Jaramillo, Donna Sneeringer and Kay Ruhstaller all expressed their support of the draft letter.

Ms. Dawson praised the inclusion of language about retaining the ECE workforce “because a lot of people in our position think they need to go to the public school system to become an elementary school teacher, and this job is so important. ...it's nice to see that that letter's going to support my work because I've worked really hard, and so have others, and I don't want to lose them to become an elementary school teacher.”

Ms. Algorri voiced support for the letter and advocated for removing the pause on child care slot expansion: “...those slots are something that we are all looking forward to, as the cost of living is increasing, and we see more and more families not having a place to live. And I've shared in the past, in the region where I live, we see more and more families having to move across the border, and our children should not be displaced. And we know that those 70,000 slots would make a huge difference in our community.”

Ms. Sneeringer thanked all those who worked on the letter and provided a follow-up comment on the perception of expansion and community need: “I know we had a big expansion all at once, and there were a lot of questions about need and if there was really that much need in the community. And I want to just say from my organization's perspective, the Child Care Resource Center, we are fully enrolled, and we now have 9,000 kids on our waiting list again. So, I think as we look at the continued need for slots and expansion, we certainly are seeing the need and really look forward to working with everyone to continue to move forward on serving as many children as we can.”

Ms. Ignatius asked about what might happen to unallocated slots due to a lack of teachers: “...is there an expiration date where those slots, if they do not get used... get sent back to the state and reverted to general fund? Is there a way to extend the timing so that they can use those slots, or can they be transferred into vouchers, so we don't lose it all together?”

Director Johnson connected this question to Ms. Corley-Marzett's earlier question about extensions for completion of renovation work, confirming that “...any investments that the Governor and Legislature are making have an expenditure appropriation time period associated with it. And, in addition to state general fund dollars, we have a mix of

other fund sources, federal funds, etc.” She further explained that expirations depend on funding source and terms, and requests for extensions need to go through the budget process. “The federal funds would obviously be on the timeframe that’s already been set forward. And if there was an interest in changing the funding stream... can you take a dollar that was earmarked, let’s say for a general child care setting and change it to an alternative pay program that it really does depend on again, how the funds were appropriated. If there’s flexibility in the preparation, we can do that. If there’s not, we don’t have that flexibility as a department in that discretion. So, it’s through the budget process that that would occur.” Director Johnson mentioned that CDSS can follow up with Ms. Ignatius on the specifics of how many subsidies and what fund stream are still pending.

Ms. Ignatius made a follow-up comment that it would be helpful to know more about the funding associated with slots and vouchers “just so that the field can then make really smart decisions about how to use those, without losing them.”

Naimah Facih asked if the Council will get a chance to see the letter and if they will be able to add anything to the letter before it is submitted.

Ms. Ignatius said that the draft letter was sent via email to the Council for review. “We will definitely have a new letter once we see what’s in the Governor’s budget and can make sure you have your feedback reflected there.”

Director Johnson reiterated that the link to the current letter is available on the [ECPC website](#).

Ms. McMillian asked why questions about open slots seem to be reoccurring: “Every other day, I get a request from Children’s Home Society [of California] asking about do I have open spots? How does that data factor in as far as the slots are concerned and why the frequency for that question? Every day, I’m filling out a survey, even though I just retired.”

Dr. Jaime-Mileham explained that there is a statewide database that tracks the number and location of openings. California contracts out with Resource and Referral agencies (R&Rs) that maintain that database. Providers and programs can update their status on the [MyChildCarePlan.org website](#) or their personal website. The MyChildCarePlan.org website produces a report that indicates the total number of slots and availabilities to get a sense of child care deserts across the state. R&Rs and families can use MyChildCarePlan.org. She underscored that many families accepted for alternative payment programs are referred back to the R&R, which can provide a list of available programs that meet the family’s criteria. Ideally, R&Rs are using regularly updated lists to make sure families have the latest information.

Seek Council Endorsement

Ms. Ignatius polled the Council for any members opposing or abstaining from supporting the letter. There was no opposition and three abstentions. A voice vote of endorsement was then taken.

Solicit Input on 2025–27 Child Care and Development Fund State Plan

Ms. Bloomer asked Dr. Jaime-Mileham to solicit input on the 2025–27 CCDF State Plan.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham provided a status update of the CCDF State Plan administered by ACF and also known at the federal level as the ACF-118 report. Full remarks begin on page 24 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

The CCDF State Plan serves as California's application and agreement between CDSS as lead agency and the federal government as to how state child care and development programs will be administrated to conform with legislative requirements, federal regulations, and other instructions and guidelines issued by the ACF. The State Plan is submitted every three years. The CCDF 2025–27 State Plan is due July 1, 2024 and will be effective October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2027. CDSS is federally required to develop this plan in collaboration with ECPC.

Share Feedback From Parent and Workforce Advisory Committees

Dr. Jaime-Mileham shared that CDSS had a State Plan input session during the November 2023 Joint Parent and Workforce Advisory Committee Meeting. The input session focused on select sections of the State Plan including those that covered family and workforce topics. For each topic, Dr. Jaime-Mileham provided a brief introduction and asked participants if they thought the current policies were sufficient and efficient, and/or how CDSS can improve existing policies and implement new policies. She summarized each of the topics along with committee members' responses:

- **Presumptive eligibility:** A recent notice of proposed rulemaking released by the ACF introduced the possibility of adding the option of *presumptive eligibility*. This means families would automatically receive allowable child care services for a predetermined period, providing time for them to collect and submit eligibility documentations.
 - Most committee members agreed that presumptive eligibility would be beneficial for families and that 30 days was ample time for families to collect required documentation of eligibility and need. CDSS should also consider following presumptive eligibility once it is implemented, whether the 24-month term begins with presumptive eligibility or once eligibility has been certified. Providers should be paid for their services during the

presumptive eligibility timeframe even if the family is subsequently found not eligible. See [CDSS December 21, 2023 ECPC CCDF State Plan PPT \(State Plan\), slides 4–5](#), and pages 24–25 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#) for additional information on presumptive eligibility.

- Family fee (“co-payment”) exemptions: Federal regulation allows states to exempt families who (1) have incomes at or below the federal poverty level for their family size, (2) receive or need to receive protective services, or (3) meet other criteria established by the lead agency.
 - Committee members suggested augmenting the list of eligibility criteria to reach families from additional populations. Feedback in other input sessions suggested extending exempt status to active military, college students, grandparents raising their grandchildren, and tribal families. Participants also suggested factoring in the cost of living in order to exempt families in areas that are high cost or have deep concentrations of poverty. See [State Plan, slides 6–7](#), and page 25 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#) for details on criteria.
- Workforce training and development: Currently, the CCDF targets the entire system of support for the mixed delivery system. Funds are used to target the family, friend and neighbor; FCCH; and center-based workforce through the Workforce Pathway Grant, Quality Counts California, the Language Project, Infant Family Mental Health consultation, the Program for Infant Toddler Care, and others.
 - Committee members agreed that the current topic offerings are beneficial. However, some mentioned that grants and funds are difficult to find. It was suggested training should be tied to degree attainment, higher education, or *badging* and trainings and resources should be available to the entire workforce, not just those receiving state subsidies. Dr. Jaime-Mileham reviewed a list of suggestions for more workforce-related training topics.
 - Committee members identified a variety of professional development needs. See [CDSS December 21, 2023 ECPC CCDF State Plan PPT, slide 9](#), and page 25 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#) for list of suggestions for PD. R&R representatives reminded everyone of the benefits of the Child Care Initiative Project. Some reported finding the funding difficult at times to navigate.

See [State Plan, slides 8–10](#), and pages 25–26 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#) for more on workforce training and development.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham posed one question regarding the State Plan sections under review for the Council’s feedback and then opened the floor for input: “Is there anything else

that we should continue to take into consideration. Any additions to this? Anything that we did not cover that is important?”

Solicit Input from Council

The full record of Council input discussion can be found on pages 26–29 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Natali Gaxiola shared her perceptions on the differences in training in a district facility versus a private center, FCCH, or FFN. Working in a California State Preschool Program (CSPP) tied to a school district and operating on a school campus, she notes there are many distinctions. She shared her observation that district staff receive prep time built into their day but private child care does not. Also, while self-care is promoted as a way for providers to support their overall health, they do not have time to implement it. Ms. Gaxiola offered suggestions to adjust conditions so providers’ time is used more efficiently and their training experience is enhanced:

- Bring trainings to the providers so they don’t have to travel and incur expenses (i.e., paying substitutes, travel time, arranging child care for their own children) when they leave their program.
- Verify that trainers bring personal, relevant experience with young children.
- Add a coaching component to provide real-time support with critical feedback on training content that providers are learning to implement.
- Increase wages.
- Provide opportunities and avenues for veteran providers to serve as mentors/coaches.

Ms. McMillian was glad to see members’ suggestions considered. She advocated for supports and resources for formerly incarcerated mothers who are trying to procure child care services: “I am being told that there are centers and FCCHs, that once they find out that these mothers are formally incarcerated and they may be late picking up their children because they have to go do a drug test or what they have to do, they are being, considered in my words, discriminated against. And that is unfortunate, but it is also unfair and especially when we know that the prison population is made up of mostly Black and Brown folks, but especially for the women. Please can we make sure that something is put in place to help these mothers and fathers who are trying to reestablish themselves, bring themselves back into society, and working really, really hard at it.”

Ms. Jaramillo described the importance of providers having access to more resources, with an emphasis on funding. She identified specific areas where she would apply additional monies: (1) supporting operations including higher wages to retain and recruit

staff; (2) covering training costs and paying staff for their time for professional development, (3) other services like mental health support, and (4) startup funding.

“We are draining [staff] and they’re so stressed,” Ms. Jaramillo said. “I find no other ways to say it, but money will make a difference because then they will be compensated, and we will have the ability to recruit and secure our staff. Right now, they’re going to the K–12 world, and I don’t blame them.”

She said startup funding is needed to cover everything required for licensing approval—inspections, materials, facility improvements to meet licensing standards and more. She provided her personal example of having a site that did not pass fire inspection, but not being able to receive funding until the site is open. She noted that, “finding ways to help us with that, would definitely make a difference because I’m not making money out of this. I’m trying to provide services. ... I want to provide services to our families, and right now, I haven’t been able to get my licenses.”

Ms. Facih asked if there are trainings to help new parents, especially teenage parents, who may need help learning how to raise their child. She pointed out that parenting classes can be helpful for providing additional resources to prevent parents becoming overwhelmed “because the most important thing is not only the physical care, it is the emotional part of the care.”

Ms. Corley-Marzett reflected on her perceptions of the conversation around expulsion and suspension that took place in the input session during the November Joint Parent and Workforce Advisory Committee Meeting: “I attended the virtual input session, and it was very good on one hand, because the state was including providers directly and asking for input. And on the other hand, I was disappointed, because during the input session, the state was not being transparent on providing accurate information when asking about input on suspension and expulsion...providers can’t give an accurate response to something, because all the information was not given...”

Director Johnson noted that input sessions continue to be held frequently as part of the state’s process, and the state welcomes feedback for ways they can be improved: “As we are engaging with you, we are here to hear your voice and incorporate that voice into these planning processes.”

Karin Bloomer moved the group to public comment.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat

“Name CSPP as a categorical eligibility – presumptive for CDSS programs.”

“FCCHs have a 20 percent rule. The provider can’t be gone more than 20 percent of the day necessary to attend a training and pay an assistant in place of the provider. They

must close and displace the children for the day and inconvenience the parents. This rule needs to be removed.”

“We really need a better partnership with community care licensing. That would be most helpful for all of us trying to serve the community.”

“If [professional development] is important... training hours should be able to be converted into higher education units in a way that makes time spent by providers ‘meaningful’ to the policymakers.”

“Early Ed/UPK [Universal prekindergarten] needs to grant credit to FCCH providers for number of years operating to be able to transfer these to credit to be included in UPK. Many providers have degrees and certifications for the education of children. Many new specifically Preschool Teachers with ECE degrees have no real-world experience to survive long-term in the profession. TK [Transitional kindergarten] in Ventura County is regularly calling parents/providers to close early for the day because the teachers can’t handle the children’s behavior because the academic expectation of the children is not developmentally appropriate.”

Early Childhood Update from California Department of Education

Director Johnson invited Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent, Opportunities for All Branch, to provide an early childhood update from the CDE. Ms. Neville-Morgan’s full remarks begin on page 30 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Ms. Neville-Morgan introduced her colleagues in attendance, **Steve Zimmer**, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, and **Stephen Propheeter**, Director, Early Education Division. She asked her colleagues to speak on the community schools model and initiative as part of the CDE’s work to transform California public schools “(to) make sure it’s more grounded in the community where our students live as well as where people work and thrive.”

Steve Zimmer provided an overview of the [California Community Schools Partnership Program \(CCSPP\)](#). Mr. Zimmer described the program as a cornerstone component of the equity mission led by Superintendent Tony Thurman.

The community schools’ model is a whole-family school improvement strategy and has been around for decades, and CCSPP is the largest program in the nation, by far. The model includes school site staff working very closely with students, families, and community-based agencies and resources for the express purpose of improving student outcomes. In California, the goal is reducing disparity in student outcomes. ([CDE Presentation on Community Schools PPT \(CCSPP Overview\), slides 2–4.](#))

Mr. Zimmer described the national, evidence-based, culturally responsive, student-centered teaching and learning practices called the *Four Pillars of Community Schools*:

integrated student supports, family and community engagement, collaborative leadership, and expanded learning. In addition to the four pillars, California developed a *CCSPP Framework*, which includes specific strategies to guide implementation, including key conditions for learning, cornerstone commitments, proven practices, and key roles. ([CCSPP Overview, slide 5.](#))

Mr. Zimmer discussed the significance of the cornerstone commitments: “It makes [CCSPP] a program explicitly about racial justice. It makes it a program explicitly about sharing power and transforming the way decisions are made at school sites. It makes ... community schools explicitly about transforming our school climates to places where all families, all students are fully embraced in their full humanity.”

[Download the California Community School Framework \(English\) from the CDE website.](#)

The California Community Schools Partnership Act provided a total of \$4.1 billion allocated to CCSPP. Mr. Zimmer noted that is “by far the largest investment anywhere in the nation.” CCSPP includes three different grant opportunities and regional technical assistance centers. ([CCSPP Overview, slides 6–7.](#)) He provided an overview of grants open for application this year, along with their eligibility criteria. Funding includes planning grants and implementation grants. ([CCSPP Overview, slide 8–10.](#)) Almost 500 local education agencies (LEAs) across the state have completed the planning grant process, and the implementation grant deadline is in February.

Mr. Zimmer reviewed the cohort demographics for implementation grants and the prioritization of equity across rounds. The request for application is out now for the third cohort. “All of our schools in the first round had 80 percent or higher . . . we had 11 schools that were between 70 and 80 percent who are very rural school communities. In the second round, we were able to go lower, 68 percent for our urban, suburban, mid- and moderate-sized districts, 58 to 68 percent for our very rural districts. Again, there were 12 grants that went below the 68% threshold. But you see this is explicitly, directly in implementation an equity driven program.” ([CCSPP Overview, slide 10.](#))

The CCSPP team is working directly with Ms. Neville-Morgan and Mr. Propheter and their teams to identify opportunities for further collaboration between our early education programs and community schools. Mr. Zimmer concluded with an overview of the ways the ECE community can participate directly with CCSPP.

“First, if you are already directly working with the school district or you are part of a school district that is part of the community schools initiative, there are many opportunities. It is very explicit in all of the materials that there should be a focus on early education and ensuring that all of the analysis is done in terms of both assets and needs in the community.” This is intended for inclusion of child care programs in the community. Providers can inquire with their district.

Additionally, if programs are not part of an LEA and want to be engaged, Mr. Zimmer shared that CCSPP includes service contracts with community partners. While many are contracts for family mental health support services, there are opportunities to formally engage with school districts or school sites that have implementation grants.

CCSPP also explicitly requires that every school site do two things. First, they must conduct an asset mapping, strength-driven analysis and a gap or needs analysis. Care providers can participate in that process to make sure child care and early education resources in the community are included. If there are significant gaps that schools are aware of, that becomes part of the implementation plan. Sites also must have shared decision-making councils or governance councils consisting of school staff, administration, teachers, parents, students, and community members and organizations. These both provide opportunities to get involved.

Questions about the CCSPP grant opportunities can be sent to CCSPP@cde.ca.gov. For additional information on the CCSPP grants, access the following resources:

- [CCPSS Program web page](#)
- [California Community Schools Partnership Program: Planning Grant Request for Applications](#)

Ms. Neville-Morgan opened the floor to questions from the Council.

Council Questions

(The full text of Council questions is recorded in pages 34–38 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).)

Ms. Gaxiola expressed gratitude for the CCSPP’s whole-family approach and highlighted the importance of staff representing and supporting families being connected to the community and having experience with young children: “...what I’ve been seeing is that we have a lot of people entering the field into certain leadership positions, but they do not have the practice. And, therefore, I don’t feel that they can effectively advocate for children because they have to know what’s appropriate, what’s developmentally appropriate for children and supporting.”

She also asked about the around community partnership, and whether it is a requirement or optional: “...when we speak about language at a state level and then how it’s interpreted at a local level, is the language being specific in regard to requirements or when things are just encouraged? Because it’s been my experience that when things are encouraged, they’re not always done because it’s not required.”

Mr. Zimmer agreed with Ms. Gaxiola’s comment and explained that early education inclusion is explicitly prioritized, but that prioritization is a recommendation not a requirement. He recapped the requirements to “provide direct opportunity for

engagement” by the early education and early care community, which include asset mapping, gap analysis, and representation on the shared decision-making council.

Finally, another requirement is “a way that something that is prioritized or recommended has some enforcement to it because there's a lot of transparency with how these things have to be publicly noticed... the annual reporting (should) also include a through line with both representation on the Council and implementation plan and clear benchmarks for that implementation plan based on the asset mapping and gap analysis.”

Ms. Neville-Morgan explained that the CDE is given “priorities and musts” through the state budget process which is why it’s important for advocates to be engaged in the process and pay attention to the language in the budget and trailer bills. “And that is your opportunity to give public feedback and input to say where you feel there might need to be changes around prioritizations and around requirements. Typically, that is not an area where CDE is the ultimate decision maker, it truly happens through that legislative process.”

Ms. Gaxiola shared her experience staying involved via committees as a member of the district leadership team and speculated about the possibility of recruiting from the early education and care field for engagement at different levels: “We go over the Local Control and Accountability Plan... I'm there as a school leader and as somebody who is involved at a local level with the education system there. However, the only reason I'm on that committee is because I'm also in union leadership. So is there a way where we can really open doors at least so that we inform early educators at different levels, whether it's CCSP or whatever it may be, that they have the opportunity to participate? ...Because it does feel like sometimes, we have to push ourselves into these positions in order to have a voice. There doesn't seem to be an easy walkway or pathway to participate.”

Mr. Zimmer concurred with Ms. Gaxiola’s comments comparing district and school site level implementation and acknowledged that the pathway for ECE participation is not always as open as it should be. He noted that the CDE is working to include special education and expanded learning voices. “It is explicit in the CCSP documents, but how does that translate on the ground, the marketing, all of those things.” He said that this presentation and other recent and upcoming CDE meetings are important.

He addressed ways to assess the inclusion of ECE at the LEA and school site level: “When the initial reporting is done, later in the process, CCSP grantees will have to report on how they've been fully inclusive of the whole of their community and particularly where prioritization has been as they're reporting out their work. There are tools and levers here that can be operationalized to make sure those doors are as wide open as they should be.”

Ms. McMillian thanked Mr. Zimmer for his efforts related to Los Angeles Unified School District and asked two questions about participation in CCSP:

- How does family child care fit, and what types of opportunities are open for FCCH, especially when providers have children in school?
- Is this only for certain school districts?

She noted that her grandchildren are in Compton Unified, and she has not seen Community Schools' information.

Mr. Zimmer said CCSPP was not at school sites in Compton yet, but that he was almost certain the district is in the planning grant phase. He promised to check their status. He noted that the program is not for all schools. As an explicitly equity driven program, it's for schools and LEAs with the highest concentrations of poverty and indicators of disparity. CCSPP funding is for transformation and wraparound support systems.

Mr. Zimmer said that the CDE believes FCCH providers are essential the fabric of the educational foundation in every community. He acknowledged the possibility of obstacles: "...as with all types of work at the school site level, that there are sometimes barriers, and you have to work with administrators to make sure that meetings are held at times where folks can actually go and attend?" But, as he pointed out, the schools must provide public reporting.

Ms. Jaramillo shared that in Marin County she sees greater inclusion for center-based providers. She expressed that she appreciates Superintendent Thurman's focus on providing services for everyone, and she wants a deeper conversation on including the word "required" in the language for any future initiatives to encourage the collaboration of child care, preschools, and any provider programs. This ties back to the perception of ECE exclusion during the UPK transition planning and impact: "... we didn't see the word "required" and a lot of us were left out of those plans when the services could have been such a beautiful opportunity for the families on expanding at the district levels... somehow (we) were not invited to the conversation." She noted that the resulting plans have gaps that could have been avoided if districts were required to work with private providers.

Ms. Neville-Morgan thanked Ms. Jamarillo for bringing up the topic of the implications of policy language and stated, "Deputy Zimmer and I, as well as Director Propheter, fully agree and support that." She reiterated that the CDE cannot institute requirements unless they exist in state legislation or federal regulations.

Ms. Sneeringer commented on possible issues for school and district needs assessments, as they relate to small FCCH data, which is not publicly available: "They would need to partner with their R&R to do that work and I don't know if that's happening. The large family child care licenses and centers are more available. So, I think the needs assessments may be incomplete." She suggested a requirement for small FCCHs to partner and advocate with R&Rs already connected with families and communities: "...there is an infrastructure and system in child care that can help the

schools connect to child care providers through [R&Rs]. And, I think it's a missed opportunity if we're not really encouraging that as a way to make sure the full picture of child care and support services are out there.”

Mr. Zimmer thanked Ms. Sneeringer and agreed that needs assessments are likely doing better with asset mapping for large centers than with FCCHs. He noted that inclusion of FCCHs is better “...if parents who have had their kids at the FCC providers are aware, or having to meet FCC providers themselves, are directly participating in leading the asset mapping and gap analysis.”

Mr. Zimmer proposed that the CDE team, with Ms. Neville-Morgan and Mr. Prophter, get together with the R&Rs and Regional Technical Assistance Centers in early 2024 to make sure materials include that FCCHs be reached out to for asset mapping: “Right now, the language I've seen is mostly child care providers, so it's in there, but it's not specific.”

Ms. Sneeringer expressed her interest in continuing to work on defining the role of R&Rs: “I think it's not realistic to think family child care providers are each going to reach out to their districts. So, we've got to figure out what that intermediary role is for the R&Rs.”

Ms. Bloomer thanked Mr. Zimmer and moved the group to public comment.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat

“Highlighting including FCC as whole child approach is essential, we can only serve so many children per site and not all providers want to participate being intentional to serve and meet the needs by including all parent options and including FCC as subcontractors and new bridges to serving all children and families. Is there a way to lift up those who want to build outreach bridges and solutions to (meet) needs and other providers?”

“Part of the outreach to families, R&Rs, and Alternative Payment Programs (APPs) should include ALL early care options, including CDSS programs. It should be uplifted that families of TK and K age kids are still eligible for full day CDSS programs if the child is not enrolled in TK or K.”

“I agree with the comments by Member Sneeringer regarding engaging R&Rs as part of asset mapping, etc....Please do not overlook the roles of [Local Planning Councils] and utilization of their Strategic Plans ...while it is important to engage FCCH there are also other providers of care within the system that are also outside of LEAs which represent the landscape of the system.”

Child Care Transition Quarterly Report:

Update from CDSS on the Transition of Child Care Programs

Ms. Bloomer asked Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham to provide an update on the child care and development transition to CDSS. Full remarks begin on page 40 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Dr. Jaime-Mileham shared that CCPU ratified an agreement with the state on July 31, 2023, succeeding the agreement that expired on June 30, 2023. It was fully ratified and was codified through SB 140 in September. The agreement comprehensively addresses topics including payment practices, full-time and part-time care redefinitions, single rate structure based on alternative methodology, and a transitional subsidy payment and the Cost of Care Plus Rate payment to bridge the period pending implementation of the single rate structure.

The state is actively engaging in the implementation of the agreed upon provisions and providing guidance to child care providers through numerous Child Care Bulletins focusing on topic-specific CCPU agreement updates. See slide 4 of [CDSS Child Care and Development Transition Update, December 21, 2023 PPT \(Transition Update\)](#) and page 40 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#) for list of Bulletins.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham provided a summary of the IGP initiative:

- Details about minor renovation and the repair infrastructure grant can be found on [Transition Update, slide 5](#) and page 40 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).
- Details about new construction and major renovation grant can be found on [Transition Update, slide 6](#) and page 41 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).
- For more information about CDSS, visit the [Child Care and Development Division website](#) or join the [CDSS listserv to receive updates](#).

Dr. Jaime-Mileham opened the floor for questions from the Council.

Council Questions

The full text of Council questions is recorded in pages 41 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Ms. Jaramillo asked if it is still possible to apply for an IGP grant via CDSS: “When I try to apply, because I’m a county office of it, I couldn’t apply. I had to go through CDE.” She suggested that General Child Care and Development (CCTR) should be reconsidered as part of the IGP to include infants and toddlers.

Dr. Jaime-Mileham responded to Ms. Jaramillo’s question explaining that the IGP was one-time funding. As there has not been additional money for another iteration, there have been no new proposals as to what the next iteration may look like. She said that

she will take note of “the impact of not including the LEAs who have a CCTR, a certain infant and toddler, in this funding stream. Understanding the LEAs can apply for the CDE funding, but however, not all contracts run through the CDE such as infant toddler care.”

Ms. Bloomer moved the group to public comment.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat

“There's no such thing as ‘Toddlers’ in Title 22 governing licensed care. It's ‘Infant’-a child up to 24mons and “Child”-a child aged 2yrs old up to not enrolled in school.”

“R&Rs calculate payments based on weeks but pay based on monthly figures. This is challenging for providers to extend all the money to provide services, food, utilities, academic activities for a whole month but not be paid until three weeks after the whole month has been completed for subsidized care.”

“TK moves 4–5yr old children who would've been full-time from the ‘Child 2yrs up to not enrolled in school’ age grouping to the ‘School Age’ age group. Providers face lost revenue challenges during the school year since attending TK makes these children part-time, but parents still need full-time care during school breaks/summer. Providers can't find enough clients to fill the older ‘Child 2yrs up to not enrolled in school’ spaces since half of the potential clients are being pulled out by TK. UPK will exacerbate the situation removing more than half the ‘Child’ age grouping.”

“Providers must charge Parents of Infants more making up for a loss in revenue to stay open for younger age groupings or decide to close all together. Based upon rising inflation costs alone, a provider will be forced to raise child care rates by approx. 30 percent in order for a provider's business to remain solvent and available to parents for infant care. Other job sectors have recently seen the government create boards with yearly mandatory wage increases for entry level work. These jobs comparatively earn more pay for less working hours and have less clearance requirements than FCCHs. And yet state subsidy rate ceilings have no such board determining required yearly compensation increases.”

Looking Ahead to 2024

Preview ECPC in 2024

Full remarks begin on page 42 of the [ECPC December 21 transcript](#).

Director Johnson provided a recap of the required standing agenda items and the special topics the Council focused on across its prior three meetings in 2023. The special topics for meetings were as follows:

- March 2023: The implementation of the Master Plan on Early Learning and Care and updates on the significant progress made to date.
- June 2023: The unique needs of California's diverse infants and toddlers, with a focus on mental health, trauma-informed care, and addressing racial disparities.
- September 2023: Supporting young multilingual learners and their families, including tribal children and families who speak indigenous languages.

Director Johnson shared proposed dates for ECPC meetings in 2024—February 28, May 20, August 13, and November 19—all scheduled for 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Official calendar holds will be sent at a later date.

Director Johnson recommended keeping in mind the Council's Statutory Charge and role as topics for 2024 meetings are under consideration. She reviewed the Council's legal requirements as an advisory body.

The Council convenes four public meetings each year and provides recommendations directly to the Governor, Legislature, CDSS, and all aspects of the system. She noted the budget letter as one example of this and also highlighted the advisory topics outlined in the ECPC statute.

- Equity: Addressing inequities, disparities, and proportionality, such as looking at geographic and economic diversity and the needs of specific populations.
- Accountability in the ECE system: Strengthening approaches to engagement with the field, gathering input, and incorporating feedback into plans and implementation.
- Updating the Master Plan: Continuing to track progress toward the Master Plan goals and building on the 2019 work of the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission.

Director Johnson thanked the Council members who have suggested topics for 2024 meetings and shared the current list:

- Child and Family Well-Being
 - Mental health initiatives for children
 - Medi-Cal coverage and accessibility (continuous coverage for children 0–5)
 - Home visiting and cultural resonance (topic addressed at 7/19/22 ECPC meeting)
 - Disrupting poverty and neglect via concrete supports (CalWORKs, Guaranteed Income, Prevention efforts, housing, mandated reporting to community supporting, etc.)
- **Addressing Disparities and Disproportionality**

- Reparations and early childhood development
- Birth equity and institutionalized racism
- Language access:
 - In health care
 - Language Justice Plans across all state and contracted agencies
- Use of data (quantitative and qualitative) to address inequities, especially for communities in deep poverty across systems targeting family-centered dual generation approaches (tied to the Equity Index)
- **Workforce and Programming**
 - Mental health and well-being for the ECE workforce
 - Supporting providers in serving children with exceptional needs
 - ECE workforce development initiatives
 - Access to bilingual degree pathways and program supports for multilingual and multi-racial educators to successfully complete their degrees
 - Understanding the P-3 credential for the ECE workforce
 - Strengthening mixed delivery:
 - How to build a true mixed delivery system inclusive of child care
 - Addressing the impact of TK on the mixed delivery system, including FCCH and center-based contractors

Members will receive a survey, and the responses will be used to prioritize topics.

Director Johnson expressed appreciation for the Council's continuing work and conversation around the state budget. She encouraged the Council look beyond the budget for additional recommendations for policy change and strengthening operational components. She specifically called out the need to make sure that systems are streamlined, accessible, and easy to navigate.

Director Johnson concluded with acknowledgments and member updates:

- Antoinette Jacobs will step down after today's meeting: "(I) want to really appreciate her passion and commitment to this Council for four years, and we absolutely wish you the best on this next journey."
- Tonia McMillian has retired as family child care provider after nearly 30 years and has accepted a role with Black Californians United for Early Care & Education: "We thank you for your service in that capacity and also wish you the best on your next journey with Black ECE as that's coming forward."

She closed by celebrating “the tremendous momentum, action, voices that have been brought to this Council that continue to be the leading voices to push us to do more in support of children, families in the workforce and program.”

Ms Bloomer moved the group to public comment.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat: The full record of public comment can be found on pages 45 – 49 of the [ECPC transcript](#). **Tonia McMillian** drew attention to Crystal Jones, a regular public participant at meetings since the beginning, expressing in the chat that she was frustrated and overwhelmed: “I just want to know, has anyone reached out to help this provider or find out what exactly is going on? I just would like to know that somebody will follow-up with Crystal Jones.”

Crystal Jones expressed that she was invited to attend her Local Planning Council where she shared her experiences as an ECE provider and vision of setting up a state preschool. She felt unheard and unassisted by that audience. She shared that she has been in communication with several “child welfare” entities at both state and national levels. Traumatizing experiences along the way have left her with a sense that she is not receiving meaningful help or guidance for her business. Currently she only feels support from parents she has worked with.

Ms. McMillian acknowledged Ms. Jones’ spoken and written comments: “I’m so glad to hear your voice... we’ve been reading your words in the chat, so something is going to happen for you. We’re getting your information so please; I’m praying for you, and we hear you.”

Ms. Jones expressed appreciation to Ms. McMillian and the Council and welcomed contact: “When you call me this time, can it be genuine care and tangible resources to get back stable like I started to maintain the level of success? Because this is all providers, not just me. There’s other people just like me that wanted to make it and don’t have the tenacity to just stay persistent. I don’t have the structure support. You guys are my structure, support, and guidance. Thank you.”

“UPK should have invested money into our existing infrastructure: enhancing wonderful network of programs and child care professionals. Creating more slots in school districts now is a slap in the face to the ECE community.”

“Tonia (McMillian)...You will be missed...Your Voice & Presence is POWERFUL...Thank you for Teaching & Opening my eyes and so many other eyes and hearts.”

“On behalf of Californians Together, I would like to thank you for your work on the Early Childhood Policy Council. Given the large and growing population of [dual language learners] in California, it is critical that provide opportunities for bilingual and home language certification at all levels of the teacher preparation system, affirming practices

that build on children's home languages and cultural identities. We appreciate you for your attention to this matter."

"We need the State of Calif to sub-divide the infant age grouping ratio. Centers already have this allowance. Then providers can address the parent needs to provide care to true infants and put 18mos up to 24mos into a more developmentally appropriate age grouping and meet community need."

"I'm a home daycare provider with a BA in child development for over 22 years. I don't get subsidized children, not by choice. I don't get the grants that they give for other providers. I understand they don't pay me for subsidized kids because I don't have them. But what about the one-time grant? I have second language learners, disability children, low-income parents and I do highly quality preschool. Thank you!"

"There is a large population of families who do not want their child to go to the "big" schools (like UPK) yet. They prefer independent child care centers or FCCH, yet they do need subsidies to support and that whole process is extensive, disheartening and time consuming. As inclusive and economically diverse we want to be, state and fed systems are making more difficult for providers to work with these systems. A more direct and speedy process need to be implemented."

A participant from Black Californians United for Early Care & Education (BlackECE) shared her observation of the impact of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): "While there's been a lot of criticisms and scrutiny around QRIS systems, one of the things that I think was a wonderful opportunity that came from it was the coalescing of the field and coming together and really beginning to uplift family child care and give them a space that's equal to those that work in centers. And now we have TK and it kind of seems like, again, we're back at this very bifurcated system." She also advocated for implementation of recommendations from providers and others in the early learning care system: "It's more than input. It's about truly hearing the field, taking their recommendations and actually putting them into implementation and policies. I just really encourage us all to really be mindful about what does it mean when we actually 'hear from the field' about the struggles that they're having and coming up with solutions and policies that create an equitable early learning and care system for California's children."

Adjourn

Director Johnson expressed appreciation for public comments and for Council members bringing attention to participants seeking help or asking questions that need follow up. She thanked the Council and Advisory Committee members and the public for their engagement to collectively make continued change and progress.

Meeting adjourned.