



Early Childhood Policy Council

Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary Report

Monday, May 20, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Physical Meeting: 1000 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814,
WestEd, Floor 5, Old Towne Room**

Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
 - Welcome
 - Voices from the field
 - Public comment
- May Revise Overview
 - Summary child care programs
 - Council discussion and response
 - Review draft budget letter
 - Share draft budget letter and solicit input
 - Seek Council endorsement
 - Public comment
- Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update
 - Status update
 - Council questions
 - Public comment
- Child Care Transition Quarterly Report
 - Update from the California Department of Social Services on the transition of child care programs
 - Council questions
 - Public comment
- Building a Comprehensive Early Learning and Care Mixed Delivery System that Integrates Universal Prekindergarten
 - Presentations
 - Council discussion
 - Public comment
- Adjourn

Attendance:

Council Members: Mayra Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Lissete Frausto, Natali Gaxiola, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Sonia Jaramillo, Robin Layton, Paula Merrigan, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Kim Patillo-Brownson, Dean Tagawa, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio

Parent Advisory Committee Members: Deborah Corley-Marzett, Lissete Frausto, Patricia Lozano, Yenni Rivera

Workforce Advisory Committee: Miren Algorri, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Virginia Eigen

Panelists:

- Adam North, EveryChild California
- Amanda Clarke, community member
- Dez Martinez, San Diego County Office of Education
- Maeva Marc, Kidango
- Stephen Propheter, California Department of Education

Summary Report:

Welcome and Introduction: Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Council Member

Full welcoming remarks are recorded in pages 3–6 of the [Early Childhood Policy Council \(ECPC\) May 20 meeting transcript](#).

Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Deputy Director of the CDSS Child Care and Development Division opened the second Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting of 2024 in the absence of Chair Kim Johnson. She welcomed attendees and expressed appreciation for public engagement.

Voices From the Field

Jaime-Mileham invited **Virginia Eigen**, Workforce Advisory Committee member and transitional kindergarten (TK) teacher at San Jose Unified School District, and **Amanda Clarke**, parent and early care and education (ECE) professional to share as voices from the field.

Clarke thanked Eigen for the invitation to speak at the meeting. She shared her background as a coach and office manager for a middle school in San Jose Unified School District and a former teacher for toddlers. Clarke offered details of her daughter’s experience in TK programs from her perspective as a parent and former classroom educator. She observed that being in Eigen’s TK classroom and a structured after-school enrichment program has benefited her daughter’s social-emotional development. She particularly called out the value of interacting with different children and cultures and participating in multicultural events “that help our children to broaden their horizons.” Clarke also highlighted her experience as a classroom volunteer and being able to speak in multiple languages and share knowledge and values. “I feel very privileged to have those kind of programs for us and for the families in our community, especially our low [socio-economic status] families where they do provide either financial reimbursement for them or financial help.”

Eigen who was previously a child development specialist for children ages two through kindergarten, shared her journey to becoming a TK teacher in the San Jose Unified School District.

Jaime-Mileham thanked Eigen and Clarke for sharing their personal journeys in ECE. She thanked Clarke for bringing her unique voice to this sector as a parent.

Bloomer moved the group to public comment.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat

“Thank you for sharing the inspirational story, these programs inspired others to continue their work and have quality child care.”

May Revise:

Summary Child Care Programs

Karin Bloomer asked Jaime-Mileham to provide an update on the May Revise. Full remarks begin on page 6 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

Jaime-Mileham provided a high-level overview of [proposed solutions included in the May Budget Revise 2024-2025 CCDD May Revise Budget Update](#)) to address shortfalls that impact families and children, specifically those solutions tied with California Department of Social Services (CDSS) programs.

- Child care slot expansion pause at current level
- Reduction to Emergency Child Care Bridge Program
- Foster care permanent rate structure
- Reductions to housing programs
- CalWORKs Home Visiting Program
- CalWORKs Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative

Balancing and stabilizing the budget will require difficult decisions to prevent shortfalls from persisting. The CDSS’ key approach to this budget is to preserve programs as much as possible. Jaime-Mileham encouraged attendees to send any questions via email (ECPC@dds.ca.gov).

Jaime-Mileham welcomed **Stephen Prophter**, Director of the California Department of Education (CDE) Early Education Division, to provide further details on the May Revise summary. Prophter’s full remarks begin on page 7 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

Prophter acknowledged the Governor for his administration’s historic investments prioritizing ECE. CDE is approaching the budget with a goal of maintaining investments as much as possible, with the understanding that reductions or pauses may be needed due to the multi-billion-dollar shortfall. He described how a proposed sweeping \$250 million cut would impact the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP). Local education agencies (LEAs) statewide would lose \$198 million meant to support inclusion work, including professional development, adaptive equipment, and other modifications to ensure the full participation of children with disabilities. The cut would also mean losing \$50 million previously set aside to support building statewide systems to support coaching, professional development, and classroom assessments promoting inclusive practices and effective instruction. These funds would have reached both community-based organizations and LEAs.

Prophter underscored the need for more inclusion support for California State Preschool Programs (CSPPs) and addressed the implication of the May Revise on an existing set-aside for children with disabilities. “The Legislature [and] the Governor, in a prior budget, included a policy decision to require 10 percent of enrollment in CSPPs be set aside for children with disabilities through a phased-in approach where we’d start at 5 percent, go to 7.5 percent and then 10 percent in successive years. That was paused or delayed somewhat in...the current year budget. [The May Revise] proposes to pause it

seemingly indefinitely and holding it at 5 percent. So, we know that California lags in the nation and in inclusive early education.”

Propheter also noted positives in the May Revise, including adjustments to streamline enrollment for the CSPP and a continued commitment to TK expansion based on enrollment to-date. There are also some technical adjustments to reflect the name of the new Preschool and TK Learning Foundations that will be coming out this summer.

Propheter’s final note was that funds previously delayed for the Preschool, TK, and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program “[have] now been proposed to be swept completely and...could be included in the education facilities bond proposals that the Legislature is considering.”

Bloomer thanked Propheter and opened the floor for questions from the Council.

Council Questions

(The full text of Council questions are on pages 8–9 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).)

Sonia Jaramillo asked a clarifying question about the delay of the Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant: “...the implementation of TK full force in 2025 will really impact our implementation of whether or not we need to go down to serve three-year olds entirely and release our four-year olds...is this funding delay also delaying the implementation for the districts not to be in 2025 but later?”

Propheter explained that there is no proposed pause in TK implementation and no adjustment in the phase, which is still slated for 2025–26 for four-year olds.

Jaramillo noted that full implementation of TK will result in private programs losing a large number of four-year olds. She clarified that she was wondering if delayed funding may impact TK implementation because “if there's no funding, they're not going to be able to implement fully.”

Propheter acknowledged Jaramillo’s point: “[Yes], the funding is just based on where enrollment is. No pause. ...the numbers that CDE released last week around TK enrollment, it's about 59 percent of eligible four-year-old children are enrolling. And compare that with kindergarten. Kindergarten it's more like 82 to 83 percent of eligible five-year-olds.”

Sarah Neville-Morgan offered a reminder that the May Revise is a proposal: “We don't know what the final will still be.”

Review Draft ECPC Budget Letter

Bloomer invited ECPC members **Robin Layton** and **Donna Sneeringer** to facilitate a review of the draft budget letter to gather feedback from the Council. Their full remarks begin on page 9 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#) and the full text of Council discussion can be found on pages 10–14.

Share ECPC Letter and Solicit Input

Layton summarized the development of the budget letter. She had proposed at the February meeting that the Council should draft a budget letter to the Governor and Legislature chairs in response to the May Revise. Layton and Sneeringer volunteered at that time to draft the letter. The letter under consideration at the May meeting was based on the approved December 2023 budget letter, offering thanks for current investments while serving as a reminder of commitments made. Layton noted that due to the May Revise being released on May 10, there was no time to bring the draft letter to the advisory committees for review and input. While budget letters continue to be based on inputs including public comment and ECPC member input, the suggested changes for this letter are limited to respect the advisory groups’ prior approval. If approved, the letter can be sent to the Legislature within 24 hours.

Sneeringer explained that the budget letter has been refined to address the current proposal, which will serve as the launchpad for the Legislature and Governor negotiations of the final budget.

Sneeringer reviewed the [draft ECPC budget letter](#), including the Council's proposed adjustments to reflect new state committee members, budget chairs, and pro tempore, and revisions made on the following topics:

- Acknowledgment of the state's financial position
- Reiteration of the state's commitment to the children, families and child care providers
- Slot expansion

She explained that there were no changes made related to the Rate and Quality Advisory Panel (RQAP): "Our recommendations stand. We believe that this work needs to be completed and that it needs to move forward as designed." Changes were made in the state budget process conversation with the awareness that "there are some pauses in place and what we said was that we believe they should maintain the promise of funding 200,000 child care slots by budget year 2025–26."

Layton reiterated that there were not a lot of changes and the phrase "true cost of care" was bolded to make it stand out.

Bloomer thanked Layton and opened the floor for the Council input discussion.

Council Input Discussion

Kay Ruhstaller expressed support for the draft letter. She suggested editing the opening of the last paragraph ("As your partners in helping California families with young children navigate the challenges of today...") to emphasize that challenges have increased in the wake of the COVID pandemic. "Because in all of our environments I just really believe that we're seeing social-emotional behaviors as a result of COVID that we have not quite experienced in the past. And so, the environment has become tougher for our providers."

Janet Zamudio suggested including sending a copy of the letter to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction since the Council is also advising him.

Mayra Alvarez thanked those who worked on the letter and suggested adding a bullet to request funding for the Medi-Cal continuous coverage provision be green lit.

Sneeringer stated that reference to greenlighting funding for Medi-Cal continuous coverage for children was in a previous draft letter, but the drafters weren't clear what the status was. She confirmed that the language from the December letter ("Funding and greenlighting the Medi-Cal continuous coverage policy so that [the Department of Health Care Services] can make this protection operational by January 2025") can be added back in.

Seek Council Endorsement

Bloomer polled the Council for any members abstaining from supporting the letter. There were two abstentions.

Layton polled the Council for any members opposing the letter. A voice vote of endorsement was then taken.

Bloomer moved the group to public comment.

Selections From Public Comment and Chat

“I am a family childcare provider from Los Angeles County and a proud member of CCPU [Child Care Providers United]. The May budget balances too much of the state’s deficit at the expense of working parents and providers. It is a deeply disappointing proposal because suppliers do not ask for anything more than enough to cover our costs. These costs include ingredients for fresh and healthy meals, educational materials, such as books and toys, transportation costs to drop off and pick up students at school and a reliable net salary that we can count on. We urge the Governor and the Legislature to invest in those who care about the next generation of California!”

“Thank you, Robin [Layton], Donna [Sneeringer], and everyone on this panel for finalizing this important letter.”

“Thank you for the strong commitment to the goals and keeping them in sight in this letter. Also, much appreciation for the inclusion of the mental health and social-emotional aspects that we need to support for providers and families.”

“Early Edge California would like to thank the Council for its ongoing work and commitment to supporting California’s diverse families and children. We’d like to thank the Council for drafting a letter urging the administration and Legislature to maintain their commitment to California’s children and the critical workforce of providers taking care of them, especially as it relates to the commitment to child care slots and moving forward with the alternative rate methodology. Without these slots and commitment to rate reform, the state will not be able to meet the needs of youngest learners, especially multilingual learner children.”

“Thank you for the advocacy expressed today. It is disconcerting that so much is proposed to sweep funding that supports inclusive practices and least restrictive environment for preschool students with IEPs [Individual Education Plans]. Starting young children with challenges in their rightful place with peers takes systems change endeavors that require funding for additional facilities, professional development, professional ongoing coaching, etc. Having ALL children in high-quality early learning and care programs will have a positive impact on literacy and academic success, reduced disproportionality, and frankly, reduced need for prison services in the future. Please advocate for IEEEP funding.”

Rate and Quality Advisory Panel:

Status Update

Bloomer asked Jaime-Mileham to provide an update on the RQAP. Full remarks begin on page 14 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

Jaime-Mileham expressed gratitude for the RQAP members, CCPU, and the broader child care and preschool community of interest who have demonstrated their sincere commitment to the rate reform process. She acknowledged the milestones achieved so far and the honest feedback offered on the process. Quoting a previous ECPC member, she noted, “It’s just too big for us not to care, and this is historic.”

Jaime-Mileham summarized feedback received at the May 8 RQAP meeting:

- Panel members expressed frustration that the state is not using the MIT living wage tool to define the salary elements of the base rate as recommended by the previous Rate and Quality group.
 - According to the Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) definitions, the salary elements depend on the selection points and the model can be run in various combinations. The options are the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2023, the MIT Living Wage Calculator of California of 2023, or the hybrid BLS plus approach. The hybrid approach adjusts BLS upward by a variable percentage based on geographical region and informed by the MIT Living Wage Calculator.

- Panel members also requested clarifications on two issues:
 - Who are the decision makers in the alternative methodology process?
 - What is the timeline and the implementation rates based on the true cost of care?

Jaime-Mileham acknowledged that RQAP members may find it difficult to provide feedback while wondering whether their concerns are being heard or if their input will impact the final outcome. She assured members their feedback continues to be heard and encouraged them to continue sharing their concerns and their thoughts on decisions still to be made.

Jaime-Mileham reviewed rate reform progress milestones achieved over the last year. (See slide 2 of [CDSS Rate Reform, May 20, 2024 PPT \(Milestones Achieved in the Past 12 Months\)](#)) and page 15 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

In March, the JLMC arrived at consensus on the rate element definitions. Jaime-Mileham provided background on how the JLMC met the mandate for rate element definitions. In the JLMC successor agreement, they are charged with using the information for the cost estimation model to define the elements of the base rate and enhancement rates to inform the state's proposed single rate structure. The rates will also be subject to the mandated public engagement process.

At the April and May RQAP meetings, CDSS gathered public input from child care providers on the JLMC definitions. Members of the public may comment on the rate element definitions and other aspects of the single rate structure and alternative methodology process via email (singleratestructure@dss.ca.gov).

The JLMC consensus on the definitions was shared with the Legislature in a progress update report submitted March 22, 2024. On May 15, the CDSS submitted a second report, updating the Legislature on the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan (CCDF) and single rate structure progress.

The Legislative Reports are posted on [the CDSS Rate and Quality website](#).

Jaime-Mileham discussed the new requirement from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Child Care for an assessment of how provider payment increases have kept up with inflation. CDSS partner P5 Fiscal Strategies (P5) recently completed this analysis. The analysis had three steps:

1. Calculating the statewide average change in inflation for January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023
 - This period was selected because it corresponds with the implementation date of the rates associated with the last CCDF State Plan submission. The inflation data came from the California Department of Industrial Relations.
2. Calculating the corresponding increase to provider payments consistent with guidance from ACF
 - The analysis addressed payment rates reported in California's last CCDF State Plan, which were those affected by January 1, 2022.
3. Comparing the average statewide inflation to the January 1, 2022 payment rates plus additional payments made to providers
 - The July 2024 CCDF State Plan submission will include payments for fiscal year 2023–24 and 2025–26, pursuant of Article 7.2 of the successor agreement between the state and CCPU and the parity payments to the non-represented providers. No payments funded through the American Rescue Plan Act were included in this inflation rate analysis.

The analysis found that the statewide average inflation over the two-year period was 11 percent, and state funded payments made to providers met or exceeded the statewide inflation rate for this period.

The cost of care plus rate and the traditional transitional one-time payment were established in the successor agreement between the state and CCPU and codified as SB140 to address the parity. The monthly cost of care rate is scheduled to sunset at the end of fiscal year 2024-25. The administration acknowledges that cost of care payments are temporary. However, including them in the analysis was deemed appropriate as they reflect the payments for providers during the time period of the analysis.

(See slide 5 of [CDSS Rate Reform May 20, 2024 PPT \(Analysis of Pay Increases\)](#)).

There are several milestone goals that must be achieved to finalize rate setting by July 1, 2025. Milestones include the following:

- July 1, 2024: Submitting the CCDF State Plan
 - Within 60 days of ACF approval: Submitting implementation outline for single rate structure to Legislature and CCPU
 - Within 90 days of approval: Reopening rate negotiations with CCPU
- August 2024: Finalizing rate element definitions for centers
- Fiscal year 2024–25: Implementing planning activities and finalizing selection points

(See slide 6 of [CDSS Rate Reform May 20, 2024 PPT](#), and page 17 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).)

Rates will take effect in fiscal year 2025–26, once other reasonably necessary activities (such as regulatory and policy guidance, training for contractors, and updates to contracts and data systems necessary) have been completed. The current elements include a recognition of quality standards. During the second phase of rate reform work, there will be additional conversations on competencies, skills, and abilities. Phase II will begin in calendar year 2025. (See slide 7 of [CDSS Rate Reform May 20, 2024 PPT](#), and pages 17–18 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).)

Opportunities for public input in the rate reform process will continue. CDSS will hold quarterly public meetings addressing rate reform throughout fiscal year 2024-25. These may take the form of RQAP meetings or ECPC meetings.

The CDE and CDSS will partner to convene two focus groups for center-based programs. One focus group will be for Title 5 centers and the other will be for private centers. The purpose of the focus groups will be to continue discussing current issues related to the JLMC-approved elements, implementation, and operationalization. Other one-time, limited focus groups will be convened as needed throughout 2024–25. Members of the public can comment on rate element definitions, the alternative methodology process, and the single rate structure via email (singleratestructure@dss.ca.gov).

Closing out her presentation with an update on evaluation activities, Jaime-Mileham shared that the CDSS has retained Child Trends to develop an evaluation framework for the new rate structure. While evaluation will not begin until the new rates are implemented, Child Trends is starting evaluation design. Child Trends will be reaching out to providers and families in the coming weeks to invite input through interviews and focus groups.

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

- [Rate Reform and Quality page on the CDSS website](#)
- [March 22, 2024 Report to the Legislature](#)
- [May 15, 2024 Report to the Legislature](#)

For more information about the CDSS, visit the [Child Care and Development Division website](#) or join the [CDSS list serv to receive updates](#).

Bloomer thanked Jaime-Mileham for her presentation and invited questions from the Council.

Council Questions

(The full record of Council questions are on pages 18–22 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).)

Layton thanked Jaime-Mileham for clarifying the topics that came up at the RQAP meeting. Layton is a current member of the RQAP, and was previously part of the Rate and Quality Stakeholder Work Group and a 2018 rates committee. She clarified that the RQAP wanted only the MIT cost of living calculations used to ensure the true cost of care be presented for the administration to consider. She expressed dissatisfaction with the provider payment increases presented, and pointed out the challenge of any rate increases needing to be reflected in 2025–26 budget: “...if there is any rate increase, it would go into effect the following year. And so, next year's budget proposal for 2025-26 needs to have rate increases even before the report is done... hold harmless and temporary funding ends

... June 30, 2025, so, we could end up with a whole year with a problem. (See slide 5 [CDSS Rate Reform, May 20 2024 PPT \(Analysis of Pay Increases\)](#)).

Deborah Corley-Marzett expressed her perspective that the public be given ample time to speak at meetings: “I think it's important that our voices are fairly heard at the end of every segment because that's what we're here to represent and to speak. So I just really felt slighted.” She also shared her opinion of the May Revise. “All the cuts and the promises that were made but not kept, all the fight that providers have done, I feel like the rug is just being pulled from under us. The slot issue is a major issue for all of us. ...It's not just being pulled from under us as providers, home-based educators and centers, early education. It's being pulled from under the families we serve. The rug is being pulled from under the most vulnerable people in California. Those who cannot afford it, those who have mental issues, those who have family homelessness and all issues, our families we serve that are in homeless centers. And this is really sad.”

She closed by reemphasizing the importance of giving providers time to speak and express their experiences in the field.

Sneeringer supported the need for voices to be heard at meetings. She acknowledged the breadth of meeting agenda topics, noting that budget issues are time sensitive conversations but conversations about universal prekindergarten (UPK) could extend over multiple convenings.

She expressed solidarity with Layton’s concerns around putting safeguards in place in this year's budget to avoid a funding cliff on June 30, 2025: “...it isn't just about having an agreement in place June 30 because if the care costs plus stipends are ending and hold harmless is ending, as an administrator of a voucher program, we have to give due notice. Which means mid-June next year, we will have to send notices to providers that their rates are going down if there is no agreement in place because we have to give timely notice of an adverse action. And this is really the window where we could have some of those safeguards protected. And just the urgency is really critical to me and to our organization.”

Lissete Frausto thanked Corley-Marzett for her comments. She shared her reaction to the May Revise and child care slots: “We need to make sure that once the final budget is finalized, we have what our families deserve, especially also our providers and our teachers. I am speaking today myself as a parent and an advocate. I have a 14-month-old and I've gotten to the point where I'm frustrated, and I'm sure many other families are frustrated as well because we already have a difficult time finding child care for our children, and yet now we want to pause the slots and that's just going to make it even harder on working families.” She advocated for prioritizing early child care and learning: “We need to make sure that we have that if we want our economy to go up or if we want to be able to bring in other things, we need to take care of our children, our families, and our providers first, and that should be our top priority. And then everything else should fall under.”

Layton praised Frausto for speaking up about what these funding cuts mean because voices like hers are “so important for the administration and the Legislature to hear.” She expressed her opinion that if another crisis like COVID were to happen, “things will shut down, and people can't go to work unless they have child care.”

Frausto shared her lived experience of experiencing a partial layoff and not having child care during the COVID pandemic: “I got laid off because I didn't have any child care during COVID. Everything had to close down, and I didn't have any child care. So, my employer said, ‘well, you're going to be one of the people that is going to go on unemployment.’ And then after a while, they had to lay off people completely.”

Bloomer moved the group to public comment.

Selections from Public Comment and Chat

“Childcare should *be* an entitlement program for our children. Just in Los Angeles County there are 15,000 homeless children who entered the school district or are part of it in 2024 so once again imagine how many are in need of child care today, Mon, May 20th but unable to have a slot. *That* is why I refuse to give up on a decade later from when I was out there waiting on a slot for 10 months.”

“Providers are not paid a salary because they are not employees. Language about wages and salaries for Family Child Care providers is misleading and doesn’t represent the reality of being a business owner.”

“If we continue to separate childcare from preschool/pre-K we are going to cause a severe loss in childcare slots.”

Child Care Transition Quarterly Report:

Update from the CDSS on the Transition of Child Care Programs

Bloomer asked Jaime-Mileham to provide an update on the child care and development transition to CDSS. Full remarks begin on page 22 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

Jaime-Mileham reported that all transferred programs continue to be firmly embedded within the mission, vision, and organizational structure of the CDSS, and the Department remains committed to effectively operations to achieve the goals of the child care and development transition.

Jaime-Mileham thanked the CDE for continuing to manage the Child Development Management Information System and for the CDE’s partnership during the transition of programs. As of November of 2023, the CDSS has implemented Child Development Program Enrollment Attendance and Reporting which allows child care and development contractors to submit the fiscal reports necessary to process payments.

Update on Rate Reform

As required by the state’s Memorandum of Understanding with CCPU and [Senate Bill 140](#), the JLMC— comprised of representatives from the CDSS, CDE, the California Department of Human Resources, and CCPU—was convened beginning in October 2023 to conduct a rate and quality system structure review. The purpose was to define the elements of the base and enhancement rates using the single cost estimation model to inform the single rate structure, subject to mandated public engagement state plan process.

Consensus was reached and the agreement was finalized March 6, 2024. The CDSS submitted a required report to the Legislature that month. The cover letter, definitions of the elements, and report to the Legislature are available to the public on [the Rate Reform and Quality website](#).

Update on Brilliant Beginnings

In July 2021, the CDSS launched the [Brilliant Beginnings Initiative](#) to support and improve the child care data landscape. It includes the California Supporting Providers and Kids (CaISPARK) project, [MyChildCarePlan.org](#), and Child Care Connect. During this quarter, the CaISPARK project made progress in two areas: 1) conducting internal engagement and market rate research and 2) conducting disciplinary market rate research with the vendor community.

The CDSS continues collaborating with the California Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Network to host and maintain the MyChildCarePlan.org website, launched in October of 2022.

During the quarter, an update was completed to add all licensed child care providers in California to the MyChildCarePlan.org website. The CDSS made progress following the state IT approval process for Child Care Connect, which will replace MyChildCarePlan.org after June 2025. Child Care Connect will meet all federal and state child care consumer education requirements, including those mandated by state

Assembly Bill 2960 statute of 2018. MyChildCarePlan.org does not meet these requirements. CDSS finalized the draft report on Child Care Connect informed by parent listening sessions hosted by the R&R Network.

Update on Child and Adult Care Food Program

Jaime-Mileham provided a status update on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CDSS added 16 new online courses in both English and Spanish to the Bright Track online training website. Bright Track offers CACFP operators policy guidance, technical skills, and professional growth opportunities. Training topics include improving workforce culture, addressing health equity, and diversifying meals in child nutrition programs. More than 300 people attended the CACFP Stay Connected Quarterly Webinar on July 31, 2024. The agenda included the CDSS update that introduced state agency CACFP staff roles and functions. Subsequent quarterly webinars will foster stakeholder engagement and gather input from CACFP program operators. Topics will cover state agency updates, policy support, and best practices. The target audience for these webinars is CACFP authorized representatives, program contacts, as well as community partners.

Jaime-Mileham thanked the CDE for their partnership and for allowing CDSS to continue to share the legacy programs.

For more information on CDSS activities, access the following resources:

- [Brilliant Beginnings on the CDSS website](#)
- [Rate and Quality Reform on the CDSS website](#)
- [Child Care and Development Transition page on the CDSS website](#)
- [Child and Adult Food Care Program on the CDSS website](#)

For more information about the CDSS, visit the [Child Care and Development Division website](#) or join the [CDSS list serv to receive updates](#).

Bloomer thanked Jaime-Mileham for her presentation and moved the group to public comment.

Selections from Public Comment and Chat

“Title 5’ doesn’t accurately describe the different requirements for Department of Education and Department of Social Services programs. Requirements are no longer the same for those programs.”

“As a provider I will be unable to serve children if we continue to treat child care as an afterthought. We also need to realize that before COVID we had 44,000 FCC homes and we now have 22,000 and we don’t have enough opening to cover the loss of slots due to this treatment.”

“I am disappointed that the reimbursement rate chart detailing percent increase and inflation does not visually reflect that cost of care plus is temporary.”

Building a Comprehensive Early Learning and Care Mixed Delivery System that Integrates Universal Prekindergarten:

Presentation

The full UPK presentation slides and remarks of the discussion are available:

- [CDE UPK](#)
- [CDSS UPK](#)
- [San Diego County Office of Education \(SDCOE\) UPK](#)
- [UPK Partnership Guidebook](#)
- [ECPC May 20 transcript, pages 24-50](#)

Speakers, in order of presentation:

- Donna Sneeringer and Dean Tagawa, ECPC members

- Stephen Propheeter, CDE
- Lupe Jaime-Mileham, CDSS
- Dez Martinez, Coordinator of Early Education Special Projects, SDCOE
- Maeva Marc, Vice President of Advocacy, Kidango
- Adam North, Director of Professional Development, EveryChild California

Bloomer asked Jaime-Mileham to introduce the update on building a comprehensive early learning and care mixed delivery system that integrates UPK. Full remarks begin on page 24 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

Jaime-Mileham explained that ECPC members identified UPK as a topic of significant interest through the survey administered at the beginning of the year. She thanked Sneeringer and Tagawa for facilitating the discussion.

Sneeringer opened by acknowledging the comments in the chat and expressing her understanding that UPK and the mixed delivery system are sensitive and complex topics. She noted that the goal of the panel was “to have a beginning discussion.”

She expressed a vision of UPK as focused around local control and parent choice: “I think that as a Council and as an industry, we really need to design a system that gives families options to meet their needs, so their kids are supported to thrive...we are challenged to build a system that's not going to look exactly the same in every community, yet still offers families an array of choices...We've become very entrenched in which side of the early education aisle you sit on, whether you're on the preschool [and] TK side or you're on the child care side...but families don't see us as separate. They see us as a single continuum that they need to raise their families”.

She encouraged participants to listen to the presenters and “start to think differently about how we can take the journey together.” The ultimate aim of the ECPC is to make policy recommendations to the state on what needs to be done to create a comprehensive system, how child care and pre-K fields can work better together, and what barriers need to come down to support collaboration and create a stronger mixed delivery approach. The panel speakers were invited to share their expertise to allow ECPC to “really start to unpack what else we need to be doing.”

Sneeringer reiterated her awareness that UPK is one component of a complex environment. The 2025–26 rollout date for TK, does not mean that everything will be fixed and fully implemented. She encouraged all attendees to be a part of the continuing conversation.

Tagawa explained that his role with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) puts him in “unique situation with a very unique perspective” as he supports both TK and CSPP in the district. He described the districts capacity and the differing perspectives and challenges: “...we have slots for about 10,000 kids within our state preschool programs. And those include our part-day programs at the elementary schools, along with 86 early education centers. So, I have on one side...my early education folks and my early education center principals and my state preschool program teachers who are all talking about they didn't get the same number of four-year-olds to backfill into their programs this year. And, then I have on the other side trying to get our elementary TK programs full and up and running because some schools didn't have this before. And so how do we get them up and running?”

Tagawa noted the central idea “that we want all of our kids and all of our families to be able to get into a program.” He pointed out that the [California Master Plan for Early Learning \(MPELC\)](#) was developed in part to ensure that all four-year-olds (and income-eligible three-year-olds) have access to free, high-quality preschool programs prior to enrolling in kindergarten. (See slide 2 [UPK opening slide and Council questions \(Master Plan for Early Learning and Care\) PPT](#).)

In LAUSD, 86 percent of families are Title 1 families in the free and reduced meals program. Tagawa emphasized that the district's goal is "to be able to make sure that every kid has a place to go." He highlighted the importance of preschool in building academic foundations. He shared an anecdote from his time as a kindergarten classroom teacher about a student who entered kindergarten from preschool already able to read. He noted that LAUSD children now have the opportunity to go to a preschool program, and that families still have freedom to choose programs that fit their needs: "Within our early [education] center programs, we had about 1,700 families who didn't go to TK, because they needed that public choice. They needed the full-day, full-year, full-program services. And so, for them that option to have that choice is really important."

He acknowledged that UPK "even for a local educational agency who's serving both groups...this is a tough conversation and getting it going is important." He underscored the intention of coming away from discussions with policy recommendations to bring back for ECPC review and endorsement at the next.

Sneeringer explained the value of hearing about UPK from both CDE and CDSS, as there are impacts and roles across many of the CDSS programs administered and many participants have contracts with both agencies: "We are working very hard to try to integrate and blend things together across those boundaries."

She welcomed **Sarah Neville-Morgan**, Deputy Superintendent of the CDE Opportunities for All Branch and Prophet of CDE to share highlights on UPK implementation efforts. Full remarks begin on page 27 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).

Neville-Morgan asked her colleague **Stephen** Prophet to speak on the CDE's UPK efforts.

Propheter explained that UPK is an update of California's existing system of prekindergarten programs. The goal of UPK is to better fit the needs of families and dramatically expand access to high-quality preschool. TK will be available for free to four-year-olds by 2025–26. While all four-year-olds will be eligible for TK, families will maintain the ability to choose the program that best meets their and their child's needs. Currently CDE data show 59 percent of eligible four-year-old children are enrolling in TK, so that means 41 percent are enrolling somewhere else, or nowhere else.

UPK follows a roadmap set out in Governor Newsom's MPELC, and CDE is implementing that vision. Prophet explained that the legislative mandate for UPK expansion prompted the CDE to "take a systemic approach through the launch of UPK rather than just focusing on TK." The CDE views UPK as a bridge between the early learning and care system and TK-12: "We know a strong start in pre-K is only beneficial if it is sustained. We cannot deliver on the promise of UPK without the alignment and support of early grades reinforcing and building off of what children gain in their pre-K experiences" ([CDE UPK PPT, \(Alignment Between Systems\), slide 2](#)) UPK is also part of a broader initiative to align preschool to third grade (P–3) learning experiences. Research consistently finds the long-term effectiveness of interventions varies considerably, in part because of what happens as children enter elementary school. ([CDE UPK PPT, \(California's Pre-K to 3rd Grade Initiative\), slide 3.](#))

The success of UPK requires shifts in multiple systems and building new partnerships. Prophet touched on specific areas where shifts will be necessary, including curriculum and assessment alignment, family engagement, teacher preparation, and connections between systems ([CDE UPK PPT, \(The Need for Multiple Systems to Shift\), slide 4](#)). He acknowledged that "it's a major investment...but there is a need for systems to shift to make sure that we are supporting our youngest learners."

Propheter also reviewed UPK enrollment trends for both three- and four-year-olds ([CDE UPK PPT, \(UPK Enrollment Trends\), slides 5–6](#)). He noted that enrollment has recovered from the dip caused by the

COVID pandemic. In combination with a slight dip in the state's population, this means that a higher proportion of four-year-olds are now enrolled in either TK or CSPPs than were in 2019.

Propheter explained that CSPPs are included in [Great Start California](#), the state's vision for an improved, coherent P–3 pathway. Investments under Great Start California have resulted in historic changes that impact program quality and equity. New requirements for serving children with disabilities, supporting multilingual learners, and reducing exclusionary practices have made CSPPs more inclusive spaces. By granting children with disabilities categorical eligibility and requiring that at least 5 percent of slots to be reserved for children with disabilities, enrollment of children with disabilities in CSPPs increased from 4.3 percent to 5.6 percent in just the first year of implementation. While enrollment has improved, legislation is still needed. Funding was not included in the May Revise.

Propheter also reported on data from year 2 of new requirements for identifying multilingual learners (MLLs): "In the first quarter of this current year, 58 percent of children in [CSPPs] were dual language learners, mirroring that birth to age five population in California. Our state preschools are tracking with Migrant Policy Institute's estimate that about 59–60 percent or so of children birth to five are MLLs....These insights are really powerful for fostering that culturally inclusive and affirming...programs for California's children and families as well as increasing support for home language development alongside English development ([CDE UPK PPT, \(Great Start State Preschool I\), slide 7](#))."

Head Start and private preschools will continue to be critical partners for ensuring families have choices that give all children access to the early learning opportunities they deserve.

In 2024–25, the CDE will begin the rollout of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, Second Edition (CLASS) and Classroom Environment Tool to ensure that UPK is an educator-first system of improving adult-child interactions. CDE supports the new CLASS for the benefit of the state. There are more than 200 independent empirical research studies that substantiate the positive effects that the CLASS tool and coaching have on early learning programs and children's outcomes ([CDE UPK PPT, \(Great Start State Preschool II\), slide 8](#)).

Propheter described the scope of recommendations from the *UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup Report*, described the diverse makeup of the workgroup, and summarized key recommendations from the report ([CDE UPK PPT, slides 9-14](#)):

- Quality recommendation:
 - Require that UPK programs are fostering child-centered learning environments, including requiring state preschool programs to adopt an evidence-based curriculum aligned with the Preschool and TK Learning Foundations and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and using those tools to inform instruction and inform practice. (CDE UPK, slide 11)
- Access recommendation:
 - Encourage community schools serving elementary grades to focus on supporting expanded access to high-quality UPK programs through a mixed delivery model by collaborating with local preschool programs and local early learning and care infrastructure to offer full-day options to best meet the needs of children and families. (CDE UPK, slide 12)
- Intersection of quality and access:
 - Provide pathways for Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs) to join Family Child Care Home Education Networks (FCCHENs) through support. (CDE UPK, slide 13)
- Educator quality supports:
 - This recommendation is from the 'other consideration' section where recommendations are highlighted that could be implemented should funding become available. (CDE UPK, slide 14)

The CDE is grateful for their partners, including the CDSS, the State Board of Education, and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, as well as of all of its work group members. Interested parties can learn more by visiting the [UPK Workgroup page on the California Educators Together website.](#)

Bloomer thanked Propheeter and transitioned to Jaime-Mileham.

Jaime-Mileham discussed how the CDSS fits into the UPK system and the role its programs can play in the delivery of UPK, specifically around the General Child Care (CCTR) voucher programs, Head Start Collaboration Office and R&Rs. Full remarks begin on page 32 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript.](#)

The CDSS oversees direct contracts of voucher and Title 5 programs that serve children from birth to 13 years old, which includes three- and four-year-olds in private centers; preschools; licensed FCCHs; and Family, Friend, and Neighbor care. Voucher programs include the Alternative Payment Program and CalWorks, while Title 5 programs include the CCTR Programs, General Migrant Child Care, and the FCCHEN. Based on a family's income, the voucher program covers most of the cost of the family's preferred child care provider, including those offering UPK.

The CDSS also subcontracts with R&Rs that support families seeking child care. R&Rs help families identify programs that meet their needs.

Finally, operating within the CDSS, the California Head Start Collaboration Office supports Head Start agencies and activities designed to benefit income-eligible children and their families from the child's birth until school entry. The Collaboration Office's primary purpose is to partner with other state and local agencies, ensuring alignment with the universal preschool goals and enhancing program quality ([CDSS UPK PPT, slide 2](#)).

Jaime-Mileham summarized CDSS workforce supports made possible with CCDF funds, highlighting the California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN). CPIN provides high-quality professional learning, technical assistance, and support through a virtual learning network. CPIN leads across the state deliver professional development trainings and learning strategies to CSPPs, CCDF-funded programs, and voucher and Title 5 programs to support the development of three and four-year-olds ([CDSS UPK PPT, slide 3](#)).

Sneeringer thanked Jaime-Mileham and welcomed **Dez Martinez**, Coordinator of Early Education Special Projects for the SDCOE, to talk about the work being done in San Diego's UPK transitions and planning processes.

Dez Martinez is also the SDCOE Child Care and Development Planning Council Coordinator. She shared the county's process in using UPK Planning and Implementation Grants to create a UPK mixed delivery plan with an equity lens that addresses various geographic locations and families' needs ([SDCOE UPK PPT, \(Our Role\), slide 2](#)).

Martinez summarized key factors that contributed to successful UPK planning and implementation outcomes ([SDCOE UPK PPT, \(Successful Outcomes\), slide 3](#)). She identified collaboration as key to the partnership between Local Control Accountability Plan and the Vista Unified School District (VUSD). The partnership resulted in a prenatal to third grade continuum of supports that includes parents, teachers, and community members. Additionally, the partnership between Educational Enrichment Systems, a community-based organization (CBO), and district superintendent Dr. Matt Doyle is a model for how districts can work with local CBOs. This type of partnership can be replicated with districts willing to support all children and families at a systems level.

SDCOE was also able to develop a P-3 team that supports networking and individualized technical assistance. This technical assistance provided "is really having some significant supports in helping districts learn which [CBOs] are nearby and how to best work with them."

Finally, SDCOE developed a UPK mixed delivery team focused on obtaining feedback from mixed delivery partners. This led to a draft UPK mixed delivery plan which outlines significant needs, barriers, and

possible solutions. “It's through this work that county-wide UPK expansion and enhancement can happen through [FCCH] providers, CBOs, districts, Head Starts, military providers, and native providers.”

SCDOE is also working with colleges, universities, licensing, and First 5, and has been in close partnership with the R&R Network from the outset. “[The] mixed delivery approach is really what has helped us to expand our understanding of county needs...but not all UPK expansion work has been easy-peasy. Not all of it has been successful. There's still work to be done.”

Martinez shared challenges that SDCOE has observed and hopes to convert to positive goals over time ([SDCOE UPK PPT, \(From Challenges to Goals\), slide 4](#)).

First, she noted that there is a strong tendency for a “parallel play” approach towards UPK efforts rather than a “collaborative play” approach: “The need for internal collaboration has come up in multiple ways by multiple people, multiple agencies, districts, and even our own county office of education...we're working in silos. We're hearing that even districts that have [CSPPs] on campuses are not effectively collaborating with those preschools...” Martinez pointed to the UPK grant itself as really being “two different grants...they're held at different departments within [SDCOE] that are not even on the same level. One of us is upstairs, another one is downstairs. We work to collaborate, but it has been difficult and we're doing some great things and work is continuing to move on...”

The second challenge is an atmosphere of competition rather than cooperation related to funding, salaries, services and quality. The disparity in workforce pay and qualifications remains an issue. As Martinez explained, “...I'm not sure that we will see the workforce crisis come to an end until we can have equitable wages between both TK and our mixed delivery early educators.” Martinez shared an example of TK and CSPP teachers working in the same classroom. An experienced CSPP teacher may hold a higher degree or a high-level child development permit and have more knowledge than a new TK teacher, but the CSPP teacher will have a lower salary range and may be seen as an assistant because they do not possess a credential like the TK teacher.”

Martinez also discussed that CSPPs are offering some quality services that are “not quite there at the TK side yet.” For example, CSPPs are using the DRDP, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, and CLASS. “We're also evaluating their teacher-child interactions, which we know are key for brain development...but we're not seeing those same requirements or services on the TK side.”

Finally, Martinez pointed to a limitation with family choice when it comes to TK and special education: “When it comes to special education services and inclusion, we're not quite there yet.” She explained that if a family has a child with an identified special need but chooses to be at a CBO rather than TK due to the needs of the family, they may have to forego special education services that are only available to children enrolled in TK.”

Sneeringer thanked Martinez. She welcomed **Maeva Marc**, Vice President of Advocacy at [Kidango](#), to share work the organization has been doing with school districts in their community in providing UPK options.

Maeva Marc, described Kidango as “an early learning and care agency in the Bay Area...serv(ing) about 5,000 children and families and [offering] a blended variety of child and development programs: Early Head Start, Head Start, general child care, [CSPPs]. We also have 72 providers who are part of our FCCHEN Program.” As an organization, Kidango is excited about serving the zero to three population, and their waitlist is evidence of how many families are hoping to enroll in care. Marc notes that the vision for the UPK system is wonderful, but it's a hard vision to achieve right now.

Marc shared her opinion that competition in the system has created harm that must be addressed: “...we need to make sure we are addressing that harm and finding a way to attend to healing so that we can all start working together.” She thanked Martinez for “bringing up how we need to stop seeing ourselves as competitors, but as part of a united system for families.... As a former teacher, one of the things I've always told myself is, ‘Don't put a children's life on a shelf to deal with the adult stuff. Focus on the kids.’”

Marc shared that Kidango’s relationship with Alum Rock School District in Santa Clara County is based on a shared, aligned vision on ECE: “We've had a relationship with [Alum Rock School District] for over 20 years, and this year we actually were able to partner with them to implement a birth to five campus. We know that throughout our K–12 system, there's been some under-enrollment in schools. And instead of closing a school down, we were able to transform this school based on the need within that community for families who had children under five years old. And so as a partner with [the district] we provide the infant-toddler care, as well as working with the three-year-olds, and we provide the wraparound services, the before and after care for their TK and K students.”

Marc further explained Kidango’s vision and relational approach: “We need to be able to stabilize our families as well as our ECE workforce. And what we need to do is ensure that, as we begin to implement, the UPK programs have the support that they need to establish meaningful foundational partnerships with their local LEA. There needs to be a way for them to have access to those kind of relationships.” She noted that Kidango is fortunate to have dedicated staff who work to develop partnerships and recognized that many organizations don’t have the same capacity. As not every organization has this capability, “it is really important that we are providing the resources on how to partner with your local school district and what great partnership looks like.”

She shared her observations of what families want and need in child care: “It's expensive to live in California, and so families are working very hard to keep a roof over their heads and to keep their children fed. And so full-day care is something they need. And I think that with this system, if we work together, we cooperate together, ...we can really build a system that serves children and families in the way that they need it. And it's important too to ensure that families are able to choose what is best for them throughout this system.”

Marc expressed appreciation for Sneeringer calling out the need for one unified system: “...if we can all really get that ingrained in our minds and how we can unify, it's really important. ...I'm from Haiti and it is Haitian Heritage month this month, and our motto is ‘L'union fait la force.’ There is strength in unity. And I stand by that in the work that I do, and I encourage you all—and I'm talking to my providers who are on the call right now—go find your local LEA. Knock on those doors. Say, ‘Hey, I'm here. I know you need help. Let's do this together.’”

Sneeringer thanked Marc and agreed with the importance of unity as a guiding principle. She also highlighted the importance of resources and shared that the Child Care Resource Center has been partnering with EveryChild California to develop a new toolkit to support UPK conversations in the ECE community. She introduced **Adam North**, Director of Professional Development at EveryChild California, to share more details.

Adam North provided an overview of the [UPK Partnership Guidebook](#) (Guidebook). The Guidebook is funded by Heising-Simons Foundation and developed by six partner organizations ([UPK Guidebook PPT, slide 12](#)). All partner organizations are stakeholders with “a significant investment in seeing successful partnerships.”

North described the partner organizations’ approach to understanding the overall vision, charge, and delivery of UPK as they developed the Guidebook ([UPK Guidebook PPT \(UPK Vision\), slides 2–3](#)): “We looked at where are the blanks...and [asked] where can we help be a supporter of that vision? Because we think the vision is good, but where many things aren't totally clicking yet ... we can start to set in and provide supports for... those partnerships.”

North stated that while TK is one component of successful UPK, there is more involved: “We're talking about parental choice for the community and for the families themselves. There's tremendous flexibilities under UPK where we can design programs that are appropriate for your individual communities.”

He underscored that the pathway for a child's success in UPK can look different depending on families' priorities, the geographic accessibility of services, and even the age of a child as programs are being phased in ([UPK Guidebook PPT \(How You Deliver\), slide 5](#)). North explained that fully delivering on UPK is not possible without creating partnerships that support services such as full-day care, IEPs and Individualized Family Service Plans, and staff development ([UPK Guidebook PPT \(Community Partnership Examples\), slide 6](#)).

The primary purpose of the Guidebook was "to create a common understanding of the regulations and laws that govern UPK." But North noted that work has extended to "starting to create and share resources and tools and templates that help facilitate the successful delivery of UPK." ([UPK Guidebook PPT \(Blending/Stacking, Braiding or Layering?\), slides 8–10](#)). The Guidebook is now live and available at the dedicated website www.UPKGuidebook.org

North noted that the Guidebook website also compiles and shares existing resources and tools being used in the communities. He encouraged organizations and providers to let the Guidebook partners know about how they are doing UPK work: "If you've already done the work and you're telling us this is working for you ... we will publicize it on the website and allow others to engage with that, download it, utilize it, whether it be a template, a case study, [or] a presentation, and understand what's working for you in your communities might work in other communities across California."

North said the Guidebook developers' hope it can expand "beyond just a resource catch-all and also become a community of sharing" including possibilities of trainings, webinars and events.

The [Guidebook website](#) is organized into information for (1) family support, (2) CBO support, and (3) local education agency support. Although these are separated for navigation paths on the website, North explained they are not meant to silo information. The hope is for a "more of an integrated approach to understanding how these resources can play with one another." He encouraged participants to visit the website and to reach out to the organizations involved in developing the Guidebook for help supporting UPK work.

Sneeringer thanked North.

Tagawa reflected on the breadth of the information in the presentations and the potential for collaborative work to achieve the goal "to get every child an opportunity to get to a preschool program. ...There's a lot of opportunities and challenges for us."

Sneeringer prefaced the Council discussion by asking members to consider two questions:

- What gaps and challenges are you experiencing in this UPK transition and what supports or policies are needed to address these challenges?
- What are some successful early strategies and collaborations we could shine a light on— as models to replicate?

She reminded the group that the goal of the conversation is to begin developing UPK policy recommendations for consideration at the August ECPC meeting.

Bloomer opened the floor for Council discussion.

Council Discussion

(The full text of the Council discussion is on pages 41-46 of the [ECPC May 20 transcript](#).)

Natali Gaxiola expressed thanks and noted that much of what was shared in the presentation "is my lived experience as a state preschool teacher." She shared her impression of being part of a school district implementing TK and the variable quality of learning environments: "I do see very much that it isn't equitable. ...I'm going to speak for those who can't advocate for themselves, which are my students, and for parents and families who have gone into TK programs and it's a hit or miss. There's an amazing teacher at the school where I'm at and you walk into her classroom and you see the knowledge of child

development throughout her class, but you walk into other classrooms and they're just doing demos. ...I come from a classroom where we do look at CLASS, where we look at the [Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale] and where I'm constantly reflecting on my practice and making changes. And especially now that we are getting those very young three-year-olds that are starting at what is the end of the school year for us. My classroom dynamic changes and adapts... But I can see how challenging this can be for a brand new teacher. I feel like there's a lack of support."

She advocated for more positions outside of the classroom to support classrooms and parents "because after the pandemic, I feel like we see the effects of children and the high needs. And not all needs—and now I'm going to the inclusion part—not all needs end up with an IEP. Not all needs can be documented that way, but they need some support." She provided the example that when children exhibit behaviors that are developmentally appropriate, additional social-emotional or behavioral supports can still be beneficial. Further, she noted that many of the practices that she has made standard in her pre-K classroom, "like visuals for STEM boards, priming, sand timers for those that need it," are not being used in TK classrooms.

She expressed support for Local Control Accountability Plans: "How do we support small school districts knowing about what's going on in different places so that they can see what can apply to their school district and what can support their community?"

Layton highlighted the partnership between VUSD and Educational Enrichment Systems as a model, noting the importance of support from the school board support and ongoing education for the K–12 workforce: "The K-12 world is not trained in ECE. They're becoming more trained, but it's constant training on our part to let them know and educate them on what happens in an ECE program."

Layton further cited the importance of advocating for families and parental choice, providing K-12 education on ECE and best practice, and making TK work for educators and families: "...it's a constant advocacy on all of our parts because TK is here to stay, unfortunately. And hopefully with legislation and with advocacy, more and more of the TK teachers will become educated in early childhood education. And the ratios will change because it is about the children. We want the children to have a safe, developmentally appropriate program..."

Paula Merrigan shared challenges she is hearing from fellow TK teachers: "Class size of 12:1 (24 students) is higher than preschool staffing ratios. LEA's not adhering to the 12:1 staffing ratio - not providing a sub when the [paraprofessional educator] is out. Many admins are not understanding what to look for in TK when it comes to developmentally appropriate practices."

Sonia Jaramillo expressed appreciation for the presentations and for "making everything more clear and easy to understand for all the different providers." She shared her impressions of gaps and challenges in Monterey County as including "the collaboration components.... The lack of inclusion and the urgency to implement the TK at the local LEAs is creating this conflict. And we need to find a system, a policy that somehow would require true partnership involvement, inclusion on the different levels so that the different providers are not left out and we end up losing those opportunities where we can provide better services to the families. I work at a county office of [education], and I am not included."

She described professional development challenges introduced by serving three-year-olds: "...as the districts are taking the four-year-olds, one of the things that we're seeing is that we are being forced to go down and serve three-year-olds if we want to continue to provide services. With that comes the challenge of providing the professional development to our staff, preparing them, adjusting our facilities, having all those different requirements that come in with the different developmental needs of our children as we go down in services. And having our teachers already prepared to work with preschool age children, I see our local districts actively recruiting our staff, which is a great thing and opportunity for our teachers, but it leaves us with the challenge of now I have to start all over. So, what I see is we're going to

become the entry-level position, and we're going to train, and then half will be going to TKs.... It's going to be a great opportunity, but we need to have more resources and more funding available because this is going to be our reality.”

Jamarillo advocated to make sure that parent choice is truly free and programs aren't losing families who would prefer to stay.

Corley-Marzett characterized UPK as being more than just complicated: “It's outright scary for home-based educators who are not in FCCHEN because they're losing their children, three- to four-year-olds. And, especially for those home-based educators who are not a part of FCCHEN...who have a curriculum and provide UPK themselves already and provide a learning environment for kindergarten.” She expressed appreciation for the UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup Report recommendation to provide pathways for FCCHs to join FCCHEN: “That really meant something because I thought they're really listening to what providers are saying...I have to say...does CDE have any data on how many family daycare providers, home-based educators who are not in FCCHEN, who want to [join] FCCHEN? And, what does that pathway really look like? Because we want to make it available to everyone, and how do we do this?...I know that there's thousands who want to be a part of this next delivery system, so we have to open that door and make it available.”

Zamudio expressed thanks for the “very thoughtful conversation and for thoughtfully putting it together to invite different partners to share data and their experiences.”

She shared her thoughts on the effect UPK is having on four-year-old enrollments. She emphasized the importance of focusing on resources for programs and for younger children. Families still need to find quality care for younger children, but programs are reporting difficulties keeping their doors open. While serving more younger children is a suggested solution to lower four-year-old enrollments, programs need time and support to adjust to the different requirements that involves (such as., licensing, staff ratios, enrollment limits).

Ruhstaller stated that “Supports need to include legislative policies that ensure the R&R's have access to LEA's specific programs so we can provide comprehensive information to parents on what's available to them [regarding] UPK/TK. Policies to allow some flexibility for paid advertising so parents know these programs exist would be critical and cost effective. Successful strategies include creating workforce pathways with high school students to obtain their units via dual enrollment in college to help both FCCH and center-based programs.”

Sneeringer thanked the Council for their candor and comments. Council members can send any additional thoughts after the meeting to Karin Bloomer so that they can be included as feedback is synthesized. She expressed appreciation to the members' willingness “to have these hard conversations and look for solutions and better partnership going forward.”

Tagawa thanked Gaxiola and others for sharing the reality of what a CSPP teacher goes through. “Thank you for taking care of our kids...just know that your work is always appreciated.”

Bloomer thanked Sneeringer and Tagawa and moved the group to public comment.

Selections from Public Comment and Chat

“I think even in the communications about UPK, and we're saying it's an inclusive system, but when we define something that starts at preschool and three-year-olds, it's not inclusive and it doesn't include all of the workforce that serves the zero to three population, which as I just highlighted is the most at need for services and support. So, I would advocate that and maybe it's a step backward just to reformat and think of us as a zero prenatal to third grade system. Redefine P as prenatal like Professor Heckman

advocated when he created P3 and the Heckman equation. I cannot understand why we're not doing it, so do it now. There's no time like the present and that will solve so much of our issues that we continue to discuss on this meeting and that we continue to feel undervalued, under-supported, underfunded.”

“Families need clear, easily accessible information and choices about programs serving children starting at birth, and CDE should not make it more difficult for families and providers by only focusing outreach and information on programs starting at 3 years of age... Defining the "P" in P-3 as "preschool" removes the focus from programs and services for California's youngest and most vulnerable population, children birth to age 3. Redefining as prenatal to 3rd-grade also makes it more clear that California serves and supports children starting at birth (not only CSPP preschool-aged children and older). A prenatal to 3rd-grade framework aligns more seamlessly with the broad [Opportunities for All Branch] office mission to ensure students from birth to age twenty-two have access to a quality and equitable public education that embraces diversity and increases access to student and family support services. The small change in defining the "P" in P-3 to "prenatal" also aligns with the national [BUILD initiative](#) that encourages states to systemically help prepare young children to succeed by helping families access high-quality early learning, family and parenting support, early intervention for children with special needs, and comprehensive health, mental health, and nutritional services.”

“...the new requirements that we are going to have in regards to providing coaching and providing evidence of the assessment of CLASS assessment to the Department of [Education]...I'm very concerned for the CSPP programs and how we're going to be able to do that.... Should we be pushing for more slots and encumbering the California budget, or should we be focusing on the cost of care, stabilizing staffing, stabilizing CSPP, the birth through five system? I understand we always want more money; we always want more things for families, but I think we need to take this time to look at stabilizing our system before encumbering funds.”

“It's amongst our own early childhood specialists at Departments of Education and in Washington, D.C., across this nation, we continue to make the children wait. Why don't we insist that it happens prenatal to three, that that's where the universal is?”

A participant recommended that CDE “NOT follow the Office of Head Start's use of the CLASS to defund programs.” They urged that CDE to limit the use of the CLASS “...to help identify where additional support is needed for continuous quality improvement...” and “...to indicate a need for more intensive training, support, and technical assistance and/or coaching for program staff...” and to not use it to determine findings during monitoring visits or for initiating contract terminations.

“I am on an LEA, and we are now having to look at the possibility of changing our license to be able to house the 2.8-year-olds, as recognized by the CDE as 3-year-olds...we then need to shift our [professional development] to train our staff to meet the needs of younger students...need to increase pay to retain our highly qualified staff....I often hear ‘CSPP is my heart, but I need to earn more to meet the needs of my family’”.

“...I encourage the group to continue advocating for a true mixed delivery system that embraces Title 22, centers and [FCCHs]...and continue advocating for a formal way for R&R agencies to get all the information for TK, UPK, UTK to R&R agencies so that we can give parents a true accurate referral.”

“...we want ALL providers able to fully participate in UPK. FCCHEN is a great program, but the payoffs for providers compared to the increase in demands and regulations and copay limitations (depending on contract type) is severely unequal and unfair.”

“Former home-based educator, currently in an ECE support role. Reiterating that allowing current ECE providers to participate in the roll out of UPK. These are people that often have the expertise that TK providers are looking for who need to be included as a vital part of the early education workforce. Also, the comments about lack of family choice for children that have disabilities or needs is such a real problem. If we believe that early intervention is important, we need to work together to prioritize access for everyone.”

"I am more than likely closing my [FCCH] program after 24 years in business. Once my next group of [four-year-olds] head off to TK in August, I have no new incoming littles to keep paying my staff. Families are keeping their new babies with them while working from home until they become mobile and cannot manage both at the same time. They are coming to me at 18+ months instead of the traditional 3 months of age. Regardless, I can only accept 4 under 24 months. I feel defeated."

"Lots of great info today and your support is so appreciated. I agree with comments about the support for parent choice - particularly between parents sending their children to pre- or TK, so wondering why some LEAs are not giving that choice to parents of children in special education preschool programs. Parents of children in LEA CSPPs are given that choice. This practice seems inequitable in providing all parents equal choice and access."

"It cracks me up how I keep hearing from people who encourage ECE providers to collaborate with districts, but district people are never in the room to hear that! If you really want collaboration, you should have principals and district heads in all of these meetings that CDE and CDSS holds on this topic. Collaboration requires at least two willing participants, but districts are ONLY willing if it is in their financial best interest, regardless of what is best for the community. Sorry, but that is the reality."

"I already provide preschool pre-K as a home educator, and I do not have a FCCHEN in my area...requiring the joining of a FCCHEN is not equitable if there are NOT FCCHENs in all locations."

"I have a large [FCCH], and I'm actually on the commission for the unified framework. I'm wondering why we ...use them as a frame of reference for large [FCCHs]. California has to be one of the hardest states in order for large [FCCHs] or [FCCHs] in general to be recognized. I'm just wondering why we are not using the recommendations to make sure that we're actually delivering a mixed delivery system that is equitable...."

An LEA official shared:

"As an LEA, I oversee our ACEs [Adverse Childhood Experiences] and expanded learning program. Our local Santa Clara County Office of Ed has been doing a wonderful job with the UPK implementation and implementing communities of practice. But what I want to remind everyone is that we had a wonderful high-quality system that was built with all the stakeholders under Impact with the efforts of Power Preschool, QRIS, block grants, and everything else. With UPK, I see that there are a lot of parents that are moving to choose a full-day model with TK and the expanded day program without having to do extensive paperwork, contracts, subsidy forms, or paying for parent fees....I've heard that the TK expansion has significantly [impacted] our local family, child care home providers and destabilize their enrollment, which is a group of providers that were already significantly impacted by COVID. And now as an LEA, we are required to serve TK after school with our expanded learning. Expanded learning does have quality standards, but there's nothing in there about developmentally appropriate practice, developmentally appropriate environments, staff training in ECE or anything... The majority of LEAs across the state are subcontracting with CBOs to operate their extended day programs. I have not observed the same quality that families will be getting in full-day CSPP, Head Start, family check at home providers. And the ones that are being presented in expanded learning and UPK conferences and workshops are wonderful. The programs they're highlighting are ones that are partnering already with their existing providers on campuses that are CSPP programs or CCTR programs. ...there needs to be a policy and considerations and the investments made in professional for expanded learning program workforce. So, if we're going to take this model of people that were after-school program providers and expect them to serve four-year-olds, we need to train them and provide them with the support to do so. All of our providers and our CBOs are wonderful partners, but they are not experts in the field of early learning...If you want equality vision of input implementation of UPK, we need to make [state] investments in the [professional development] or develop something to meet the needs of our youngest learners."

Jaime-Mileham thanked guests, panelists, the Council, and the public who continue to work alongside us as we think about our system. The Joint Workforce and Parent Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for June 27 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The next quarterly ECPC meeting is scheduled for August 13 from 9:00 a.m. to noon and details will be posted on the [CalHHS website](#).

Meeting adjourned.