



# Early Childhood Policy Council

## Meeting Agenda, Attendance, and Summary Report

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Physical Meeting:

1000 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

WestEd, 5th floor, Capitol Room

### Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
  - Welcome
  - Voices from the field
  - Public comment
2. Disrupting Poverty and Neglect Through Concrete Supports
  - Presentations
  - Council discussion
  - Public comment
3. Building a Comprehensive Early Learning and Care Mixed Delivery System that Integrates Universal Prekindergarten
  - Review and discussion of draft policy recommendations
  - Public comment
4. Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update
  - Status Update
  - Council questions
  - Public comment
5. Child Care Transition Quarterly Report
  - Update from the California Department of Social Services
  - Council questions
  - Public comment
6. Adjourn

### Attendance:

**Council Members:** Kim Johnson, Mayra Alvarez, Lisette Frausto, Natali Gaxiola, Mary Ignatius, Carola Oliva-Olson, Kim Patillo Brownson, Cheryl Polk, Lupe Jaime-Mileham, Sonia Jaramillo, Robin Layton, Tonia McMillian, Paula Merrigan, Scott Moore, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio

**Parent Advisory Committee Members:** Tonia McMillian, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Naima Facih, Patricia Lozano, Yenni Rivera, Cheryl Schroeder

**Workforce Advisory Committee:** Mary Ignatius, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Zoila Toma, Debra Ward

**Guest Speakers:**

- Lucy Ford, Child Care Resource Center
- Yasmin Grewal-Kok, Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall, University of Chicago
- Cheryl Treadwell, Chief of Safety Prevention, Early Intervention Branch, California Department of Social Services
- Stephen Propheeter, California Department of Education

## Summary Report:

### Welcome and Introductions:

**Kim Johnson**, Chair and Director of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), opened the third Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting of 2024. Full welcoming remarks are recorded on pages 2–6 of the [ECPC August 13 meeting transcript](#).

### Voices From the Field

Chair Johnson invited **Lucy Ford** to share as a voice from the field. Ford provided an overview of CCRC's role in community outreach and its evolving donation program, detailing CCRC's work to identify and adapt to families' needs, especially during the COVID crisis. To address a wide range of immediate needs, CCRC provided monthly distributions of food and diapers as well as household items. Another effort to address both short-term emergencies and long-term needs was a subsidized child care program to support parents working or attending school. The impact of CCRC programs is visible through the stories of those it serves, like a mother who received help and later returned to volunteer with the agency. With a recent grant, CCRC is looking to expand its services even further through initiatives like the "Fill the Fridge" campaign to provide more food and more non-perishable items.

**Chair Johnson** thanked Ford for sharing and opened the floor for Council discussion of (1) the family resource centers and their value in providing tangible supports for immediate and long-term needs, (2) CCRC's mixed funding streams and mix, (3) the availability and awareness of family services throughout California, and (4) work with Tribal communities. Chair Johnson also highlighted [food banks in the state](#). The full text of the Council discussion is on pages 6–8 of the [ECPC August transcript](#).

### **Disrupting Poverty and Neglect Through Concrete Supports: Presentation**

The full Disrupting Poverty and Neglect slides and remarks of the discussion are available:

- [Child and Family Well-being System \(Chapin Hall\)](#)
- [Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting \(CDSS\)](#)
- [ECPC August 13 transcript](#), pages 9–20

**Chair Johnson** welcomed **Yasmin Grewal-Kok** to share research on the impact of concrete supports for families in need. Full remarks begin on page 9 of the [ECPC August 13 transcript](#).

**Grewal-Kok** reported that economic and concrete supports are a core component of child and family well-being systems. Research on the intersection of family economic insecurity and child welfare involvement informs us about the relationship between accessing supports and the risk for child maltreatment and child welfare involvement. Economic and concrete supports to families include a broad range of services ([Chapin Hall, slide 2](#)).

Grewal-Kok underscored that United States child welfare policy and structures reflect specific choices. From the onset of child and family services in the U.S., policymakers have separated programs designed to address poverty from those designed to protect children. When family economic hardship is combined with a fragmented human service system; piecemeal, deficit-based policies; and disparate access to supports, outcomes include:

- overloaded and destabilized families,
- unmet service and support needs,
- high rates of reported neglect,
- deployment of authorities to investigate, and
- removal of children from the home and other child welfare involvement.

Chapin Hall proposes disrupting poverty through an alternative policy and fiscal framework of macroeconomic policies to address economic hardship, cross-sector shared responsibility and accountability, and a move towards mandated supporting ([Chapin Hall, slide 4](#)).

Grewal-Kok reviewed statistics that point to a strong relationship between family economic insecurity and child welfare involvement in California ([Chapin Hall, slides 5–11](#)). She noted that it's critical to think of economic and concrete supports as a racial equity strategy to address persistent disparities across the child welfare continuum in California and nationally ([Chapin Hall, slide 12](#)). The total annual public expenditures of California's child welfare system is over \$3 billion, and more than 50 percent of federal child welfare funding goes to foster care. Meanwhile, only 11 percent of federal funding is directed to preventative services ([Chapin Hall, slide 38](#)).

Research shows that reduced access to economic and concrete supports is associated with increased risk of child maltreatment and child welfare involvement while increased access is associated with decreased risk. The ever-growing body of evidence is consistent across time, types of studies, and the kind of supports provided ([Chapin Hall, slide 3](#)).

California recently enacted two important laws narrowing the definition of neglect to prevent children from entering the child welfare system for reasons of economic hardship alone:

- Assembly Bill 2085, Chapter 770, Statutes of 2022 clarifies that mandated reporters should not make referrals based solely on parents' economic disadvantage.

- Senate Bill 1085, Chapter 832, Statutes of 2022 prohibits children from being removed solely due to homelessness or poverty.

Grewal-Kok provided an overview of the types of decreased economic and concrete supports associated with increased risk for child welfare involvement ([Chapin Hall, slide 14](#)). She summarized the categories of supports associated with decreased risk for child welfare involvement, including (1) macroeconomic supports, (2) concrete supports, (3) public benefits and (4) child welfare interventions augmented with economic and concrete supports ([Chapin Hall, slide 17](#)). She highlighted key findings around positive impacts of unconditional cash payments to families, earned income and child tax credits, paid family leave, child care subsidies, preschool, supportive housing, TANF, and supplemental nutrition assistance programs, offering examples of state policy options ([Chapin Hall, slides 18–32](#)). Recent research indicates these supports can also have a population-level impact, and there are opportunities to take a public health approach to prevention ([Chapin Hall, slides 34–36](#)).

**Chair Johnson** thanked Grewal-Kok then welcomed **Cheryl Treadwell** to speak on California's broader poverty prevention strategies, including building Community Pathways and shifts in mandating reporting. Full remarks begin on page 15 of the [ECPC August 13 transcript](#).

**Treadwell** reported on California's paradigm shift from mandated reporting to community supporting by building Community Pathways.

The data on community member calls to the mandated reporter hotline confirm “general neglect tends to be the number one allegation.” When a call is flagged with this catch-all allegation it biases responses towards child welfare involvement and does not allow for more specific solutions and resources to be utilized. Treadwell highlighted the importance of addressing racism embedded in the child and family service public systems, pointing to “significant disparities when it comes to Black families [and] Native American families when they are separated from their families” ([CDSS: Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting, slides 4–5](#)).

CDSS is working to advance family-centered policies at a higher level. California's five-year plan under the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was approved in 2022, and 53 counties and two tribes have opted into this service to provide community comprehensive prevention services.

In 2023, the Child Welfare Council convened the Mandated Reporting Community Supporting Task Force ([CDSS, slide 6](#)). The Task Force developed five strategic priorities, including mandated reporting reform ([CDSS, slide 7](#)), and 14 recommendations ([CDSS, slides 8–9](#)) to be voted on at the September Child Welfare Council meeting. [Read the Task Force Recommendations](#). Further, the CDSS Citizen Review Advisory Panel's 2024 report also recommended reforming the mandated reporting system, and CDSS is restructuring the CalWORKs Linkages program ([CDSS, slide 6](#)).

Community Pathways provide local prevention services to children, kin, and tribes without direct involvement of Child Protective Services. The FFPSA opened the door to

funding for California to build capacity and to expand the prevention conversation for more public-private partnerships ([CDSS, slide 10](#)). The keys to prevention in a Community Pathway approach are engaging and strengthening the network of public and private service organizations that families often voluntarily approach when in need.

CDSS shared examples of cross-sector opportunities it has identified from the plans submitted to the agency. Of the 53 plans submitted, 33 counties and the Yurok and Karuk tribes have decided to institute a Community Pathway ([CDSS, slide 15](#)).

CDSS continues to work with counties implementing a Community Pathway to build their capacity ahead of the October 2026 FFPSA implementation requirement. In the meantime, CDSS is putting in place federal requirements and automation pieces, and some counties have already started offering prevention services with state funding ([CDSS, slide 16](#)). Treadwell encouraged attendees to submit questions about the FFPSA or inquire whether a county has submitted a plan via email ([ffpsa.preventionservices@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ffpsa.preventionservices@dss.ca.gov)). Treadwell can be contacted by email at ([Cheryl.Treadwell@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Treadwell@dss.ca.gov))

#### Council discussion

**Chair Johnson** thanked Treadwell and opened the floor for Council discussion. The full text of the Council discussion is on pages 20–26 of the [ECPC August transcript](#).

**Treadwell** provided a list of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in California to connect families with communities creating Community Pathways. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Community Pathways Advisory Committee’s emerging work includes providing county human services departments with technical assistance in connecting with community-based organizations, as well as exploring the Resource and Referral contract as a leveraged partnership opportunity with FRCs to build capacity. PEI is currently intentionally revising professional development and training curriculum with educators as priority, as they are often the first reporters.

Treadwell noted that the Community Pathway Advisory Committee includes child care providers, foster parents, and former foster youth with lived experience. The Committee will offer ongoing opportunities for people to join on specific topics as it moves forward on an ad hoc basis.

**Chair Johnson** underscored a recent policy change in California's TANF program, CalWORKs. Historically, a family working to reunify lost access to supportive services while the child was in an out-of-home placement. The new policy allows TANF payments to continue, thereby increasing the opportunity for family reunification.

**Grewal-Kok** addressed concerns about the impacts of a static federal poverty rate on family eligibility for supports and services and the dearth of basic parenting education. She noted that Family Connects, a universal home visiting program that supports parents with newborns, has incredible outcomes as a relatively inexpensive program. On the other hand, foster care is an expensive intervention. Comparing the two types of interventions, “the long-term cost savings from helping families early are huge.”

**Chair Johnson** pointed to the child tax credit and how much impact that it had across the country when that was implemented.

## Selections from Public Comment and Chat

“The federal poverty rates...need...to be higher especially for child care. Many families, and I include myself, do not qualify for Head Start because ‘we make too much money,’ when in reality we can just make ends meet with rent, food, necessities for our children, and etc.... childcare should be available for our children and families no matter their income or living situation.”

“I appreciate all of the data showing that early support and intervention, most importantly access to child care starting at BIRTH, as a necessary economic and concrete support.”

“I heard the need and the data that supports more funding to preventative services but am concerned about removing funding from one system to pay for another. We often come across this same tension in child care where TK–12 is placed in opposition to funding for community based organizations that serve children 0–12. I am hopeful that when funding changes are made, they will be made in a thoughtful and strategic way that does not result in negative unintended consequences to children, foster parents, foster families that are in the foster care system.”

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

**Chair Johnson** invited Council member **Donna Sneeringer** to facilitate a Council input discussion of the work to develop UPK policy recommendations. Full remarks begin on page 26 of the [ECPC August 13 transcript](#).

**Sneeringer** spoke on behalf of herself and Council member Dean Tagawa on their process of soliciting and reviewing input on policy recommendations as California embarks on ambitious system change to implement universal pre-kindergarten (UPK). The Council has been working to develop recommendations that support a comprehensive early learning and care mixed delivery system integrating UPK. The resulting draft recommendations were assessed for alignment with recommendations from the UPK Work Group and the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.

Council members received the current draft recommendations in advance of this meeting, and the document was posted on the ECPC webpage for public review as well. This review is to obtain any additional edits and to ask for the Council's endorsement to include these recommendations in the year-end report to the Administration and the Legislature for consideration in the next legislative session.

The group reviewed additional edits submitted by Council members and the public since the [draft UPK Policy Recommendations](#) were last posted, as well as relevant draft recommendations.

- Information Recommendation 5.b. was revised to add the California Department of Education as a partner to CDSS' and to clarify maintenance of CalWORKs eligibility.
- Funding Recommendation 6.a. was revised to clarify children's period of need as prenatal until their thirteenth birthday as associated with the final Rate and Quality Advisory Panel (RQAP) report.

Sneeringer polled the Council for any members abstaining or opposing endorsing the recommendations. There were two abstentions. A voice vote of endorsement was taken.

Sneeringer polled the Council for any members abstaining or opposing moving the recommendations forward as part of the final report. There were three abstentions. A voice vote was taken.

**Deborah Corley-Marzett** advocated for state agencies to notify parents of their rights, including rights some parents aren't aware of, such as sleep time and for networks to make sure all information about parents' rights is received by all parents as well as providers. She emphasized that all providers be included in pathways to be a part of the mixed delivery as well as the training fund to get them in school.

#### Selections from Public Comment, Chat and Via Email

"I am a second-generation [FCCH] provider in Van Nuys and a member of Child Care Providers United [CCPU]. I've been providing care in my community for 17 years. A true mixed delivery system cannot exist until family child [care] providers are incorporated into its definition. What is effective for one family may not suit another, so it is essential for parents to have the option to select providers that meet their individual needs."

"Early Edge CA would like to thank the Council for its ongoing work and commitment to supporting California's diverse families and children. We appreciate the multiple proposed edits to the UPK policy recommendations, which includes the inclusion of FFN caregivers as we suggested and removes administrative barriers for collaboration between schools and providers."

The Children's Council of San Francisco expressed support for the UPK recommendations.

#### **Rate and Quality Advisory Panel Update**

**Chair Johnson** welcomed **Dr. Lupe Jaime-Mileham** to share a RQAP update. Full remarks begin on page 37 of the [ECPC August 13 transcript](#).

**Jaime-Mileham** announced Child Care and Development Division (CCDD) new hires including Jackie Barocio, Branch Chief, Central Operation Branch—which includes the Data Research and Planning Office, Child Development Fiscal Services Section, and the Child Care Administrative Bureau—and Karen Chang, Branch Chief, Program Quality and Improvement Branch. Chang brings an extensive background in advancing racial and economic equity in her previous role as the Assistant Deputy Director of the Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD).

The CDSS submitted its triennial [Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\) State Plan for fiscal years 2025–2027](#) to the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on July 1, 2024. Jaime-Mileham detailed the contents of the CCDF State Plan including ACF's requirement that the state set payment rates based on the alternative methodology no later than July 25, 2025 ([CDSS: Child Care and Development Rate Reform and Quality Update, slide 5](#)). She shared that "the rates that you see included in Section 4 of the State Plan are our current rates along with, in a separate section, a

description of the cost of care plus add-on rates.... The department will submit an update to the ACF CCDF plan by July 1, 2025, which will then include... the new payment rates informed by the alternative methodology.”

Jaime-Mileham also reviewed key milestones as efforts approach the rate-setting and implementation stage. ACF approval of the CCDF State Plan submission is pending. Within 90 days of ACF approval, the state and CCPU will reopen negotiations to restructure the current subsidy reimbursement rate for FCCH and FFN providers. Negotiation are anticipated to start in December 2024 or January 2025 ([CDSS, slide 6](#)).

A trailer bill to the fiscal year 2024–25 budget agreement details the timeline of the state's transition to a single rate structure. Rates based on the alternative methodology will be established no later than July 1, 2025. If new rates do not take effect on July 1, CDSS will provide a timeline for the transition. The trailer bill also states that rates will not be lower than the current subsidy rate, inclusive of the cost-of-care-plus payments, and it requires CDSS to submit a quarterly report to the Legislature and CCPU, focusing on rate reform implementation.

Opportunities for public engagement in the rate reform process are ongoing through this fiscal year. Interest holders will be able to engage via multiple channels, including quarterly RQAP meetings. The next RQAP meeting is scheduled for September 24.

From May to August, CDSS and CDE hosted a series of focus groups for center-based providers—Title XXII private centers participating in state voucher programs, contracted Title V centers, and state preschool programs. The ECPC will also continue to hold quarterly public meetings with rate reform as a standing agenda item. Jaime-Mileham encouraged the public to submit any feedback or comments about the single rate structure via email ([singlratestructure@dss.ca.gov](mailto:singlratestructure@dss.ca.gov)) ([CDSS, slide 7](#)).

Information about rate reform is available on the [CDSS Rate Reform and Quality webpage](#) and those interested can stay engaged by joining the [CCDD listserv](#).

### Council Questions

**Chair Johnson** opened the floor to questions from the Council. The full text of Council questions is on pages 40–44 of the [ECPC August transcript](#).

### **Child Care Transition Quarterly Report**

**Jaime-Mileham** shared the Child Care Transition updates including child care and development program budget, CCDF State Plan, and child and adult care programs. Full remarks begin on page 44 of the [ECPC August 13 transcript](#).

The Governor and the Legislature reached an agreement for the fiscal year 2024–25 state budget, closing a budget shortfall of \$45 billion. The current budget allocates \$1.64 billion to continue to fund 118,556 slots, with actual available slots dependent on age and other criteria. “With that precise number that will be added in the last few years, it authorizes an additional \$228.6 million, representing approximately 1,100 new general child care CCTR slots beginning October 1, 2024” ([CDSS: Child Care and Development Transition Update, slide 4](#)).

Other relevant budget items include the following:



- Statute changes give CDSS the authority to streamline the RFA process.
- An approved re-appropriation of fiscal year 2023–24 funds maintains funding for the emergency Bridge program and for fostered children.
- Local diaper and wipe distribution efforts will continue, supported by a \$9 million earmark.

The CDSS submitted the triennial CCDF State Plan for 2025–2027 to the ACF, detailing how CCDF funds will be allocated and expended. This was the first time that CDSS, rather than CDE, was the lead agency preparing and submitting the CCDF State Plan.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) transitioned from the CDE to the CDSS on July 1, 2021. The CACFP team continues to collaborate with the CCLD to expand access to programs. The CDSS added 16 new online courses in English and Spanish to the CACFP policy guidance platform to promote technical assistance and support professional growth opportunities. The CCLD is collaborating with the CACFP Roundtable and the US Agriculture and Natural Resource Nutrition Program Institute to develop an interactive map visualization of CACFP participation throughout California.

CDSS launched the Brilliant Beginning Initiative on July 1, 2021, to improve the child care data landscape. The initiative includes CalSPARK, MyChildCarePlan.org, and now Child Care Connect. After June 2025, Child Care Connect will replace MyChildCarePlan.org and will meet all federal consumer education requirements and state mandates in Chapter 829, Statutes of 2018. The CCRC hosted listening sessions to inform the creation of Childcare Connect, and the final report of these sessions was prepared ([CDSS, slide 7](#)).

Resources are available on the [CDSS Child Care and Transition website](#).

Learn about California State Regulations regarding child care subsidies for families working from home on the [Cornell Law Legal Information Institute webpage](#).

Per Chair Johnson, [learn about SUN Bucks summer food program on the CDSS website](#).

### Council Questions

**Chair Johnson** thanked Jaime-Mileham and opened the floor for Council questions. The full text of the Council questions is on pages 46–50 of the [ECPC August transcript](#).

### Selected Public Comment and Chat:

“I had a client that they switched her back to the welfare, since she qualified for welfare, and she only had a month left or whatever... Then, welfare said she didn't qualify. Well, within that time it was 30 days, I kept the kids because she was going to school... I didn't charge [the parent], but I suffered as the provider because I wanted the young lady, she'd been going to Fresno State about two years, to complete [her education]...[I], the provider had 30 days with no income....I just want us providers to be treated fairly and with respect and dignity when we're dealing with subsidy programs.”

“...the entire mixed delivery system, serving children zero to four ...women of color ... need to be paid competitive wages and reimbursed at the true cost of care, and these

women continue to carry the early child care system on their backs. ...we cannot increase access to quality child care without getting women [of color] professional wages, competitive wages, and the funding is the first part. ...I just want to thank [Sonia Jamarillo, Zoila Toma, and Tonia McMillian] for showing those examples of what providers do every single day and what they do for our children and families.”

“I really appreciate the points of ensuring rates are equitable across the system to create pay equity between both private and school-based programs. Research by UC Berkeley shows that private child care providers are often Black and Brown and serve these communities, and school-based staff are typically White... How do we ensure this lack of equity is remedied?”

“I am also a proud member of [CCPU] and I've been providing high-quality wraparound care in my home-based 24/7 facility for over 16 years. And I've also served as a hub to all of my clients, acting as a liaison between the families in my care and the necessary resources in our community. ...we know the programs better than the workers themselves at CCRC. ...and still, we are not compensated for our time, our quality, our services and our experience...parents need that access to second and third shift facilities that family child care provides. And studies and surveys have proven time and time again that the parents' number one choice is home-based early education and care. And it's really time for the state to take concrete action now and finalize that actual cost of care document without further delay.”

“There are multiple communications coming our way from CDE and CDSS with critical information embedded as part of the Management Bulletins. Is it possible to develop a system where Program Directors can get critical reminders before they are due? [Also], an org chart presentation for both entities (CDE and CDSS) which delineates roles and responsibilities so that I know who to go to when questions...[and] the development of a table listing reports/assessments due for the year, with a link to the report and deadline...[these help] us ensure we are compliant.”

## **Adjourn**

**Chair Johnson** thanked the public, Council and advisory committee members, and presenters.

The next Joint Workforce and Parent Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 17 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The final quarterly ECPC meeting of 2024 is scheduled for November 19 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Meeting adjourned.