



A Letter from the Early Childhood Policy Council May 29, 2025

Governor Gavin Newsom, State of California

Speaker Robert Rivas, California State Assembly

President pro Tempore Mike McGuire, California State Senate

Senator Scott Weiner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Chair, Women's Legislative Caucus

Senator Monique Limón, Vice Chair, Women's Legislative Caucus

Dear Governor, Mr. Pro Tem, Mr. Speaker, Chairs, and Vice Chair:

The Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC), established in law in 2019¹, advises the Governor, Legislature, and the California Department of Social Services on statewide early learning and care and child development policy.

We respect and understand that California is facing current budget challenges with multiple attacks on our state by the federal government. We believe it is essential to maintain the Administration's and Legislature's commitment to California's youngest members, their families, and early childhood care providers, as demonstrated in the 2024-25 State Budget.

We want to again acknowledge the State's historic investments that significantly impacted children, families, and early educators—predominantly from communities of color—including transforming family fees, the commitment to rate reform, and providing increased funding to child care providers and programs to keep their doors open, as well as preserving critical health and social services programs that support child and family well-being.

We recognize the efforts you are making as you embark on the May revision of the State Budget development process for State Fiscal Year 2025-26, and we look forward to the Administration and Legislature upholding the investments needed and those in imminent danger:

- Ensure implementation of a robust cost of care methodology as agreed upon in last year's state budget. It is critical that the state adopt a policy which creates a path toward a sustainable future for California child care providers, not held back by immediate budget constraints.
- Restore and approve a cost-of-living adjustment in child care and development and

¹ See Welfare and Institutions Code 10320.

state preschool contracts aligned with that provided in the education programs.

- Fund state-contracted programs based on the Federal requirement of paying based on the child's authorized enrollment, not attendance;²
- Preserve Medi-Cal access for undocumented families by rejecting proposed cost sharing and freezes to enrollment in the program.
- Fulfill the promise to fund 200,000 child care spaces by Budget Year 2025-26 and a commitment to continuing to backfill declining Proposition 64 revenue to ensure current spaces are maintained and expanded; and
- Protect the ongoing funding for the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program at 2024-25 Budget levels to ensure immediate access to child care for children entering foster care to provide resource families with needed supports to accept the child in their home.

With a projected \$7-12 billion shortfall in California's 2025-26 budget, there is no better time than now to seriously consider raising revenues by eliminating billions of dollars in existing tax breaks that benefit the wealthy and profitable corporations, using some of the proposed discretionary reserve that exists for times like this, and scaling back spending in more appropriate places such as the state's bloated prison budget.

We must ensure there is equitable access to services and support for families and the workforce, particularly marginalized populations, including Black, Tribal, and People of Color families, immigrant families, homeless families, foster children, children of incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parents, children with disabilities, dual language learners, and low-income families, including those experiencing generational poverty.

As your partners in helping California families with young children navigate today's exponentially more detrimental post-election environment and supporting the early care and learning workforce that provides essential services that support California's economy, we look forward to working with you to ensure our children remain a top priority.

Sincerely,

Early Childhood Policy Council

² 2024 CCDF Final Rule requires states to base a child care provider's payment on a child's authorized enrollment, not on attendance.