



Early Childhood Policy Council

Dear ECPC members,

Thank you for participating in California's first Early Childhood Policy Council meeting on Thursday, April 2, 2020.

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, I applaud your flexibility, patience and unwavering commitment to continuing the work of supporting California's children. Thanks to you, we had approximately 430 members of the public attend the first meeting!

Through your investment of time and energy, we were able to gather valuable input that will guide the state's efforts to support families and child care providers during the crisis and will inform long-term recommendations put forth by the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.

The following is a brief meeting summary that highlights the major items discussed.

1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Burke Harris)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Nadine Burke Harris discussed actions the state is taking to protect public health and safety in the wake of COVID-19. As Surgeon General, she reminded the Council and the public of the importance of following the shelter-in-place order to slow the spread of COVID-19. Council member Sarah Neville-Morgan described the partnership between the California Department of Education, Governor's Office, Department of Social Services and other state agencies to prepare and disseminate guidance to improve distance learning, school meals, special education and child care.
- Chair Burke Harris highlighted the Governor's commitment to improving the lives of children and families through enhanced cross-system partnerships to give kids the best shot at a bright future.

2. Onboarding of ECPC Members

- California Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Kris Perry presented an overview of the key issues for the ECPC as described in SB 75 and the Council's charge of working together to inform early learning and care state policy. The overarching purpose of the Council is to ensure that there is a sharp focus on equity, accountability, and future opportunities at the local, state and federal level for both the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the broader work of the Council.



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3. Master Plan for Early Learning and Care Working Session

- Team leaders, Jannelle Kubinec, Carlise King, and Mary Ignatius presented an overview of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care as early learning and care and education systems are vital to our state’s economy. The Master Plan also presents an opportunity to demonstrate our ability as a state to prioritize building back early learning and care as we come out of the current situation with COVID-19. We will strengthen our state by putting children and families first - rebuilding a system focused on equity, family-centered design, and care of caregivers.
- The Master Plan will build on recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission and Preschool Development Grants to create tangible, actionable models to work through the COVID crisis while building and sustaining a long-term view of how to transform the experience for every California family.

A high-level, thematic summary of public comments received during the meeting can be found in the following pages.

Thank you again for your partnership. We look forward to seeing you again soon at the next ECPC meeting on June 8, 2020.

Kris Perry

Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood Development, California Health and Human Services Agency; Senior Advisor to the Governor, Implementation of Early Childhood Development Initiatives



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Summary of Comments from the Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting

This Summary provides themes and illustrative quotes from participants in the April 2, 2020 Early Childhood Policy Council inaugural virtual session.

The Early Childhood Policy Council is an advisory body to the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide early learning, care, and child development. It will provide recommendations on all aspects of the state's early childhood system, including support for the demographic, geographic, and economic diversity of the state's children and families and ways the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Early Childhood Education's (ECE) final report can be updated and improved.

Themes Identified During Initial Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting

There were numerous substantive comments made during the Council discussion and public comment periods. The following themes capture the nature of the discussion and these themes are supported by illustrative comments that follow this thematic summary.

Challenges and ECE Gaps Augmented by the COVID-19 Pandemic

A total of 45 comments touched upon ECE and the COVID-19 pandemic. Most comments highlighted the existing gaps in the ECE systemic capacity, infrastructure, and processes in effectively managing the current crisis. Comments also emphasized the areas that need to be urgently addressed, such as ensuring child care providers are listed and supported as essential workers and receive the necessary supplies and resources to safely operate.

Funding

This theme was prominent in describing the need for sources of funding to provide sustainability for child care providers, care that enhances the quality as well as the accessibility of services (e.g. mental health and Medi-Cal services), and facilities that are equipped with the resources and supplies that augment their capacity to provide a safe setting for learning.

Engagement and Inclusion

A total of 24 comments referred to the need for engagement and inclusion of child care providers, parents, and teachers in informing the ECPC recommendations and decision-making.



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Proponents for the Continued Funding of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

Fourteen comments involved the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. Most comments highlighted the benefits of the program, and speakers were proponents of continued funding for the program.

Creating and Strengthening Career Pathways for New and Experienced ECE Workforce

Strengthening the workforce through programs that engage, train, and retain child care providers in the ECE field was a theme that emerged from 10 comments.

Increasing Equity in the ECE Field

Nine comments highlighted the need to increase equity in the ECE field by taking a systemic approach in addressing inequities, including those affecting specific child populations, inequity in regard to provider wages, and the distribution of resources based on geographic location.

Resource Sharing (Peer to Peer)

Nine comments included a link or mention of a resource for members of the ECPC meeting. The resources varied from ECE-related resources to data, to best practices.

Addressing the Need for Livable Wages for Child Care Providers

Nine comments called attention to the need for better wages for child care providers.

The Coordination of Services through Partnerships and Collaborations to Better Meet the Needs of Families and Attend to the Whole Child

Eight comments provided suggestions for partnerships and collaborations that increased capacity to attend to the whole child through the coordination of services.

Inclusion and Consideration of BRC Recommendations

Six comments included comments regarding the BRC recommendations, three of which suggested that the ECPC include or consider a few of the recommendations.

Revising Income Eligibility Requirements to Increase Access to Child Care Services

Income eligibility for families was a central topic for five commenters. Most comments touched on the need to make changes to eligibility requirements to increase child care access for families.



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Select Quotes Supporting the Themes Identified Above

Challenges and Early Learning and Care Gaps Augmented by the COVID-19 Pandemic

- "Small-businesses across the state are in crisis and very worried as well organized campaigns seek to pop-up un-licensed childcare. We cannot let that happen."
- "How will we ensure that child care providers including FCC and FFN, are always considered and treated as essential workers? Child care providers across the state are vulnerable right now, and we are unsure if they will be there when we re-open after shelter in place. How will we ensure that they are on solid ground and stay on solid ground?"
- "The families' and providers' needs today are PPE so providers can continue to provide services in a safe way."
- "I would hope that this new situation with COVID-19 would cause a redefinition of child care and ECE as an essential service. Child care services would be clearly defined and action (policies and procedures) would be put in place. Without these we will always be in reactive mode as we are now."

Funding

- "While implementation is critical, there needs to be long-term planning and funding. We have been involved in training low income parents and community members in becoming early educators with much success through a supported apprentice program."
- "When it comes to funding sources, we need not to limit our focus to funding within the ECE and education silos. Specifically, we need to engage and expect involvement of the workforce development system (in CA and nationally)."

Engagement and Inclusion

- "A Master Plan cannot be created without the input and participation of providers. Our work must not be changed without our consent and participation... Funding will never be effective until providers can help direct resources to the critical supports WE need rather than receiving funding for what we do not need..."
- "In the interest of equity, the collecting input via survey, there needs to be an option for providers and families who do not have access to or comfort with technology to be able to complete a survey, otherwise you may be missing out on valuable feedback from these stakeholders."



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Proponents for the Continued Funding of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

- “The California Early Childhood Mentor Program is an effective key to supporting a diverse workforce with high quality experiences, especially for those who are already working and are otherwise blocked from completing Degree Programs. It works and has a long history of success. Funding to expand it rather than ever considering abandoning it should be a priority to truly serve our workforce and our goals to improve quality in ECE.”
- “The Mentor Program is a cost-effective way to provide high quality Professional Development for our college students in Early Childhood Education. This has been a key program in supporting students entering the field for 30 years!”

Increasing Equity in the ECE Field

- “As we consider equity – it’s critical that we understand this beyond access and services for children, but also include the ECE workforce. Our research, and that of others, has found that among this workforce, in which all require better conditions, there are grave racial disparities that need to be addressed. We agree that good data is necessary. Leading with data to address the needs of the teachers who work with young children invites a more in-depth systemic approach to address underlying issues of racial and gender inequity that negatively impact our paid ECE workforce, comprised of about 120,000 people, most of whom are women of color.”
- “Professional Development is lost when we cannot retain our team members because of pay-equity. Training is lost when teachers must move into other systems of business because they cannot be paid a worthy wage.”

Creating and Strengthening Career Pathways for New and Experienced ECE Workforce

- “There should be a consideration for recruiting teachers in general and early education specifically - free college education to commit to the field for four years, immediate loan forgiveness for current teachers, paid internships and practical classroom experiences.”
- “How do we make teachers see that what they do in the classroom can and should be respected as a very real part of their career and is okay to stay right there.”
- “In addition to child development classes in high school, we should have Youth ECE Apprenticeships!”



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Resource-Sharing (peer to peer)

- "To the point about data, we want to make sure that the Council is aware that the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) will be launching the [California Early Care and Education Workforce Study](#) which will be a representative study of our ECE workforce. Surveys were scheduled to be released two weeks ago and placed on hold but we will be moving forward when it is appropriate to do so."
- "We hope the Master Plan includes Dual Language Learners, their families and supports for teachers and providers. Here are the links to our reports: [Early Edge California Dual Language Learner Policy Platform](#) and [Early Edge California EECA Workforce Policy Paper](#)"
- "Thank you for the opportunity to share our reports and recommendations. First 5's recommendations for the Master Plan are available here: [First 5 Association of California Recommendations on Master Plan for Early Learning and Care](#)"
- "Study on Non-Traditional Hour needs: [California Child Care Resource and Referral Network Non-Traditional Hours and Child Care Study](#)"

The Coordination of Services through Partnerships and Collaborations to Better Meet the Needs of Families and Attend to the Whole Child

- "Let's also engage City, County and Special District Park and Rec programs for children."
- "With a separate office on early care and education, how do we ensure close coordinated work with home visiting, CDE, Doulas who work prenatal, birth and post birth?"
- "Given that the health system is the first point of contact for children, how can we ensure that we are maximizing this connection to support families from the start, as well as leveraging federal programs such as Medicaid?"

Inclusion and Consideration of BRC Recommendations

- "Remember and integrate BRC recommendations for higher education faculty and students across ECE/Child Development community college, baccalaureate and graduate programs, so that preparation, counseling and care of our ECE students is robust across their preparation and ongoing professional development. BRC recommendations include financial supports to students and to IHE programs to provide strong competency-based and practice-based learning experiences to students."
- "...it will be critical to build on the BRC's recommendation to leverage the capacity and proven role of the local First 5 Commissions as the



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“glue” across local programs and services that promote optimal early childhood development.”

Revising Income Eligibility Requirements to Increase Access to Child Care Services

- “Family income eligibility should be addressed... consider [the] cost-of-living[,] differences throughout the state - families are getting left out.”

Addressing the Need for Livable Wages for Child Care Providers

- “We need a system that will allow an early educator to stay in their current teaching position with a living wage. It’s time to advocate for worthy wages.”
- “Universal access needs to be partnered with wages and professional development including Higher Education to accommodate the need and ensure a sustainable workforce.”