



## Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting Summary

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Burke Harris)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Nadine Burke Harris discussed the pandemic's deep impact on the lives of families and young children and reminded the Council and members of the public of the power of human kindness and coming together to uplift each other.
- Chair Burke Harris acknowledged and expressed gratitude to two Council members who have been working tirelessly to serve the families of California throughout the pandemic: Kim Johnson, Director of the Department of Social Services and Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent at the California Department of Education. Director Johnson has been instrumental in advocating for California's most vulnerable children and families. Deputy Superintendent Neville-Morgan has been diligent in the development of written guidance, webinars, funding allocations for health and safety supplies, vouchers for child care and many other critical efforts to ensure children and families impacted by COVID have the support they need.

### 2. Early Childhood Budget Update

- California Department of Finance representatives Jessica Holmes, Sarah Burtner, Carlos Aguilera and Tyler Woods presented an overview of Current and Budget Year early childhood – related proposals. In her opening presentation, Jessica Holmes discussed the May Revision proposal projects an overall budget deficit of \$54.3 billion, with a \$13.4 billion deficit projected in the Current Year and a \$40.0 billion deficit projected in Budget Year 2020 – 2021. The Department of Finance briefing focused on proposed budget shifts to programs contributing to Early Learning and Care, Child Health, and Family and Community Resiliency sectors.
- **Early Learning and Care** – Sarah Burtner discussed proposed budget reductions, expansions and federal assistance dependent trigger cuts for the following Early Learning and Care programs and initiatives:
  - Child Care Data Systems, Full-day Kindergarten Program, Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Alternative Payment Program (APP), California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Early Learning and Care Infrastructure Grant Program, Workforce Development Grant Program, Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program, allocations of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds, and child care program consolidation (with the exception of State Preschool) under the Department of Social Services.
- **Child Health** – Carlos Aguilera presented proposed budget reductions, eliminations, and transfers for the following Child Health programs and initiatives:
  - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Medi-Cal Healthier California for All Initiative (CalAIM), and Proposition 56 allocations.
- **Resilient Families and Communities** – Tyler Woods discussed proposed budget reductions, expansions and preservations of programs and initiatives geared toward enhancing family and community resiliency:
  - California Home Visiting Program, Black Infant Health Programs, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids (CalWORKs), CalWORKs Home Visiting Program, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and Paid Family Leave



***Early Childhood Policy Council***

The full Department of Finance Budget Presentation can be found on the official Early Childhood Policy Council Website ( <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/committees/early-childhood-policy-council/#may-27-2020>)

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



## **Early Childhood Policy Council**

### **Summary of Comments from the Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting**

This Summary provides themes and illustrative quotes from participants in the Early Childhood Policy Council Special Session on May 27, 2020.

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.

#### **Summary of Comments and Questions by ECPC Council Members and the Public**

The themes include:

- Impact of Budget Cuts on Children, Families and Providers
- Concerns Regarding Transition of Child Care Programs from California Department of Education to the Department of Social Services
- Support for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program
- Inclusion of Local Planning Councils

#### **Impact of Budget Cuts on Children, Families, and Providers**

Concerns about the Governor's May Revision 10% reduction in child care reimbursements were expressed by numerous ECPC members and the public. Members spoke about the harmful impact of the 10% rate cut on families, providers, and child care as a whole. Members indicated the Administration should find other areas in the state budget to reduce and that child care providers are already paid very low rates and risk further closures. The Administration was urged to consider space (slots) reductions as opposed to rate reductions. Comments highlighted that small agencies are providing child care services during the pandemic when schools and communities are unable to and that many of these agencies are in communities that are struggling economically, run by women, many of whom are women of color and will be forced to close down.

#### **Concerns Regarding Transition of Child Care Programs from California Department of Education (CDE) to the Department of Social Services (DSS)**

ECPC members and the public expressed concerns about the proposed transition of child care programs from the California Department of Education to the Department of Social Services.

#### **Support for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program**

At least one ECPC member highlighted the need for the administration to support the California Early Childhood Mentor Program through the continuation of funding. Twelve members of the public expressed support for the program.



***Early Childhood Policy Council***

*Inclusion of Local Planning Councils*

At least four members of the public emphasized the need to include members of Local Planning Councils in the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.



## **Early Childhood Policy Council**

### **Select Quotes Supporting the Themes Identified Above**

#### Impact of Budget Cuts on Children, Families, and Providers

- “I believe that the state can find somewhere else to cut. Child care centers and homes are already shutting down. Those that shut down temporarily may not ever reopen. The cuts specifically to the standard reimbursement rate and the regional market rate - it just basically can't be done. We already are paying our staff close to minimum wage.... the legislature and administration need to make a decision about how to save child care to open California and this proposal really does the opposite.”
- “...we are trying to find out if there's other possibilities other than the reduction of the 10% so that the services to our families are not impacted. We are seeing a lot of home providers, a lot of our programs closing due to the underfunding.” Still, another member added, “I'm trying to figure out with these cuts, exactly what is the expectation? Or the outcomes that everybody's looking for? Because I don't see any protections for children or those of us who care for children. So is that why we're meeting today? So I want to know: what are the real expectations?”
- “The 10% cut is really hard.” The member asked about possibly delaying the implementation of the proposed 10% cut from July 1<sup>st</sup> to a later date, to “see what federal funding is coming.”
- “The 10% rate cut is going to have a reciprocal effect where parents will be further put in burden.” Another member wrote, “A 10% cut means many family child care providers will be closed down, and countless children who come from unprivileged backgrounds will pay the price.”
- “As I mentioned and the council members are saying, the cuts will shut down the child care system. California can't reopen without child care so the cuts need to come from other sectors.” Another member reiterated that the budget cut “will affect slots as well as push the child care sector out of business.”
- “With this budget cut many child care providers are going to lose the business that they have worked to build and more importantly the children who are served by these educators are going to be struggling more than ever as they will not have access to quality child care services.”
- “Providers have forever been subsidizing the state by accepting payment that does not cover the cost of care. Once they lose the pay, it will be near impossible to get back. These small, women and women of color owned business will not survive. That's shameful.”
- “Providers will get a 10% cut. They have already spent on disinfecting and clean-ups prior to the funding coming in to assist with some of those expenses. Most use their own



### **Early Childhood Policy Council**

homes to provide child care but if they're not able to pay staff, provide these extra expenses then mortgages will not be paid."

- "We cannot pit the needs of families against the needs of the ECE workforce, both predominantly women of color who have subsidized this system for far too long with high copayments/parent fees and low wages, no benefits, no retirement."

### Concerns Regarding Transition of Child Care Programs from California Department of Education to the Department of Social Services

- "Our field has consistently had low pay and therefore difficulty attracting skilled workers. We are teachers, working to support children's development at a critical time in their lives. However, we are not paid or treated like teachers. I see a move to the DSS as relegating us once again to a status below other educators in our state. DSS deals mainly with Health and Safety, while ECE programs provide so much more than this." Another member of the public commented on how funds to transition child care programs from CDE to DSS could destabilize the field and that funds used for the transition are better spent supporting the field.
- "While we are in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, we remain steadfast in our belief that any transition should only occur with careful planning, consideration, and transparency. Input should be actively gathered from all stakeholders (i.e. consumers, contractors, providers, and state agencies), followed by a plan to make any transition seamless for all involved, or resulting in improvements in the current structure."
- "Department of Social Services currently has an infrastructure that can be built on." It was reiterated that an important part of the proposal includes a "connection to the Department of Education and lifting up child development as a key component of an educational support on a children's pathway."
- "I would ask the administration to reconsider the transition and consolidation and pivot the funds to support providers." Another member said, that "changing or transferring all of these state funded programs out of the Department of Education to DSS, this is not the place to do that."

### Support for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

- "Without the mentor program we will have difficulties training new ECE workers. The children and families are going to need a lot of support and the budget cuts that have been proposed will make it difficult to help the families and the children
- "How committed are you to support early childhood providers and their financial support during the coming 12 months? The EC Mentor Program is a significant way to support local community, high quality early childhood teachers."



### ***Early Childhood Policy Council***

- “I also want to advocate for the Early Childhood Mentor Program, a program that has been effective for over 30 years in supporting our early childhood field and teacher preparation. We need to continue to support students coming into this field, especially in a time of economic uncertainty. I have utilized this program to support directors, teachers, and teachers in training for over 10 years at the community college level. Mentors were essential to me as I was forced to move to online teacher preparation this spring.”

#### **Inclusion of Local Planning Councils**

- “Local planning is critical if state and federal child care investments are to improve the lives of children and working families in our diverse state, especially during times of crisis such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. I am hoping that the ECPC consider identifying LPCs as the local body responsible for coordinating services between county agencies for children ages birth to 12 in the upcoming Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.”
- “We have risen to the call during this pandemic. The LPCs are strategic in our communities.”