



Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting Summary: November 20, 2020

Attendees: Amelia Soto, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Carola Oliva-Olson, Cheryl Polk, Cheryl Schroeder, Dean Tagawa, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Debra Ward, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Kim Patillo Brownson, Kimberley Johnson, Khydeeja Alam Javid, Lupe Jaime, Mary Ignatius, Mayra E. Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Nadine Burke Harris, Naima Facih, Natali Gaxiola, Patricia Lozano, Patrick MacFarlane, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Sonia Jaramillo, Stephanie Myers, Tonia McMillian, Virginia Eigen, Yenni Rivera

Number of virtual participants: 494

1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Burke Harris)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Nadine Burke Harris thanked the Council for attending the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care special session and for their input throughout the year supporting the Master Plan's development. She explained that the Council was convened to receive a special briefing on the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care prior to its official release on December 1, 2020.
- To maximize the amount of time spent on the Master Plan, Chair Burke Harris informed the Council that she will forgo reading the roster aloud and that the Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) support team will check attendance by referring to the names in the Zoom participant panel.

2. Update on Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

- Deputy Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, Kris Perry, introduced the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. Deputy Secretary Perry thanked the Council for their effort, expertise, and commitment to supporting the Master Plan's development in her introductory remarks. The impact of COVID-19 not only presented challenges to the Council as a whole, but to each of the members individually as parents, providers, and members of their communities. Deputy Secretary Perry expressed her deep gratitude for the effort put into the Council's work this year.
- Deputy Secretary Perry reminded the Council that while they are a critical advisory and stakeholder group for the Master Planning team, they are not responsible for approving the plan. As an essential body contributing to the plan's development, the Master Plan team will present a high-level overview of the Master Plan and will share additional details after the plan is officially published on December 1. The high-level presentation was organized into two parts. The first segment covered the vision, goals, and strategies included in the plan. The second segment focused on opportunities to enhance the system in partnership with the Biden-Harris administration.



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- Master Plan team leaders, Jannelle Kubinec and Lupita Alcala, presented an overview of the Master Plan's four central goals and a high-level description of the plan's strategies supporting each goal. The Master Plan's goals include (1) strengthening and unifying programs and services to support children's learning and development; (2) supporting children's learning and development by enhancing educator competencies, incentivizing and funding career pathways, and implementing program standards; (3) unifying funding to advance equity and opportunity; and (4) streamlining early childhood governance and administration to improve equity.
- Kubinec and Alcala were supported by Master Plan team members Lynn Karoly, Susan Muenchow, and Aressa Coley. They engaged the Council in a discussion around how federal stimulus funding should be prioritized to address the immediate needs of California's parents and providers while advancing the state's long-term goals.
- The Master Plan for Early Learning and Care can be viewed by visiting the [Master Plan for Early Learning and Care website](#).

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



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

The following sections provide a high-level overview of themes from the November 20, 2020 Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) special session—based on each of the three polls taken. Quotes are provided as a bullet list to illustrate the themes that emerged during the meeting.

The ECPC 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 on Early Childhood Education's (ECE) final report can be updated and improved.

Poll #1: Prioritizing Stimulus Funding

What should the state prioritize to support providers through the pandemic?

A total of 74% of meeting attendees responded that resources and technical assistance for personal protective gear, sanitation, training, and other costs should be prioritized in stimulus funding. Family fee waivers and hold harmless were also mentioned, however one member of the public expressed that waivers should not be included at the expense of providers. This was echoed in the public comments. Others on the Council agreed.

Non-operational days for child care sites should be left unlimited and at the discretion of the health department in the area. Another member suggested that non-operational days should be designated by when a doctor medically releases a provider. Automatically recertifying families based on eligibility year, need of care so that parents do not have to worry at the end of the 12-month eligibility was also suggested. A question that arose during the discussion was whether a plan was in place to cover and prioritize some of the needs of essential workers.

Poll #2: Prioritizing Stimulus Funding

What should the state prioritize to support children and families?

Although not addressed in the plan, it was highlighted by a Council member that it is important to keep in mind the need for and accessibility of mental health services for families and to keep in mind that "childcare providers serve as a critical connection point for families." Additionally, although it did not rank in the top three, social services was underscored by ECPC members. The need to destigmatize accessing social service programs, particularly during this time of COVID-19 when many families are in need, was emphasized as critical in supporting and encouraging families, particularly families with dual language learners and children with disabilities, as well as providers who need social service programs.

Because children may not be first in line in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, distance learning may need to continue. An ECPC member requested that that flexibility should be



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provide to programs that are seeking funding in order to encourage creativity and allowing schools and programs to meet students where they are. Echoing the concern for supporting families with distance learning, another ECPC member expressed that they were pleased that dual language learners were being considered and included. In addition, toward supporting distance learning for dual language learners, the need to increase access to technology was mentioned, highlighting how technology needs for families include centralized hotspots and a WiFi system. The question was raised whether the Master Plan could allow for a centralized website for families to access resources, including lesson plans and activities that can support distance learning.

Poll #3: Prioritizing Federal Funding

What should we prioritize from president-elect Biden's proposal to advance California's long-term goals?

ECPC members highlighted the need to examine and address inequities that existed prior to COVID-19 and proactively and quickly address those disparities. The sense of urgency to ensure families, particularly families with DLLs and children with special needs, receive the services they need was expressed by ECPC members. This was highlighted as a need by one member of the public who urged for a “deep analysis of competencies and standards” as the transition from CDE to DSS takes place.

Provider compensation was tied to providing and maintaining high-quality programming. ECPC members commented that many of the financial struggles that families face are also faced by providers. Other members commented that a livable wage as well as benefits such as paid leave, increased number of non-operational days, and a medical and retirement plan, will attract new people into the ECE field and retain providers. Livable wages were also cited by ECPC members as a way to address the inequities in the ECE field, as the field is dominated by women of color, with many families of color relying on affordable and high-quality child care.

Preparing a well-paid workforce was also mentioned by ECPC members. Members commented on the need for a “career ladder,” and to increase the offering of courses and training sessions that support system alignment through the development of foundational professional development opportunities that integrate equitable practices as well as “anti-racist training.” Other members highlighted the need for these opportunities to include free training as well as financial assistance for providers, including assistance in hiring a substitute to give release time for teachers or providers attending professional development.



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Select Quotes Supporting the Themes Identified Above

Poll #1: Prioritizing Stimulus Funding

What should the state prioritize to support providers through the pandemic?

- “I would add continuation of waiving family fees...And then find a way to continue to hold us harmless so we can continue to keep employed even on the days that we have to close because of... COVID cases or lack of staff.”
- “I also want to say as far as the non-operational days for COVID, it really should be left unlimited... It really depends on your health department also in your area.”
- “It should be automatically recertified based on the previous year at the end of the 12-month eligibility...We don't want our parents to have to be stressed out that 'I'm at the end of my 12 month eligibility and now I'm going to lose my child care because we're back in the purple and we're not open again.'”
- “As far as family fees waived, they should not be waived at the expense of the child care provider.”
- “The one thing is, I didn't see any priorities about compensation for providers. And there was a lot of talk about resources. But we've fallen pretty significantly behind on what we're paying our providers. And there was some discussion early on about hazard pay. We are asking child care providers to put their own health at risk to be open and they are doing so.”
- “High-quality care must be affordable, but not at the expense of the providers. As a preschool teacher and mentor, I provide high-quality programs for the children in my care. I do not see that reflected in my income and the Mentor program should definitely be revisited.”

Poll #2: Prioritizing Stimulus Funding

What should the state prioritize to support children and families?

- “For dual language and special needs students, we seem to be struggling in our area. I'm sure it's a statewide phenomenon—is the lack of access to technology. And although that technology is not for the students, in order for us to be able to do anything with our families, parents have to have access to technology. So, we seem to be struggling with finding a way to one, find the right technology to be using for the families' access to a centralized hotspot, Wi Fi system for our communities. And the third one will be a centralized place for them to access resources. So, I'm wondering if within the planning, a centralized website can be considered for families to have access to lessons and activities so that they can go into the site and access this remote service. Resources that will connect them to the plan for transition and into kinder and not having to fall behind.”
- “We've got a lot of distance learning going on around the state with the exception of a handful of districts who may go back to full distance learning, depending how



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this spike in the virus goes. And that has a cost to the child care system for essential workers and families who have to go to work.”

- “Anything that the administration and the department and all of us can do to encourage and support families and providers who need any of the food stamps, CalWORKs, MediCal, whatever the program is, this is the time when they need it.”
- “I do worry that families need the ability to access social services because of the families we serve. Many are in isolation, already have multiple environmental risks, and familial challenges.”

Poll #3: Prioritizing Federal Funding

What should we prioritize from president-elect Biden’s proposal to advance California’s long-term goals?

- “I also think looking at what a new administration is going to do, we have to take a really serious look at the impact of COVID this year on disparities that existed beforehand. And just try to take immediate action to reverse course on some of those things.”
- “The comments we heard today, for the most part, are consistent with the issues and concerns that have been put forward during the COVID crisis. Need to add that the Master Plan and the federal stimulus partnership should ensure that their state-level policy level administrators and policy makers themselves have the professional experience and expertise to lead services for high-risk children and families, including DLL and immigrant children. The transition from CDE to DSS will occasion the need for deep analysis of the competencies and standards that ensure quality, support, and guidance to those programs that are transferred. DSS staff will need PD, etc.
- “We have to have urgency in uplifting solutions to get money in the hands of our workforce as well as benefits and paid leave time. We saw the response for alignment with the Biden proposal and heard from committee members, we have to uplift this issue and I want to emphasize that in our state, early educators are six times as likely as K-12 teachers to live in poverty. Additionally, both African-American and Hispanic educators are somewhat more likely than their white peers to work with infants and toddlers—this is critical for the Council to examine with a recommendation for universal preschool and what implications may arise.”
- “Maintain high-quality programs and giving parents access kind of goes hand-in-hand with making sure that everyone, that the professionals get compensated.”
- “We have to compensate [providers] to make this a lifelong career for them.”
- “How are we being laser focused on race inequities that continue to plague our field and thinking about this field being dominated by women and women of color where providing support to subsidize families of predominantly black and brown children.”



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- “We need to, now more than ever, embed anti-racist training for all early childhood professionals; we need to train those professionals in good online practices, and we need to focus on children's social and emotional development as children who are supported socially and emotionally have the benefit of better cognitive development outcomes. Compensation, which includes health care, sick pay, etc. to provide an equitable workforce.”
- “We need to implement equity and anti-racist training as a requirement for all early childhood professionals in higher ed courses.”
- “When we aim to build back the CA ECE system, we cannot lose site of the fact that we had a system that was already producing inequitable outcomes for children, families, and educators.”