



Workforce Advisory Committee Meeting Summary: February 10, 2021

Attendees: Tonia McMillian, Amelia Soto, AnnLouise Bonnitto, Debra Ward, Miren Algorri, Patricia Alexander, Virginia Eigen, Zoila Toma

1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Tonia McMillian)

- In her opening remarks, Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) Workforce Advisory Committee Chair, Tonia McMillian, welcomed the Committee and members of the public to the first meeting of the year. She thanked the Committee and the public for their commitment to attending and serving. Chair McMillian presented an outline of the meeting agenda that included an overview and discussion of budget items related to the child care workforce, an update on the child care program transition, and a brainstorming session to inform what the Committee would like to see incorporated into future meetings.
- To maximize the amount of time spent during the meeting, Chair McMillian informed the Committee that she would forgo reading the roster aloud and that the ECPC support team would check attendance by referring to the names in the Zoom participant panel.

2. Governor's Proposed January Budget

- California Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary, Kris Perry, presented an overview of the Governor's January budget proposal, specifically focusing on funding proposals with implications to the state's early childhood system. The presentation summarized proposals for the current year and upcoming budget year.
- Current year proposals included \$110 million to child care providers to reimburse them for costs of waived family fees and extends the length of care for children of essential workers with temporary vouchers; an additional \$21.5 million for child care slots in 2020–21 and an additional \$44 million in ongoing funding to expand child care slots; and an update on the collective bargaining process with Child Care Providers United (CCPU).
- Budget year proposals included the transition of early childhood programs from the California Department of Education (CDE) to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), effective July 1, 2021; Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act COVID Relief Funds; one-time General Fund allocations to support families and child care providers as a result of the pandemic; and guidance on how to prioritize \$300 million of additional federal funding.
- Kris Perry facilitated questions from and discussions within the Committee.



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3. Child Care Program Transition Second Quarter Report

- Kristina Meza, Chief of the CalWORKs and Family Resilience Branch within the Family Engagement and Empowerment Division at the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), presented an overview of the Child Care Program Transition Second Quarter Report. Meza summarized efforts CDSS has taken over the last quarter to engage stakeholders to inform development of the draft transition plan. While the official transfer will not take place until July 1, 2021, the transition plan is due to the Legislature and the ECPC at the end of March.
- The CDSS transition team has engaged stakeholders continuously throughout the plan's development, including opportunities through topical listening sessions, quarterly stakeholder calls, and feedback collected through the transition web page. Upcoming activities to finalize the plan will include a release of the draft transition plan for public comment, public-private partnership development, a Transition Plan Walkthrough via webinar, the Third Quarter Stakeholder Call, and the transition of programs and staff on July 1, 2021.

4. Committee Meeting Planning Session

- ECPC support team member Aressa Coley facilitated a visioning and brainstorming exercise using Miro, a virtual whiteboard. Coley presented an overview of the different methods Committee members can use to provide input and facilitated a discussion to help the Committee identify priorities for their work in 2021.

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

Summary of Comments and Questions by Workforce Advisory Committee Members and the Public

The following sections provide a high-level overview of themes from the February 10, 2021 ECPC Workforce Advisory Committee 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 (1) all aspects of the state's early childhood system, including equity—with consideration for demographic, geographic, and economic diversity—focusing on family-centered, two-generation approaches; (2) opportunities to incorporate a support model of accountability—as opposed to a compliance model of accountability—into the state's early childhood education system; and (3) ways that the State's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the 2019 California Assembly Blue Ribbon



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Commission on Early Childhood Education's (ECE) Final Report can be updated and improved.

The following is a list of the major themes from the meeting:

- Transition from CDE to CDSS
 - Impact to ECE programs
 - Changes to processes and logistics
- Funding needs
- Equitable pay for the ECE workforce
- Role of higher education in ECE career pathways and professional development
- California Mentor Program
- Impact of COVID-19 on the ECE workforce
- Strengthening opportunities for input from and communication with the ECE workforce
- Resources

The following sections provide a high-level overview of these major themes.

Transition from CDE to CDSS

Impact to ECE programs

Advisory Committee members and the public attendees brought up concerns regarding how the transition from CDE to CDSS would impact certain ECE programs and funding. It was noted that attendees of the meeting were interested in learning about how programs other than the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and transitional kindergarten (TK) are going to be affected. A couple of attendees expressed that there is a larger focus on TK programs and that there is a need to ensure funding is dispersed among the various ECE programs.

Changes to processes and logistics

Attendees had questions regarding how the transition would impact existing processes and logistics. More specifically, attendees raised questions related to reporting, audits, and assessments. There was also a question regarding how funds will transfer to CDSS and how that will differ from the previous year.



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Funding needs

Several comments from Committee members and the public underscored the financial needs of ECE providers. Stipends, relief funds, cost of living, and other factors contributing to ECE providers' finances and wages were raised by attendees as necessary to consider in any budget planning.

Equitable pay for the ECE workforce

Meeting participants brought attention to the need for wages to reflect the training and education of ECE professionals. Comments were marked with the need for wages to be linked with other necessary benefits, including health insurance. A couple of attendees specifically commented on the need for legislatures to enact changes that directly affect workforce wages.

Role of higher education in ECE career pathways and professional development

Partnerships with institutions of higher education were mentioned by several attendees as necessary in enhancing the workforce, whether it be through preparation or additional training. Creating alignment between classroom training and hands-on practice was raised by several attendees. Comments related to bridging higher education and professional development with higher wages were also mentioned.

California Mentor Program

Committee members and public attendees frequently mentioned the Mentor Program when commenting on the role of higher education in strengthening the ECE workforce. Attendees commented on the Mentor Program's benefits as well as voiced the need for the program to continue being funded.

Impact of COVID-19 on the ECE workforce

Committee members and public attendees highlighted several of the ways in which COVID-19 has affected ECE professionals—specifically the need to address systemic inequities that have financially impacted women and influenced who has access to professional development and technology.

Strengthening opportunities for input from and communication with the ECE workforce

Committee members and public attendees frequently elevated the need to create and strengthen opportunities for ECE providers and stakeholders to provide feedback. Moreover, it was underscored that information regarding the transition needs to reach ECE providers.



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Resources

Attendees provided resource ideas and links; these included the following:

- [“Child Care Providers Will Get More Financial Help From The State” article from the Child Care segment on the February 10, 2021 The Latest page of the LAist website](#)
- [California's 2021-22 Governor's Budget web page](#)
- [Child Care Transition page of the CDSS website](#)
- [“Early Care and Education Is in Crisis: Biden Can Intervene” article from the Words on the Workforce page of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment \(CSCCE\) website](#)
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is doing very similar work with Power to the Profession ([NAEYC Power to the Profession website](#)). Many of the same topics and ideas are being addressed. I believe a collaborative approach will help to make our voices louder and more impactful with the legislature, both in California and nationally. I would encourage the Committee to look at that work for further ideas and cross collaboration.

Select Quotes Supporting the Themes Identified Above

Transition from CDE to CDSS

Impact to ECE programs

- “Do we know what programs are being shifted from CDE to CDSS?”
- “Has this Committee examined how this transition from CDE to CDSS for all programs besides CSPP and TK will exacerbate the preschool-child care dichotomy?”
- “I want the monies to go into the earliest education, from the cradle start all the way to the college. But those first four years are so critical, and the data shows it year after year how important it is to put our monies and invest in those early childhood programs and providers and centers. That's where our money should go. Not into all of these TK [programs].”
- “Will the transition plan be categorized by program type? This would help support staff and educators/providers refer to their specific program.”



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Changes to processes and logistics

- “For programs that will serve both CSPP and CCTR [General Child Care], will you all be using the same reporting system? I am curious about how we will manage the changing workload.”
- “Thinking about the process of audits and/or reviews from CDSS—will that look the same or will it differ? And in the program review processes, there are instruments used now; will those go over? Such as the DRDP assessments, the Environmental Rating Scales, and more as they were law with the Department of Education.”
- “And we, of course, are like everyone else and we're very nervous about the mechanics of how things will work when the transition happens. So the document that you're referencing, that's going to be coming out? Will that walk through how our contracts are issued? If there'll be an analyst that we'll work with, like in CDE right now? [Will it walk through] the mechanics of how reporting will work every month—all the things that we need to get ready for on our end?”
- “In terms of the money that's going to Department of Social Services, how does that compare with last year's budget?”

Funding needs

- “Please share that private providers, those without Title 5 and HS [Head Start] funding need financial support. With limited enrollment and increased costs, it's difficult to continue to serve—especially infants and toddlers.”
- “Private providers need access to relief funds.”
- “I would like to address the fact that center-based program and family child care have the same needs: we all need subs, we all wear many hats, and we are all looking for a worthy wage.”
- “We need better funding to keep centers open and pay staff adequately or providers will continue to close.”
- “When we're [talking] about wages and even the cost of programs, you also have to look at where the area is. Because [in] different areas the cost of living is so different. What's a livable wage in one area won't even buy you a bedroom in somebody's house to live in.”



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Equitable pay for the ECE workforce

- “Early care and education wages for FCC [family child care] and center-based teachers should be equivalent to K-12, based on education and experience. Compensation needs to include wages, medical benefits, retirement, and access to [the] supplemental financial supports that K-12 has; that is real equity!”
- “So if you are going to college, I think also that has to be paid off is equal to wages and stuff like that.”
- “I think that the focus of wages has to start with the policy makers making those changes, updating the Title 5 regulations or updating whatever regulations to support the better wages.”
- “So, it's pretty evident that our legislatures are reluctant to take action that directly relates to the wages and benefits of a specific group of workers. I found this evidence was made loud and clear as many policymakers were not in agreement to increase the minimum wage to \$15 for the federal workers. So I think if we want to make a difference for our child care workforce and not look at them as child care workers or just babysitters, but we want better wages for our workforce. We need to encourage legislatures to rewrite the funding terms and conditions that we have in our contracts or to look at Title 5 regulations to make those adjustments to address the workforce better-wage issues more directly. Whether that's actually putting in language in Title 5 that gives agencies the opportunity to develop career ladders or that they have to start with a specific wage in mind and so forth.”

Role of Higher Education in ECE career pathways and professional development

- “Alignment between the expectations of QRIS [quality rating and improvement system] and the college preparation programs.”
- Higher education is mentioned as a partner in Goal 1, Strategy C: Expanding Preschool Preparation. Higher education is eager to be involved. Higher education is a critical component of ECE workforce preparation in California. As an Early Childhood/Child Development higher education faculty, we want to collaborate in the roll-out of this plan: contributing innovative and best practice models from ECE/CD higher education in California—in CCs [community colleges], CSUs [California State Universities], UCs [the University of California campuses], and private university campuses. How else do you envision higher education’s active participation within the roll-out of this action item?”



Early Childhood Policy Council

- “The community colleges are the perfect place to help start teachers off on the right path, including units and professional development opportunities. There should be some advocacy to support lab schools/child development centers so that future teachers have an opportunity to practice what they are learning before they go out and get jobs in the community. Please consider funding to support guided-work experiences at the community colleges.”
- “I want to thank you for acknowledging the need for partnerships with higher education as part of your vision for early childhood systems. As you may know, higher education supports career pathways throughout the career lattice, such as teaching dual enrollment classes at the high schools, developing certificates and courses for family child care providers, offering courses at the R&Rs [Resource and Referral agencies and programs] and aligning coursework between two-year and four-year programs to support transfer students.”

California Mentor Program

- “I agree with the above comment about the Mentor Program. Community colleges must also allow students to complete their field work in their own programs under supervision. The barrier of doing field work in the community college is preventing working students to complete their certification for a higher permit level which could relate to higher wages and advancement.”
- “I agree [that] the loss of the Mentor Program will impact our field immensely. That should be one item (among many others) that should be addressed and try to figure out how to get it back.”
- “I fully support full funding for the Mentor Program as it exists now, in full partnership with the community college and other four-year institutions. Quality practitioners are a product of strong mentoring and support!”
- “The Mentor Program has had a huge impact on our field. Quality programs come from quality mentoring!”
- “We have all seen the benefit of the Mentor Program; it would be a big mistake if it didn't continue and be fully funded.”



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Impact of COVID-19 on the ECE workforce

- “Not enough people are discussing the fact that COVID forced women to choose between their profession or to quit to stay at home to help their young children tackle distance learning; this has affected our workforce greatly.”
- “COVID has revealed and exacerbated systemic inequities. As we move forward, how will the implementation of the master plan [Master Plan for Early Learning and Care] specifically support the need for teachers/providers to access courses, education, pathways, and knowledge around trauma-informed practices, dual language learning, and anti-racism within higher education systems?”
- “I do want to point out the fact that this pandemic has opened our eyes to the lack of technology and access to computers and laptops and we're entering into a new normal. And so we've got to make sure that we have access to new technologies and also be able to utilize them. So in the event that we find ourselves in another situation, we're experiencing a new way of communicating with each other.”

Strengthening opportunities for input from and communication with the ECE workforce

- “CDSS has a 1-800 number for parents to express concerns about providers and I would like to encourage CDSS to create a 1-800 number for providers to call in concerns about the agencies & networks on their lack of information and misinformed information to providers. There needs to be an open conversation with providers.”
- “Can you share the thinking about the Public Hearing process on the CCDF [Child Care and Development Fund] draft plan? CDE’s process was to publish the draft plan with comments directed to content that was already included. Will CDSS’ approach differ?”
- “Countless FCCs are not aware of the transition.”
- “We need to think about the language we use for the professionals that work with our children and families. The term 'providers' does not indicate professionalism. One program in the east uses the term home educators instead family child care [and] early care and education instead of child care. The field would need to consistently lead this change in all arenas.”
- “And my question is, how are family child care providers—how are FCCs specifically—being a part of these conversations about the transition? And how are we supposed to offer that feedback so our opinion and our concerns can be taken into consideration?”