COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
POLICY ROUNDTABLE FOR CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT
POLICY • PLANNING • PRACTICE

SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 ♦ 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Microsoft Teams

To join online: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZjNiOTRjOGUtZTA5Yy00NTcyLWFhOTctNzEyYWJmOWUwM2Ew%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2207597248-ea38-451b-8abe-a638eddbac81%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b7586cd5-04a5-4d70-975c-229e0917e659%22%7d

To join by telephone: +1 323-776-6996 United States, Los Angeles (Toll); Conference ID: 241 296 749#

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions

10:00	1.	Comments from the Chair	Information	Jackie Majors, Chair
10:10	2.	Approval of Minutes – June 2, 2020 - Roll Call Vote	Action Item	Jackie Majors, Chair Erica Weiss, OAECE

Public Policy Update

10:20	3.	State Budget and Legislation	Information	Dean Tagawa, LAUSD Michele Sartell, OAECE

Public Policy

10:30	4.	The Status of Child Care and COVID-19	Information	Debra Colman, OAECE Director

Discussion

10:45	5.	Finding Our Focus During COVID-19 1) *What surprised you about the Status of Child Care presentation?* 2) *What policy issue should be the focus of the Roundtable over the next few months?*	Discussion	Jackie Majors, Chair

Wrap-up

11:25	6.	Announcements and Public Comment	Information	Meeting Participants
11:30	7.	Meeting in Review and Call to Adjourn	Information	Karla Pleitéz Howell, Vice Chair

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Vision

Children are healthy, thriving and have equitable opportunities to achieve optimal development and succeed in life.

Mission

Lead, build, and strengthen an affordable and high-quality early care and education system for the children and families in Los Angeles County.

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Special Session Minutes for June 2, 2020

Welcome and Introductions

1. Call to Order and Comments by the Chair

Chair Jackie Majors opened the meeting via Microsoft Teams of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development (Roundtable) at 2:32 p.m. Jackie welcomed members, alternates and guests while acknowledging the stress that everyone may be experiencing due to recent events relating to the protests in addition to managing work under COVID-19. She then introduced the purpose of the meeting to consider recommended pursuits of position in response to the Governor's proposed revisions to the proposed budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21. She informed the meeting participants that recommended positions were vetted with the leadership of the Roundtable and the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee) last week, noting that the recommendations address those issues of highest priority and are aligned with local and statewide advocacy groups.

Erica Weiss, staff with the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE), conducted roll call of the meeting participants.

2. Revisions to Governor's FY 2020-22 Budget Proposals for Early Care and Education: Analysis and Recommended Pursuits of Position

Michele Sartell, staff with the Office for the Advancement of Early, presented a brief overview of the budget analysis that was included in the meeting packet sent prior to the meeting. She reviewed three of the Governor's budget proposals for early care and education: impact of proposed cuts to the reimbursement rate system; use of federal CARES funding to reimburse the state for emergency expenditures; and proposal to shift early care and education programs, except State Preschool, from the California Department of Education (CDE) to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). She commented that the third item pertaining to the shift of programs is not accompanied with a proposed pursuit of position to avoid detracting from the more significan budget items; rather, it is listed as an item that requires monitoring.

Directing meeting participants to the proposed recommended positions for Board approval, Michele read the items as follows:

- Oppose the Governor's proposed cuts to the Standard Reimbursement Rate and Regional Market Rate used to reimburse subsidized early care and education services.

- Oppose the Governor's proposal to sweep of the federal CCDBG supplemental funds to backfill the General Fund costs associated with COVID-19.

- Advocate for using CARES Act funding and redirecting the child care workforce and Infrastructure grant funds, data system funding and reduction to the Early Learning Planning Council to: backfill the proposed rate reductions; continue family fee waivers; hold harmless all early care and education programs ensuring that they continue to receive reimbursement for their full contract amount and keep staff engaged in serving children and their families based on FY 2019-20 contract amounts through FY 2020-21; assist with COVID-19 group

sizes and staffing ratios; allocate funding to programs so that they may re-open and stay open, and provide professional development related to trauma and other COVID-19 related supports.

Jackie Majors asked for a motion to approve recommended pursuits of position for elevation to the Board of Supervisors. Dr. Robert Gilchick made the motion to approve the motion; Boris Villacorta seconded the motion. Discussion addressed a concern regarding the shift of early care and education programs to the CDSS and implications for the long-term. In response, it was re-iterated that a decision was made to not allow the item to detract from the other highly significant issues. Erica Weiss took roll call on the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

3. Public Comment

Jackie asked for public comments. None were offered.

Call to Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Members Attending:
Fran Chasen, Southern CA Chapter – California Association for the Education of Young Children
Richard Cohen, Supervisorial District 3
Richard Gilchick, Department of Public Health
Dawn Kurtz, Child360
Jackie Majors, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles County
Ofelia Medina, First 5 LA
Terry Ogawa, Supervisorial District 3
Karla Pleitéz Howell, Supervisorial District 1
Dean Tagawa, Los Angeles Unified School District
Julie Taren, Child Care Planning Committee
Boris Villacorta, Supervisorial District 1

Alternate Members Attending:
Debi Anderson, Los Angeles County Office of Education
Debra Colman, Department of Public Health
Carolyn Kaneko, Department of Mental Health
Colleen Pagter, Los Angeles Unified School District
Paul Pulver, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles

Guests Attending:
Cristina Alvarado, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
Carolyne Crolette, Early Edge California
Ashley Portillo, Child360
JoAnn Shalhoub-Mejia, California Federation of

Staff:
Michele Sartell
Erica Weiss

Public Policy Update

Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development
September 9, 2020

OVERVIEW

- State Legislation
- State Budget
- Ongoing/Emerging Issues

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STATE LEGISLATION – SECOND YEAR OF 2019-20 SESSION

- Monitoring 32 bills – 27 Assembly bills; five Senate bills
- Shift in March due to COVID-19
- Focus on employers/employees
  - Workers Compensation (AB 196 – Dead)
  - Employee risks (AB 685 – Governor's Desk)

BUDGET ACT OF 2020 – EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE)

SB 98 (Chapter 24; Approved June 29, 2020): Education Omnibus Budget Trailer Bill ~

- $125 million
  - $62.5 to reimburse providers
  - $62.5 to Alternative Payment Programs for one-time stipends
- $73 million – extend 90 days of ECE for essential workers
- $47 million – 5,600 additional voucher slots
- "Hold harmless" to fully reimburse CDE contracted providers for child attendance if open in 2020-21 and if closed due to public health closure order; closed providers required to provide distance learning

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BUDGET ACT OF 2020 – EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE)

- Shifts ECE programs, except California State Preschool Program, to California Department of Social Services effective July 1, 2021. Following programs to be shifted:
  - Alternative payment programs
  - Migrant alternative payment programs
  - CalWORKs Stage 2 Child Care
  - CalWORKs Stage 3 Child Care
  - General child care and development
  - Migrant child care and development programs
  - Child care and development services for children with disabilities
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program
  - Child care and development facilities capital outlay
  - Administration of the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
  - Lead agency for the CCDF State Plan Early Learning and Care Infrastructure Grant Program
  - Early Learning and Workforce Development Grants Program
  - California Head Start State Collaboration Office funded by collaboration grants
  - Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Grant from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  - Resource and referral
  - Local child care and development planning councils
  - California Child Care Initiative
  - Other child care quality improvement projects
  - Child Development Management Information System and other related data systems
  - Memoranda of understand and partnerships related to program , services and systems

BUDGET ACT OF 2020 – EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE)

- $9.3 million in one-time federal funds for development and implementation of early learning and care data systems
- "Child Care Trigger" in anticipation of $300 million in new federal CCDBG aid
  - $100 million for vouchers to extend child care for prioritized families
  - $50 million to increase California State Preschool capacity
  - $25 million to assist licensed programs with COVID-19 costs
  - Stipends for licensed family child care homes
  - Up to $5,000 per licensed family child care home and up to $15,000 per licensed centers to support re-opening, administered by alternative payment program agencies

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BUDGET ACT OF 2020 – HOLD HARMLESS PROVISION

- California Department of Education correspondence in July 2020
- Programs required to open by September 8th or within 21 days of program calendar year to receive their full funding
- Exempt from opening if closed due to state or local public health order (e.g. Local Education Agencies)
- Closed programs must provide distance learning

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SB 820 – BUDGET CLEAN UP – EDUCATION FINANCE

- Reduces from $62.5M to $31.25M for one-time alternative payment and migrant payment programs
- Adds 14 day of paid nonoperational days to existing 10 nonoperational days
- Extends waiver of family fees through June 30, 2021 for distance learning of children enrolled in state-subsidized program
- Reduces from $25 to $15M in stipends to licensed programs
- Reduces from $125M to $90 M for stipends to assist subsidized programs with increased cost of care expensed during COVID-19
- Clarifies reimbursement for programs operating on a school campus when LEA is closed by local or state public health guidance/order to be reimbursed
- Additional items contingent on federal funding

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ONGOING AND EMERGING ISSUES

- Workers compensation
- Risk of liability
- Stabilization funds
- Reimbursement rate system
- Compensation/pay equity

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COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

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County of Los Angeles Public Health

Early Care and Education during COVID-19

September 9, 2020

LA County and COVID-19

County of Los Angeles Public Health

As of September 2, 2020

• Total cases	243,935
• Testing (7-day daily average)	13,022
• Testing positivity (7-day daily average)	4.9%
• Total deaths reported	5,878
• Current hospitalizations	1,048

Impact on ECE

- **Health Officer Order**
  - Per Health Officer Order, ECE programs were never required to close
- **DPH Guidance**
  - DPH guidance limits service to 12 children per room
- **School Age Care**
  - K-12 closure has magnified the need for child care

ECE COVID-19 Response

- **LA County ECE COVID-19 Response Team**
- **Briefings and Webinars**
  - LA County Public Health ECE Briefings
  - ECE Response Team Community Webinars
- **Connecting to Child Care**
  - 888-92-CHILD and enhanced child care referrals
- **Supplies**
  - Child Care Alliance and Resource and Referral agencies coordinate supplies
- **Funding**
  - State vouchers for essential workers
  - CARES Act vouchers for essential workers and low-income families
  - CARES Act Stabilization Grants

ECE Centers and Family Child Care

TOTALS	FCC	Centers	ALL
ECE Programs in Database	4,522	2,264	6,786
Open	3,315 (73%)	719 (32%)	4,035
Closed	1,207 (27%)	1,545 (68%)	32,753
Vacancies in Open Programs	14,779	13,440	28,209

Challenges

- **Cost of care has increased**
  - ECE providers can only serve 12 children in a room which has impacted their business models.
- **Re-envisioning ECE practice**
  - Moving from group learning to physically distanced activities means re-envisioning ECE practice.
- **Liability and Workman's Comp**
  - Liability has not been waived under COVID-19 so some providers are afraid to open.

Potential Policy Recommendations

- **Reimbursement Rates:**
  - Single reimbursement rate that covers the cost of care during COVID-19
- **Stabilization Fund:**
  - Stabilization fund to support ECE operations during COVID-19
- **Liability:**
  - Legislation to waive COVID-19 liability for ECE providers

Let's Talk!

Reflections, Questions, and Ideas

TIME

COVID-19 Has Nearly Destroyed the Childcare Industry—and It Might Be Too Late to Save It

Sanitizing a daycare facility preparing to re-open Getty Images

BY **ABBY VESOULIS**

SEPTEMBER 8, 2020 7:16 PM EDT

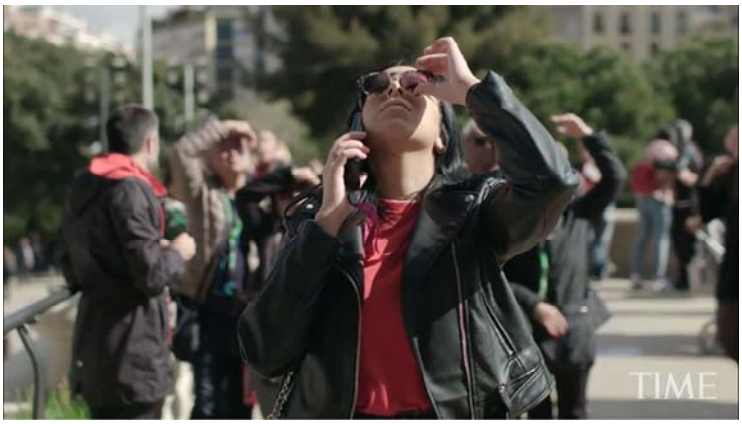
Jenna Antico, a 31-year-old childcare operator in Sarasota, Fla., thought 2020 would be a pivotal year for her business. The daycare facility she started building in 2015 was turning a steady profit, so she leased a second building in October 2019, then purchased a third in late February 2020. As it turned out, this year has indeed been pivotal—but not in the way she had hoped.

When COVID-19 hit the United States like a tsunami in March, shuttering schools and businesses, and prompting companies to start working remotely, daycares like Antico's got caught up in the current. Parents pulled their kids from the centers and local governments began issuing strict guidelines that providers would have to meet before they could welcome children back.

To meet both the Florida state and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, Antico erected four new walls—at nearly $8,000 a pop—to reduce the number of kids per classroom; purchased 16 portable sinks for $2,800 each; and hired five sanitation workers to deep clean her original center for three and a half hours every night. She is also paying her administrative assistant overtime to keep up with all the new documentation. But despite these investments, enrollment at her facilities, and therefore Antico's income, hasn't rebounded in the way she had hoped. At the beginning of 2020, her facility was just shy of its 106-kid capacity; by the end of August, only 49 children were enrolled.

Antico is hurting. She has already blown through the entire $91,000 Paycheck Protection Program loan she received through the CARES Act, accrued an additional $70,000 worth of debt, and both of her new facilities remain vacant. She has no funds left to staff or furnish them. "There's no more money left for me to take a salary," says Antico, the mother of three adopted kids and one

biological one. She and her husband, a child protective investigator who earns $40,000 a year, have now missed two mortgage payments, pulled their children out of private school, and are considering selling their home to make ends meet. Her childcare business, which she has invested $500,000 into over the past five years, is teetering on the brink of collapse.



Inside Barcelona's Unfinished Masterpiece

Not that it provides her any solace, but Antico is far from alone: 86% of childcare providers are serving fewer children now than they were before the pandemic, while 70% are incurring "substantial" new operating costs, according to a July survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The costs are relentless: daycare managers must hire more staff to handle smaller class sizes, more legal fees to navigate the onerous process of obtaining government loans and abiding by state regulations, and more cleaning supplies and personnel to prevent outbreaks among toddlers. Across the industry, enrollment has plummeted by two-thirds. Without significant government investment, and soon, 40% of childcare programs surveyed by NAEYC—and half of those that are minority-owned—will shutter. Permanently.

Interviews with more than half a dozen daycare operators from across the country reveal why so many centers may never re-open: Even before the pandemic, they said, overhead costs were immense, whereas profit margins were just enough to get by. In this pandemic era, everything has simply gotten worse. Lauren Brown, the director of World of Wonders Childcare and Learning Center in In Marysville, Ohio, says cleaning costs have skyrocketed 300%, while the center grossed $20,000 less in June and July than it normally would. Annette Gladstone, the co-founder of Segray Eagle Rock daycare in Los Angeles, says she's struggling to keep up with rent on her daycare building since enrollment is so low. Segray Eagle Rock normally accommodates 177 children; by late August, it had two dozen kids. Despite the blistering Southern California heat, Gladstone has kept the windows open while the air conditioner is running because the CDC indicates the practice can increase ventilation. Meredith Kasten who runs the Early Childhood Center in Greensboro, North

Carolina, says the demand for her services all but dried up. “Our waiting list used to be a year long,” she says. “It’s now empty.”

The slow death of childcare centers nationwide may have a domino effect across the economy, experts say. Entrepreneurs like Antico or Gladstone will face financial hardship, but so will the roughly 1.1 million people, 96% of whom are women and 40% of whom are people of color, who tend to make very low wages caring for other people’s kids. Mass closures will also have a ripple effect on communities and parents, who depend on daycare centers to go to work and support their families. Without access to affordable and convenient childcare, many parents—mostly mothers—will find it increasingly untenable, financially and logistically, to work outside the home. It’s an eventuality that could cripple women’s advancement in the workplace, exacerbate inequality, and put a drag on the U.S. economic recovery.

This catch-22 is somewhat unique to the childcare industry. While public school administrators have also had to grapple with new safety protocols and increased expenses as a result of the pandemic, they are government funded. Daycares aren’t. Society decided long ago that children have a right to a grade-school education to which even non-parents are required to contribute, but there is no similar consensus for sharing the cost of caring for smaller kids. Marcy Whitebook, the founding director of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California, Berkeley, says there’s no good reason for that societal failure. But the result is clear: “because we’re asking parents to foot the bill and it’s so expensive,” she says, “it means that the only way to really make that happen is to essentially exploit the people who are doing it.”

If there are mass closures across the childcare industry to the extent that experts predict, the failure of the government to act will have broader ramifications. Daycare providers who find themselves unemployed may never return to their profession. Daycare owners may abandon their businesses for more lucrative ones. Families may opt to keep a parent home to watch the kids. “Absent our collective investment in childcare, there really won’t be an effective community recovery,” warns Lynette Fraga, the CEO of ChildcareAware. “If we aren’t supporting childcare providers, there won’t be childcare to go back to.”

A crucial service for pennies on the dollar

Millions of American parents, who are already struggling to shell out an average of about $10,000 per toddler per year for childcare, may wonder why their daycare center is in such dire financial straits. But the industry as a whole was barely profitable even before the pandemic hit.

Unlike call centers that were able to cut down on building expenses by downsizing or going remote or retail stores that skimped on staffing, daycare facilities went into the pandemic with little fat to trim. State regulations

require that they keep high adult-to-child ratios, maintain ample square footage for space to play and learn, and in some places, hire staff that are trained in early childhood development. These measures are important: Research indicates that early childhood education shapes everything from adult brain volume to reading proficiency. “That has an impact on our future labor force and their economic potential, which ultimately is tied to our country’s economic potential,” explains Katica Roy, a gender economist.

But childcare providers perform this crucial service for pennies on the dollar. The average daycare operator grosses just $48,000 a year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, whereas the standard daycare worker makes just $24,000. Usually these jobs come with little or no paid time off, and no employee-sponsored healthcare. Only 15% of childcare workers receive health insurance sponsored by their employer versus 50% of workers from other occupations, according to a 2015 Economic Policy Institute report. The lack of healthcare benefits is problematic in normal times, as children unwittingly bring their stomach bug or pink eye to their daycares. But during a pandemic, it’s potentially lethal. Daycare providers who make an average of just $11.65 an hour may be unable to risk seeking treatment for any disease, much less COVID-19.

Staffers who need to quarantine or call in sick also pose problems for their bosses. Since most facilities are not currently allowing parents to enter daycare buildings, childcare centers need to have enough staff to bring children inside in the morning and back to their parents outside in the evening. They also need to have enough staff to watch the children throughout the day, but not so many that they can’t keep up with payroll in addition to the added expenses for personal protective equipment, cleaning services and administrative help. Kasten, the childcare director in Greensboro, says 12 out of her 28 staffers were out in one day due to a combination of COVID-related causes and scheduled absences. That creates logistical problems for both Kasten and the working parents who rely on her service. “If I don’t have enough staff to operate safely,” she says, “then I have to close the whole building.”

As COVID-19 restrictions loosen in some states, and parents begin to feel more comfortable sending their children back to daycare, some daycare directors have faced difficulty in hiring back staff that they had to lay off and finding new people to fill vacant roles. Since pay for the average childcare worker is so low, some were making more between their state’s unemployment benefits and the extra $600 per week provided by the CARES Act. In Florida, where Antico operates a center, the most an unemployed worker could have received in July, before expanded unemployment expired, was $875 per week. When unemployed people had to start proving they were looking for work to receive benefits, Antico says she scheduled 17 interviews in one day; only two people showed up.

Not everyone who lost their daycare-based job was getting unemployment insurance, either. Because Kasten’s facility in Greensboro is faith-based, her

staff was not required to pay into the state's unemployment fund, nor were they eligible to receive the state-funded benefits when they were first laid off. She made the tough choice to let her part-time employees go so she could continue paying the full-time ones, even when her center was closed. "If we laid them off in March, I would have hung them out to dry. They wouldn't have had a job, they wouldn't have had unemployment, they would have been screwed," Kasten says. "So we kept them on."

Whether those daycare jobs will last beyond 2020 is an entirely different issue as centers continue to hemorrhage money. According to data provided to TIME by the Center for American Progress (CAP), the costs of providing center-based childcare have leapt an average of 47% since pre-pandemic times. In California, costs have jumped 54%, and in Georgia, they've skyrocketed 115%.

Home-based childcare facilities, which approximately 30% of infants and toddlers attended before the pandemic, are also suffering. Though such facilities usually enroll fewer kids, which some parents may have seen as a benefit during COVID-19, the sector was has been in decline for years. From 2005 to 2017, the number of licensed, home-based child-care businesses dropped 44% according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Ellen Dressman, the director of Frog Hollow Nursery School, a home-based daycare in Berkeley, California that's been in business for more than two decades, may soon shut its doors for good. Only two families were interested in returning in recent weeks—not enough to cover operating costs. If Dressman loses the business, which covered her family's mortgage, they could lose the home that the daycare operated out of, too. "I didn't realize how much the industry really needs public support until now," says Dressman, who's now in her 60s.

"This was an industry that was really struggling before the pandemic," Simon Workman, CAP's director of early childhood policy, says of the profession at large. "If you were struggling to get by before, then the chance of you closing now is pretty high."

"We're in a fast-moving vehicle towards destruction"

Back in Sarasota, Antico is about two months away from pulling the plug on her daycare business. If enrollment numbers don't jump, she says, she won't have much of a choice. "If I get to a place where I don't think that I can pay the next payroll, I'll put it up for sale quickly at an attractive price," she says.

Short of the pandemic ending and enrollment levels surging, there's a glimmer of hope for childcare-center directors like Antico. On the presidential campaign trail, former Democratic candidates including Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand and Elizabeth Warren floated tax breaks and universal child care plans that would have pumped money into daycare centers while also reducing the cost of care for working-class families. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has since called for a combination of tax credits and subsidies that would ensure families earning less than one-and-a-half times the median

income in their state aren't having to spend more than 7% of their incomes on childcare.

There's also been some movement in Congress. The Democrat-led House recently passed a bill appropriating $50 billion toward the Child Care Stabilization Fund to provide grants to childcare providers, but it's unlikely to pass the GOP-controlled Senate. And even if it did, it probably wouldn't be enough to save individual centers that are already underwater. The Center for Law and Social Policy estimates that the industry as a whole will need nearly $10 billion per month to survive the pandemic, according to an April report.

"It is short-term triage, but it may be too late," Whitebook says of the House bill for emergency childcare funds. "We're in a fast-moving vehicle towards destruction of a lot of people's lives, livelihoods, and health. And kids are in that vehicle too."

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