



PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM 2021-22 Legislative Session

Introduction

The Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee) and Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development (Roundtable) promote policies designed to increase the availability of and access to affordable, high quality early care and education programs for all children and their families of Los Angeles County. This public policy platform presents current and emerging policy issues in early care and education that are consistent with the County of Los Angeles State Legislative Agenda for the 2021-22 Legislative Session. The platform delineates each of the County's legislative agenda items in **bold** followed by examples of efforts that may be addressed by proposed legislation and/or the proposed state budget.

Platform Issues

1. Support efforts to enhance the quality of early care and education that set high standards for all services and program types and address the needs of all children, including those with disabilities and other special needs, and their families.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Addressing the early care and education needs of children from birth through age 12, including infants and toddlers, preschool and school age children, and children with disabilities and other special needs up to age 22, and their families.
- Enhancing the quality of centers, family child care homes, and license-exempt care providers.
- Promoting a strengthening families approach to meet the needs of children at risk for abuse, neglect or sexual exploitation or under the supervision of the child welfare system and children of families under the supervision of Probation.
- Integrating early identification and intervention systems that recognize and respond early to young children who may be at risk for disabilities and other special needs.
- Developing policies that encourage collaboration between early care and education programs and locally funded projects and public agencies that foster child and family well-being through the provision of coordinated services.
- Incorporating optimal health promotion policies and procedures as an integral component that contributes to the overall quality of early care and education services and programs.
- Engaging parents as their child's first teachers and partners in promoting their child's optimal growth and development.



2. Support efforts to develop and implement a statewide quality rating and improvement system and a system to adjust reimbursement rates based on demonstrated quality.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Providing parents with clear, concise information on the quality of early care and education settings.
- Fostering the engagement of parents that promotes their child’s optimal healthy growth and development and learning through a variety of modalities including virtual supports as well as in person meetings and may also be comprised of counseling and referrals.
- Incorporating early learning standards that are research-based, culturally responsive to children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, aligned with existing regulatory systems and local quality initiatives, recognize and respond to the individual needs of children in group settings, and attend to families’ needs for comprehensive services.
- Building an infrastructure of technical assistance, financial supports and training, all of which are tied to defined quality standards, to help early care and education programs achieve and maintain high quality services.

3. Support efforts to develop and sustain a well-educated and highly skilled professional workforce prepared to serve the culturally and linguistically diverse child and family populations of Los Angeles County.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Focusing on teachers and other members of the workforce gaining skills and demonstrating competencies in the following areas: forming relationships and interacting with children, how to provide instructional support to children, best practices in working with dual language learners, proficiency in recognition and response to children with disabilities and other special needs, health and nutrition best practices, trauma-informed practices, engaging parents and guardians, and expertise on the spectrum of child development from birth through early adolescence. Workforce practice must be based on established early care and education research.
- Offering coursework and instruction responsive to a multi-lingual, multicultural workforce, including but not limited to providing content in students’ home language and offering classes during non-traditional hours.
- Integrating early childhood mental health consultation into early care and education programs to support the workforce in meeting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of children.
- Expanding early childhood educators’ access to higher education through stipend programs, grant funds and loan forgiveness programs, higher compensation when they attain post-secondary degrees, and benefits (i.e. health insurance and retirement plans).

- Facilitating child development or early childhood education coursework coordination and articulation between the community colleges and California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems.
- Supporting efforts to enhance the quality of the license-exempt care workforce and facilitating connections between license-exempt care and the larger system of early care and education.
- Supporting alignment of teacher requirements under Title 22 with teacher requirements under Title 5 and with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.
- Facilitating support of license-exempt (family, friend, and neighbor) providers serving children subsidized with federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funds.
- Training and supporting teachers and other professionals through distance learning strategies.

4. Support efforts to ensure the health and safety of all children cared for in licensed early care and education facilities as afforded by timely, regular, and frequent on-site monitoring by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD).

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Increasing to, at a minimum, annual inspections of centers and family child care homes.
- Advocating for, at a minimum, annual unannounced inspections of all licensed facilities.
- Providing that CCLD is sufficiently funded, staffed and held accountable to meet the standards, conduct timely reviews of licensing applications and responses to complaints, and provide technical assistance and resources to current and future licensees.
- Ensuring that costs of obtaining and renewing the license (or licenses for programs with multiple sites) is reasonable and not an extraordinary burden to the licensee's cost of doing business.

5. Support efforts to adequately fund high quality early care and education services for all children from low- and moderate-income families.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Expanding access to high quality subsidized services for all eligible children, including infants and toddlers and children with disabilities and other special needs as well as preschool and school age children.
- Increasing levels of reimbursement in the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) and the Regional Market Rate (RMR) to compensate providers for the true cost of high-quality services.

- Streamlining and reforming the dual reimbursement systems into a single, regionalized reimbursement system that incentivizes quality and supports the cost of program operations.
- Prioritizing funds targeted to infants and toddlers to meet the growing demand for high quality services.
- Increasing funds for expansion of high quality full-day, full-year services for all ages.
- Offering tax incentives to businesses to provide or subsidize employee's early care and education services.
- Ensuring that the income ceiling for eligibility for State subsidized care reflects the current State Median Income (SMI), adjusted by region if appropriate.
- Opposing proposals that would reduce subsidized rates based on geographic location.

6. Support the streamlining of California Department of Education and Social Services administrative processes to expand access for low-income families, ensure continuity of care, and promote flexible use of early care and education funding to meet the needs of families.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Allowing administrative efficiencies such as multi-year contracting, grant-based funding, and waivers on program rules and regulations to allow flexibility of services based on community and family needs.
- Maintaining a 12-month annual eligibility redetermination to allow for more stable enrollments for early care and education programs and continuous services for children and their families while exploring implementation of 24-month annual eligibility.
- Ensuring agencies have the capacity to connect with and serve the most vulnerable and the most difficult-to-serve families.
- Maintaining affordable family fees that do not exceed eight percent of gross family income.
- Maintaining part-day State Preschool as a free, comprehensive early care and education program.
- Allowing for various systems that serve vulnerable and low-income children and families to streamline administrative functions and share information in order to facilitate the enrollment of children in subsidized early care and education programs and to participate in joint data collection efforts.

- Expanding the role of the local child care and development planning councils to augment and strengthen the preparation of the needs assessment to capture and report on data relating, but not limited, to workforce, quality and facilities as well as access.

7. Support proposals designed to prevent, detect, investigate and, when appropriate, prosecute fraud in subsidized child care and development programs.

8. Support efforts to ensure that vulnerable children and their families have access to consistent, uninterrupted subsidized early care and education services.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Making sure that California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) families have access to child care and education services, ensure that participating families are afforded the time and information needed to evaluate their child care and education options and make sound choices, and that allow parents to pursue or maintain employment.
- Maintaining 12-months annual eligibility for CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care for welfare-to-work participants or until the participant is transferred to CalWORKs Stage 2 Child Care.
- Promoting, facilitating and supporting consistent and continuous participation of children under the supervision of the child welfare system and Probation and their families in high quality programs that promote healthy child development and support effective parenting.
- Ensuring that all subsidized children – infants and toddlers, preschool age, and school age children – and their families have access to consistent and continuous high quality early care and education services that partner with parents to promote children’s healthy growth and development and prepare them for school and life, and meet the needs of families.
- Addressing the needs of pregnant and parenting teens to ensure their access to high quality early care and education services that support their academic goals, promote positive and effective parenting skills, and contribute to their child’s healthy growth and development.
- Facilitating access to high quality early care and education programs that are responsive to the unique needs of children and families experiencing homelessness.

9. Support efforts to expand the supply of appropriate early care and education services through facility development in communities with a significant shortage of these services.

Such efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Facilitating the cost and technical assistance of effective construction or renovation of early care and education – centers and family child care homes – facilities in communities with unmet needs for these services.

- Integrating early care and education inclusive of centers and family child care homes in specific plans for land use, housing, transportation, economic, workforce, and community development.

10. Support efforts to ensure that children and their families have timely access to early care and education services during a local, state and/or national emergency.

Such efforts may include:

- Increasing and extending funds ongoing to subsidize early care and education services of the essential workforce and at-risk populations.
- Enhancing child care resource and referral services to directly connect families impacted by the emergency with early care and education programs with the capacity to serve them.
- Waiving liability due to damages relating to COVID-19 infection, transmission, or other related conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.