

Wednesday, September 1, 2021 • 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 Microsoft Teams

Centering equity and lifting community voices to build a path for transformative change in our early care and education system.

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1.
12:00 | Welcome and Introductions
▪ Opening Statement and Comments by the Chair | Ernesto Saldaña, Chair |
| 2.
12:10 | COVID-19 Update for Early Care and Education Programs | Michele Sartell, Staff |
| A. Consent Calendar | | |
| 3.
12:20 | Approval of Minutes
▪ June 2, 2021 | Action Items
Ariana Oliva, Vice Chair |
| B. Meeting Matters | | |
| 4.
12:25 | Becoming Acquainted: Reflections on the Theme for 2021-22 | Ernesto Saldaña |
| 5.
1:00 | Role of the Child Care Planning Committee: State Deliverables, Contributing Expertise, Elevating Issues, Responding to COVID-19 | Michele Sartell, Staff |
| 6.
1:15 | Goals for 2021-22 and Structuring Our Work: Strategic Plan Implementation and Needs Assessment 2022
▪ Framing the Work through the Lenses of COVID-19 and Racial Equity | Ariana Oliva, Vice Chair |
| 7.
1:30 | Work Group Updates and Recruitment
▪ Access and Inclusion
▪ Governance
▪ Joint Committee on Legislation
▪ Parents/Consumers
▪ Workforce Pathways LA – Joint Committee on Workforce Systems Improvement | Ariana Oliva
Nicole Lopez
Lisa Wilkin
Ernesto Saldaña
Andrea Fernandez |
| 8.
1:50 | Wrap Up, Announcements, and Public Comment | Ariana Oliva |
| 8.
2:00 | Call to Adjourn | Ernesto Saldaña |

Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 6, 2021
 Virtually via Microsoft Teams

VISION STATEMENT

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

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Child Care Planning Committee

September 1, 2021



COVID-19 UPDATE FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

- Cases of COVID-19 continue to rise
 - Presence of Delta variant of COVID-19 more easily transmissible - vaccines are the best protection against severe outcomes
 - Universal masking required indoors and at large outdoor events
- Guidance for early care and education updated ~
 - All staff, parents and children 24 months and older must wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status
 - Consider also offering gloves for tasks such as serving food, diapering, handling trash, or using cleaning and disinfectant products
 - Continue screening and excluding children and staff with symptoms
 - Practice enhanced cleaning and disinfecting; support handwashing
 - Physical distancing no longer required; best practices suggest:
 - ❖ Maintaining well-defined co-horts
 - ❖ Meals outside, if possible, and create adequate space when eating indoors

ROLE OF CHILD CARE PLANNING COMMITTEE: STATE DELIVERABLES, CONTRIBUTING EXPERTISE, ELEVATING ISSUES, RESPONDING TO COVID-19

ROLE OF PLANNING COMMITTEE: CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

- Conduct Countywide Needs Assessment – every five years
- Development Countywide Plan – every five years
- Prepare LPC Local Funding Priorities - annually
- Facilitate Voluntary, Temporary Transfer of Funds – (bi-) annually
- Collaborate and Foster Partnerships
- Serve as a Forum on Issues



ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2020-21

- Launched theme: Reimagining an Equitable Early Care and Education System
- Developed Tips for Best Practices in Early Care and Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic – Centers and Family Child Care Homes
- Adopted the LPC Local Funding Priorities for FY 2020-21 with Strong Start indicators added to coincide with the zip code priorities for infants and toddlers and preschoolers
- Co-convened Workforce Pathways LA Joint Committee on Workforce Systems improvement with QSLA Workforce Committee to develop the ECE Professional Development Landscape released at a public forum



ROLE DURING COVID-19 - FY 2020-21

- Coordinating an Emergency Response in partnership with Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles)
- Tracking Capacity and Vacancies to Serve Health Care and Other Essential Workers
- Ensuring Access to Financial and Consumable Resources
- Conducting Research on Behalf of the Department of Public Health



MEETING THE ONGOING NEEDS OF THE FIELD DURING COVID-19 AND TRANSITIONING TO RECOVERY

- What are the priorities of the early care and education field?
- What are families saying?
- What is the role of the Child Care Planning Committee going forward?



GOALS FOR 2021-22 AND STRUCTURING OUR WORK: STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2022

A UNIFIED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION – 2020-2025

- Created in partnership with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development
- Unified Vision and Mission

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

MISSION STATEMENT – *Lead, build and strengthen an affordable and high-quality early care and education system for the children and families of Los Angeles County.*



A UNIFIED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION – 2020-2025

- Strategic Priorities
 - **Access** - Increase access to early care and education services for children birth to five years of age and out of school care for children up to age thirteen.
 - **Quality** - Strengthen the quality of early care and education services, especially for children and families most in need.
 - **Workforce** - Improve the compensation and qualifications of the early care and education workforce.
 - **Families and Communities** - Increase engagement of parents, caregivers and communities on early care and education issues.



PRIORITIES FOR 2021-22

- Needs Assessment 2022
 - Examining access to early care and education programs for families with children birth to 12 years old
 - Creating infographics tools for public uses
- Workforce Pathways LA
 - Building upon findings from the Professional Development Landscape Analysis
- Public Policy
 - Work with the Roundtable to elevate priority issues, e.g. increased investments for infant/toddler care, reimbursement rate reform, and ongoing funding for workforce development



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Guidance for Early Childhood Education Providers Requirements and Best Practices

Welcome

On July 17 and 22, the Los Angeles (LA) County Health Officer issued a revised [Health Officer Order](#) requiring the use of face masks in all indoor public settings, including public and private businesses. Given the sustained and substantial community transmission of COVID-19 and the increasing presence of the more easily spread Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus, masking indoors, regardless of vaccination status, is essential to slowing the spread of COVID-19 in the community. The Delta variant spreads more easily than strains of the virus that circulated in LA County in the past.

As the COVID-19 virus continues to spread, the risk is greatest for those who are not fully vaccinated. Based on the unique risk to children under 12, who are not yet eligible for vaccination, and teens, of whom only a minority are fully vaccinated, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has made masking a requirement for everyone indoors, regardless of vaccination status, in childcare, K–12 schools, camps, and other youth settings. This state rule aligns with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH)'s continued requirement for masking in indoor public spaces.

Below is a summary of requirements and best practices for early care and education (ECE) providers to enhance safety and lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission within their ECE settings as they transition to full operations. In addition to this information, please remember:

- ECE providers must comply with applicable [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards](#) (ETS) and the LA County Health Officer Order. Please note that the directives in the LA County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are stricter than the Cal/OSHA ETS.
- ECE providers should review and follow the [general guidance for businesses](#). The best practices for ECE described here are intended to supplement the general guidance.

Follow mask rules for employees, children, and visitors

The current Los Angeles County [Health Officer Order](#), requires all individuals to, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask in all indoor public settings and businesses. This order, and the state's requirement for masking at child-serving sites, applies to children 2 years (24 months) and older, employees, staff, volunteers, parents and all visitors. Some exceptions to the masking requirement still apply as noted below. Based on these rules, ECE providers and sites must:

- **Visitors:** Require all visitors, including parents and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, to [bring and wear masks](#) when they are indoors at their facility. Make masks available to those who arrive without them.
- **Children:** Require all children ages 24 months and older to wear a face mask. Masks may be removed during nap time or when children are eating and drinking.
- **Employees*:** Require all employees, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks when working indoors and in shared vehicles. Masks need not be worn indoors if the employee is alone



Guidance for ECE Providers

in a room or actively eating or drinking at a seated or stationary location. Public Health recommends that all employees who are eating or drinking indoors be spaced at least 6 feet from other persons.

- Employees who work in a setting where they are in close contact with people who may not be or are not fully vaccinated (for example, children younger than 12), should be encouraged to wear a higher level of protection “[double-masking](#)” (wearing a cloth face mask OVER a surgical mask) or a respirator (e.g., N95 or KN95). This is particularly important if the employee is not fully vaccinated and is working in an indoor, in a crowded outdoor setting, or in a shared vehicle.
- Consider also offering gloves for tasks such as serving food, diapering, handling trash, or using cleaning and disinfectant products.

*Some independent contractors are considered as employees under the State Labor Code. For more details, check the California Department of Industrial Relations’ [Independent contractor versus employee](#) webpage.

- See [Los Angeles County Health Officer Order](#) page, and the [Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards](#) page for more information about mask requirements. Please note that the directives in the LA County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are more stringent than the Cal/OSHA ETS.

Screen and respond to cases

- Post [signage](#) to remind everyone who enters your establishment that they should NOT enter if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are under isolation or quarantine orders.
- Exclude any person or isolate any child or staff showing symptoms of a contagious disease or illness until they can be transported home, as required by CDSS Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) and pursuant to [Title 22 in CCR sections 101216\(h\), 101226.1\(a\)\(1\) and 102417\(e\)](#).
 - Isolate children who begin to have COVID-19 symptoms while in care, from other children and staff.
 - Ensure that isolated children continue to receive adequate supervision and that the health of the child is continually observed throughout the day according to licensing requirements.
- Follow public health guidelines for [quarantine](#) or [isolation](#) if an individual who resides in a family childcare home is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- ECE providers must notify LA County DPH officials, CCLD staff, and families of any confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Follow the [COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan Guidance in Early Care and Education Sites](#) for reporting COVID-19 cases to DPH.
 - Individual cases (1 case) should be reported within 1 business day.

Guidance for ECE Providers

- Clusters of 3 or more cases occurring within 14 days should be reported immediately to DPH. Report outbreaks to the CDSS Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) through their local Regional Office as required pursuant to [Title 22, CCR section 101212\(d\)](#).
- Family childcare homes must report a communicable disease outbreak, when determined by the local health authority, to CCLD through their local Regional Office pursuant to [Title 22, CCR section 102416.2\(c\)\(3\)](#).
- Refer to the [ECE COVID-19 Toolkit](#) for additional information on reporting and managing infections and exposures in the workplace.

Consider maintaining physical distancing and stable groups

Although physical distancing is no longer required at ECE sites, it is an additional tool for infection control that can be used at ECE sites to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If possible, consider implementing the following measures:

- **Maintain well defined cohorts.** Early care and education settings typically have a stable group model with the same groups of staff and children together each day. ECE providers should consider steps to maintain a clear separation between groups throughout the day. If feasible, this can help reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread if a child or staff person comes to the site infected.
- **Take steps to make meals safer:**
 - For employees, staff, and volunteers, maintain an outdoor break area where employees can take their breaks. For indoor break areas, keep tables 6 feet apart and post occupancy limits to reduce the risk of crowding.
 - For children, consider having meals outdoors if space and weather permit. When eating indoors, consider moving tables to spread children out or use name cards to provide adequate spacing between children.
- **Consider [use of barriers](#)** and partitions between cubicles to protect staff who are not fully vaccinated and have frequent close contact with other employees or visitors.

Improve ventilation

- Make sure your building's HVAC system is in good, working order.
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.
- Consider how to safely bring fresh air into the facility. When weather and working conditions allow, increase fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Consider using child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows; always position window fans to blow air outward, not inward.
- Decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor airflow cannot be increased.
- If your business utilizes transport vehicles, such as buses or vans, it is recommended to open windows to increase outdoor airflow when it is safe to do so and weather permitting.

Guidance for ECE Providers

- See CDPH [Interim guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#) and CDC [Ventilation in Schools and Child Care Programs](#) page.

Clean and disinfect

Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can reduce the risk of infection. Train and monitor staff to follow infection control practices related to requirements for cleaning and disinfection, housekeeping and sanitation principles listed below:

- Follow cleaning and disinfection requirements as laid out in [CCR sections 101216\(e\)\(2\), 102416\(c\), 101238\(a\)](#) and [102417\(b\)](#).
- Laundry, such as clothing and bedding, should be washed using the appropriate hot water setting and allow items to dry completely. If handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick, wear gloves and a mask.
- When choosing cleaning products, consider using those approved for use against COVID-19 on the [EPA-approved list "N"](#) and follow product instructions for use.
- The [Healthy Schools Act](#) requires that anyone using disinfectants at child care centers complete annual California Department of Pesticide Regulation-approved training. Online training can be found by going to the [California School & Child Care Integrated Pest Management](#) website. Note: This does not apply to family child care homes.
- For more information about cleaning and disinfection, see CDC guidance on [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).

Encourage vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines are [safe and effective](#) and are the best way to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace and in the community. COVID-19 vaccine is [widely available](#) in every community.

- Provide paid time off for vaccination. Employers with 26 or more employees must provide covered employees paid time off to attend vaccine appointments or if they are unable to work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms. For more information, see the [2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave](#) webpage.
- Consider offering a [vaccination clinic](#) at your workplace to make it more convenient for your employees to get vaccinated. Consider opportunities to incentivize your employees to get vaccinated or to make it easier to get vaccinated. This might include offering rewards such as additional paid time off or cash bonus payments, and/or policies that are more relaxed for employees who are [fully vaccinated](#) against COVID-19.

Support handwashing

- Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry and outside communal bathrooms with signage promoting use. Be sure that hand sanitizer is out of the reach of children. Supervise children under the age of 6 when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol or contact with eyes.
- Encourage frequent handwashing among children and staff.

Guidance for ECE Providers

- See the CDC guidance, [When and How to Wash your Hands](#).

Communicate

- Post [signage](#) so that visitors who are entering your building are aware of policies, including the requirement for all visitors, employees and children over 24 months to wear a face mask while indoors.
- Update your parent manual and share any new policies with parents.
- Use your online platforms to communicate your COVID-19 safety policies to the public.

Coping with stress

As the world continues to combat COVID-19, many are facing challenges that can be stressful for both adults and children. Many of us and many of the families we serve may feel more concerned, worried, and fearful for our own health and the health of our loved ones. It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you, a family you serve or someone else you know is having a hard time coping, help is available 24/7 by calling the LA County Department of Mental Health's Helpline 1-800-854-7771. Help is also available via a text that says "LA" to 741741 or simply by calling the family physician of the person in need of support. The webpage <http://dmh.lacounty.gov/resources> includes tips to help manage stress and improve your emotional health as well as free access Headspace Plus – for mindfulness and meditation resources.

Below are a few resources and recommendations to help in dealing with stress:

- California's playbook on [Stress Relief during COVID-19](#) provides guidance on how to notice stress in kids and outlines tools and strategies on how to reduce stress for children and adults.
- Promote healthy nutrition, sleep, and physical activity habits and self-care.
- Discuss and share stress reduction strategies with colleagues and families.
- Encourage staff and children to talk with people they trust about their concerns and feelings.
- Communicate openly and often with staff, children, and families about mental health support services available in the community, including if mental health consultation is available to the program.
- Consider posting signage for [CalHOPE](#) and the national distress hotline: 1-800-985-5990, or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746.
- Encourage staff to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#) if they are [feeling overwhelmed with emotions](#) such as sadness, depression, or anxiety; or call 911 if they feel like they want to harm themselves or others.

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



POLICY • PLANNING • PRACTICE

Meeting Minutes – June 2, 2021

Members in Attendance (31)				
Parents	ECE Program	Community Agency	Public Agencies	Discretionary
Alejandra Berrio	Norma Amezcua	Samitha Givens	Eileen Carrillo-Lau	Christina Acosta
Jessa Costanzo for Jessica Chang	Rocio Bach	Ariana Oliva	Melita Ferguson	Kevin Dieterle
Cathy Coddington	Andrea Fernandez	Kathy Schreiner	Robert Beck for Nora Garcia-Rosales	La Tanga Hardy
Crystal Jones	Angela Gray	Monica Hernandez for Edilma Serna	Ana Lopez	Toni Isaacs
Ernesto Saldaña	Nicole Lopez	Veronica Torres	Osvaldo Colin for Maria Mora	Kelly O'Connell <i>1st Supervisorial District</i>
	JoAnn Shalhoub-Mejia		Gabriel Muñoz	Sarah Soriano <i>4th Supervisorial District</i>
	Lisa Wilkin		Cherise Roper	Julie Taren <i>3rd Supervisorial District</i>

Guests and Alternates: Alejandran Albarran Moses – City of Long Beach, Ranae Amezcua – Alternate for Cheri Roper, Linda Anderson – Inglewood Unified School District, Ismat Arastu – Montessori Academy of West Covina, Fran Chasen – Alternate for Julie Taren, Saudah Collins, M.Ed. – Richland County School District Two in South Carolina, Jennifer Cowan – Connections for Children, Leann Drogin, Mary Earick, Ph.D. – New School of Education Dean at Highlands, Humberto Estratalán – Alternate for Ariana Oliva, Teresa Figueras – Alternate for Gabriel Muñoz, Sharon Greene – CA Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing Division, Jessica Guerra – Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, Losmeiya Huang – The Growing Place, Kathy Jarvey – Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, Marcella McKnight – Early Learning Alliance/Shared Services, Giselle Navarro-Cruz – Alternate for La Tanga Hardy, Terry Ogawa – Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, Jenny Ortiz – Montessori Academy of West Covina, Ghada Ponce – Montessori Academy of West Covina, Cynthia Renteria – Child Care Resource Center, Kelly Reynolds – Early Edge California, Joyce Robinson – Opportunities Exchange, Gina Rodriguez – Alternate for Kevin Dieterle, Ancelma Sanchez – Alternate for Lisa Wilkin, Ann Saneto – Catalyst Kids, Fiona Stewart – Alternate for Christina Acosta, and Jacqueline Torres – Alternate for Nicole Lopez

Staff: Michele Sartell and Debra Colman

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. by Julie Taren, Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee). She opened the meeting by reading the standardized statement for conducting the virtual meeting. Julie invited Planning Committee members Cathy Coddington and Norma Amezcua to read the vision and mission statements.

Given that this was her last meeting to facilitate as Chair, Julie shared her reflections and expressed appreciation to everyone for the honor of being in service to the Planning Committee. Her comments included a wrap up of the last two years that began with a focus on the Unified Strategic Plan in partnership with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development (Roundtable) and the

development of the implementation plan. She encouraged the meeting participants to uphold the vision and mission in unity with the Roundtable as the focus of efforts shift from responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to implementation. Julie commented on her first year as chair when the theme was focused on lifting leadership and suggested the importance of new voices and using technology to elevate all voices to share knowledge and skills. Julie also reflected on the current theme of the Planning Committee, 'Reimagining an Equitable Early Care and Education System for Providers and Families', that prompted deep conversations on racial disparities and social justice and confirmed the Planning Committee's commitment to equity as a lens for all of its work. Julie also mentioned many of the accomplishments of the Planning Committee throughout the two years as the foundation for the ongoing work on behalf of the children and families of our communities and the programs that serve them.

Ernesto Saldaña, Vice Chair, thanked Julie for her leadership and relayed the many words of gratitude for her service in the chat feature. He noted her work and the legacy she leaves in elevating the equity conversations and advocating on behalf of communities of color.

A. CONSENT CALENDAR

2. Approval of Minutes – May 5, 2021

Ernesto Saldaña, Vice Chair, reviewed the minutes from May 5, 2021 and asked for a motion to approve. Andrea Fernandez made the motion to approve the minutes; Norma Amezcua seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without objection.

B. MEETING MATTERS

3. COVID-19 Early Care and Education: Update

Debra Colman, Director of the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE), introduced her presentation with thoughts of optimism as summer approaches. Debra reported that Los Angeles County remains on the path to recovery with low and stable metrics. Among the data points she shared, more than half of the County's population has received at least the first dose of the vaccine. She noted that communities with fewer health resources have been most impacted with higher rates of COVID-19 and hospitalizations among Black residents. Efforts are underway to reach the younger populations with vaccines and incentives are now key to increasing the vaccination rates.

With respect to early care and education, Debra relayed that the co-hort size limitation has been lifted for all licensed programs if six feet of physical distancing can be maintained. She added that changes to the COVID-19 protocols overall are expected for release by the State on June 15th. In response to a question, Debra answered the mask mandate in early care and education programs is still required as they are workplaces. As such parents may enter the program if they are wearing a mask and maintaining physical distancing.

4. Child Care Planning Committee Membership – FY 2021-22

Nicole Lopez, Co-chair of the Governance Work Group with JoAnn Shalhoub-Mejia, referred to the meeting packet for the membership slate listing the proposed members by category – parents/consumers, child care providers, community agencies, public agencies and discretionary – followed by the Certification Statement Regarding Composition of LPC Membership that will be filed with the California Department of Social Services listing the names of the alternates as well as the members. The Governance Work Group reviewed the membership applications and prepared the slate in early May.

Nicole relayed that more applications were received than membership openings; in one case, an applicant was matched with a prospective member to serve as their alternate. Nicole also noted that an appointment by Supervisor Holly Mitchell to represent Supervisorial District 2 is pending. *Shortly after the meeting, Supervisor Mitchell's office notified the OAECE of her appointments to the Planning Committee as follows: Jessica Guerra as member and Patrick MacFarlane as her alternate.*

Kelly O'Connell made the motion to approve the Child Care Planning Committee membership slate for FY 2021-22; Alejandra Berrio seconded the motion. The membership slate was approved unanimously.

Next, Nicole noted that Julie and Ernesto will reach their term limits in their respective positions this year. She presented the Governance Work Group's nomination for Ernesto Saldaña to serve as Chair and Ariana Oliva to serve as Vice Chair for FY 2021-22. She suggested that Ernesto would provide continuity in leadership by transiting from Vice Chair to Chair and Ariana would be new to the position as someone who has demonstrated leadership as Co-chair of the Access and Inclusion Work Group, including their work in preparing and presenting the LPC Local Funding Priorities. Nominations were then opened to the floor. There were no nominations from the floor.

Sarah Soriano made the motion to approve the Governance Work Group's nomination of Ernesto Saldaña as Chair and Ariana Oliva as Vice Chair for FY 2021-22; Andrea Fernandez seconded the motion. The leadership slate was approved unanimously.

Nicole concluded by saying that notices will be sent to new as well as returning members to welcome them to the Planning Committee and invite them to an orientation prior to the first meeting of FY 2021-22 scheduled for September 1st. Lastly, she thanked Julie and Ernesto on behalf of the Planning Committee for their leadership, particularly through the shift to meet and work remotely during the pandemic and ensuring that focus was maintained on achieving the deliverables of the Planning Committee as required by the California Department of Education while providing space for engaging discussions on equity and racial justice.

5. Towards Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: Addressing Dominant Racial Patterns of In-group Messaging in Early Childhood Classrooms

Ernesto reflected on the first time he heard Dr. Mary Earick, Ph.D., New School of Education Dean at Highlands present at a conference in New York. He was touched by her comments regarding ensuring that each child receives the supports they need based in culture and language to promote their optimal development, something he noted was not present when he was a child. He then introduced Dr. Earick and Ms. Saudah Collins, M.Ed. of Richland County School District Two located in South Carolina who were invited due to their groundbreaking work to address race and racial patterns that shape identity that inform the pedagogy for intentional classroom practices. Ernesto referred to their bios included in the meeting packet.

Dr. Earick relayed her history as a family child care provider for 10 years, a business she started as a single mother of her young son at the time. When her son entered kindergarten, she heightened her focus on messaging and communications that promote children's positive identifies, which she transitioned to a focus on early childhood research, adult learning and therefore re-entered the education system to pursue a doctorate. She then asked Ms. Collins to talk about her work as a teacher, applying practices to promote each child's positive identity.

As Ms. Collins directed meeting participants to her slide deck, she reflected on Amanda Gorman's poetry and work with PBS Kids, some of which she has adapted in her classroom. Ms. Collins is a

second-grade teacher in South Carolina and teaches early childhood classes in cognitive development, math and science. Her work builds on embracing families as their children's first teachers prior to birth and beyond. Much of her work in the classroom is ensuring that the visuals and the materials reflect the diversity of the children and their families with opportunities for integration of each child's story into the classroom activities and lessons. Children are encouraged to share items from their home and countries of origin that shape who they are and in the ways they express themselves. She emphasized that representation that allows children and families to see themselves and their diversity, a critical component of her work. In summary, Ms. Collins wants each child to feel connected and loved.

Dr. Earick referenced her slide deck that provided the research behind the intentional approach to increasing connectedness among children and learning from their experiences. She raised the question, what is racially integrated teaching, and offered some practical strategies. She mentioned the importance of messaging that are represented in the choices of books available to the children in the setting, images displayed throughout the in the classroom/setting, and the importance of words when speaking with children beginning in infancy. She commented that by age 8 a child identity consistency settles in, which means that adults have an impact on children's later success. Dr. Earick continued her presentation by commenting on the disparities of children within the education systems, including access to schools and images that are reflective of their culture and language.

Ernesto and Julie thanked Ms. Collins and Dr. Earick, who both agreed to share additional resources and possibly return on a future date with more time on the agenda for a deeper conversation.

6. With Gratitude: Final Notes for 2020-21

Michele, Ernesto, and Julie briefly noted the work of the membership throughout this past year that exceeded the barriers presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and meeting virtually. They referenced the list of accomplishments that was included in the meeting packet. Ernesto added his appreciation for the rich and powerful conversations and storytelling by many of the members in the various meetings. His hope and plan in the coming year is to continue building connections both in the monthly meetings and beyond.

7. Announcements and Public Comment

Ernesto reminded members, alternates, and guests to send their announcements to Michele for distribution via e-mail. He then invited public comment.

- Andrea Fernandez announced that the Child Care Planning Committee, in partnership with Quality Start Los Angeles and the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, will be hosting a virtual forum entitled "Learning from Today, Preparing for Tomorrow: An Early Care and Education Professional Development Landscape Analysis for Los Angeles County" on Monday, June 28, 2021 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Invitations will be sent soon. The forum will include the presentation of the landscape report by Toni Isaacs and Fiona Stewart following opening remarks by Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell. Karla Pleitéz Howell of Advancement Project California will moderate a panel comprised of a center director, a family child care provider, a philanthropic representative, and a person representative on behalf of institutions of higher education.

8. Adjournment

Julie thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and the presentations.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

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07/30/2020

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A Powerful Invitation to Reimagine Our Work

Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently.
Maya Angelou

Please read these powerful words by Kristie Norwood, a member of the Reimagining Our Work Conveners Group. Then, use the link following to join the initiative and/or share with colleagues.

Kristie Norwood
My Truth 7/24/2020

I just left one of the best and most important conversations in my lifetime. I have had all types of conversations. I have spoken with Dick Gregory and Cornel West. I have talked to my grandmother and mother about sharecropping in the South. I have had confrontational conversations. I have yelled, scream, laughed and cried. But today, I have been transformed.

Today, we had our weekly call for the Reimagining Our Work (ROW) Initiative Conveners. We had checked in with each other, laughed heartily and focused ourselves through a story about a little boy that made his friends laugh over and over through his intentional action of dropping a toy log from a toy moose's head. As we moved into our agenda, we started with the recent updates on the ROW Initiative sign up. One of our conveners and usual meeting facilitator Pam said, "We have 111 cohort members. That's exciting." Margie replied, "I think we need to say out loud that all of them are white. Maybe we don't need to proceed until we can really draw in people of color." I sat with that for a minute. My reaction was not a quick one. It built like the flames of an open fire. 111 people volunteered to be a part of the new opportunity to reimagine the field of early childhood education and craft a new vision for where we will be in the next 20 years. An opportunity to really use our voices to say, "We do not want to return to the normal that we have lived for the last 20 years. We want to move forward into something new!" and out of 111 people, there was not one person of color, not one Black person? How can this be, when the field of early childhood is built on the labor of women of color? What does that mean?

After reviewing the list again, we found that there were a hand-full of people of color and an even smaller section of those that identified as Black that had signed up. I am grateful for their act of courage. However, my initial question remained.

What does it mean? Why was there not an overwhelming response? On our call, we started to wrestle with this thought and the flood gates opened. I started to talk but the words came from my heart and not my head. I listened to Nadiyah Taylor bring up the notion of "centering Blackness" many weeks prior. Since she said that, it has stayed with me. It is like a fragrance that is strong at first, then becomes more subtle, but never fully leaves. The idea has settled in my heart and I realize that as a Black woman, I do not even know what it means to "center Blackness." My life has never been lived with my Blackness in the center of anything. At home, we are all Black. We live, love and function without giving thought to Blackness.

Everywhere else, the intention is on assimilation. How can I fit? How can I be part of the team? How can I contribute? But centering Blackness is the intentional thought of making Blackness the point. It is the intention that directs action that raises Blackness in every conversation and every platform, focusing on our culture, our desires, our progress, our history, and our future. I realized that I have never centered Blackness in my life. Yet, I find that in my heart, it is what I have longed for.

Initially, hearing that no Black people signed up for this initiative, bubbled up a well of suppressed anguish that I did not even know existed. Ever since 1619, when we were stolen from our land and forcibly brought to this country and violently subjugated into slavery, we have not had spaces to determine our own destiny. As a people, we have not been in position to discuss, plan and execute our futures. For sure, there were some glimpses of light in our history. There was Reconstruction Era, Black Wall Street, Rosewood and The Black Panther Party; where Black people had and executed some power over our destinies. These instances were short lived and led to years of harsher punishments. Knowing our history of striving for self-determination in this country, I wonder if many Black people felt that the invitation to join was a “set up”. I know that may be hard to think about. But in this country’s history, every time the Black community begins to engage in self-determination we are met with violence. What happens after years of organizing, planning, and strategizing, implementing those strategies and seeing success? Violence! We must ask ourselves, what happens to the soul of a people that lives with their dreams deferred? In *Harlem*, Langston Hughes wrote: “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore—And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?”

As I reflect, if I am honest, I can hear the questions from colleagues of color as they rise. The years of underlying distrust, that we can ever sit at a table and be seen, heard, and valued in our humanity. That our ideas about our profession, our children and our families will matter and make a difference. The questions sound like:

Will they ask me to be involved, get my hopes up and pull the rug from under me? Will I be worse off from participating? Is sharing my voice and including my ideas even possible?

I also know that living in this country as a Black woman is exhausting! I only have so much energy for the day. Many times, I work in a deficit. But I keep pressing and I have found spaces that replenish me so that I can have energy stored. I need that energy store to feed me when I am in spaces that take everything I have and do not give anything in return. This space that I exist in where I contribute from my Blackness, but my Blackness is not nourished. This concept of double consciousness or “twoness” as W.E.B. DuBois stated, is an ever-present element to the Black person’s life in this country. In *The Souls of Black Folks*, W.E. B. DuBois wrote: “One ever feels his two-ness, --an American, a Negro...two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” Then I thought about all the Black people that may have read the invitation to the ROW Initiative and did not have the energy to respond. The ones that are thinking, that sounds great, but I could not. I do not have the energy to give to one more thing; especially, to talk. Who has time for that? I understand the fatigue. I understand the hollow in your soul when hope has been deferred on so many fronts. But I also understand the words of Frederick Douglass, “Power concedes nothing without demand.” This invitation, the responses, the lack of responses and the emotions are all about power.

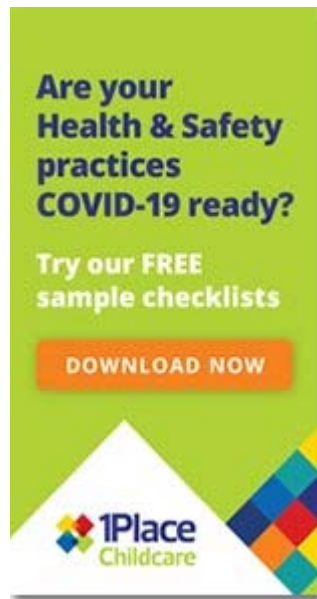
Why power? It is about power because power is all about access. Power creates and controls access. The ROW Initiative is focusing on redefining power roles and structures. Equity and social justice are part of our guiding principles. When we say we want all voices at the table, we mean it. Our ROW Conveners are made up of 3 Black Women, 1 Latina and 4 White women. Our voices are equally heard and valued, and we have made a commitment to learn from and with each other. Look, I get it. It looks like a group of white women that mixed in some diversity for credibility. I promise you; it is not! I am nobody's token and I would not be in this space if I did not believe it was transformative. I know that building this initiative is about building trust. It is about being able to find yourself in a community where you can bring your authentic self. It is about being someplace where you are investing your time, not wasting it. I promise you; this is the place.

Early in my career, it was a white woman that gave me access in the field. She opened the doors for me and made space for me at different tables. She brought me along and put me on different platforms. It was a Black teacher that gave me skill, training, and courage to walk through those doors, sit at those tables and stand on those platforms. If I am honest, my entire career has been this way. There was always someone white that gave me access and a person of color that encouraged me and nurtured me and built my skill. I was asked by Chris, another one of our Conveners, "how do we lay the planks on this bridge of trust?" I say we need both the white ally and the person of color. We need the access and the courage to go through the door. Simply put, in this journey of reimagining we need each other. But we need to deconstruct and reconstruct what we look like when we are together. What would the table look like if power were not the construct?

I wrote a chapter in *Reflecting Children's Lives* that came from a little self-published book I wrote about a little boy named Endrick. Endrick wanted to build a castle. He was fascinated with castles. I was doing my student teaching and I observed Endrick building castles in the block area every day for two weeks. I focused my intention on supporting Endrick. For one year we went through the process of him making his dreams a reality. He researched castles, drew them, and created Styrofoam models. Finally, he built a castle that was placed on the playground. That castle was there many, many years after Endrick left the center. I got to be a part of supporting this human being in having a vision, making plans, and then executing those plans. He literally made his dreams come true. And his dream benefitted so many others that got to play in that castle for years. So now, I ask the question; What if you are Endrick? Or, what if you are me? What if you can find someone that will listen to your dreams and support you in making them real? Or what if you are a person that can give their support to another? What if you can really make your dreams come true? Carlina Rinaldi said, "What could they do if...you are the if." You are the if! What can early childhood education be if? What can classrooms be if? What can teacher preparation be if? What can compensation in the field be if? What can children's experiences be if? What if you and your action are the if?

It is my hope that we all will join in this important reimagining work. We need each other. We need people of all colors, genders, and backgrounds in this work. As we talked on our ROW conveners' call, we came to a defining statement. We declared: Reimagining requires a reckoning with ourselves and our communities that ultimately leads to repair. However, to commit to and take this journey, we must engage in resistance. The courage to engage in honest and hopeful discourse is resistance. The courage to upset equations of power and reimagine our field is resistance. And that resistance leads to something new that will transform our lives and generations to come. This is an open invitation. Come...and let's transform this field and our lives!

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County of Los Angeles

A Unified Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education

2020
-
2025





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January 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The early care and education system in Los Angeles County supports the optimal development of children aged birth to five years old, as well as children up to age 13 in before and after school programs. These services are critical to our economy, supporting parents and caregivers while they work, and preparing children for kindergarten entry with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in school and life.

Under the leadership of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH), the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) convened the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development (Roundtable) and the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee) to lead a collaborative planning process involving nearly 100 stakeholders. The result of this effort is the County's first unified plan for early care and education, which will guide the work of the OAECE, the Roundtable, and the Planning Committee under one vision, one mission, and with a single unified voice.

We are excited to present the 2020-2025 County of Los Angeles Unified Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education. The plan outlines four strategic priorities:

- **Access** - Increase access to early care and education services for children birth to five years of age and out of school care for children up to age thirteen.
- **Quality** - Strengthen the quality of early care and education services, especially for children and families most in need.
- **Workforce** - Improve the compensation and qualifications of the early care and education workforce.
- **Families and Communities** - Increase engagement of parents, caregivers and communities on early care and education issues.

Making progress on these strategic priorities will require continued collaboration among all aspects of the early care and education system as well as new partnerships with non-traditional partners and allies. By joining forces under this unified plan, we can achieve the vision that children are healthy, thriving and have equitable opportunities to achieve optimal development and succeed in life.



Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director
Los Angeles County Department
to Public Health



Jackie Majors, Chair
Policy Roundtable for Child Care
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Debra Colman, Director
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Julie Taren, Chair
Child Care Planning Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education is deeply grateful to the partners and community members who contributed their time, energy and expertise to the development of this plan. Key among these were members of the Child Care Planning Committee and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development who came together as the Strategic Planning Workgroup¹ to review and synthesize input from multiple sources as the basis for this plan. This work laid the foundation for unified leadership to improve early care and education for children across Los Angeles County.

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¹ Strategic Planning Workgroup members are denoted by *.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early care and education can be a cornerstone for a child's healthy development and future well-being. So they can thrive, all children deserve access to high-quality early learning environments to support their growth and development. Quality early care and education programs offer nurturing and stimulating environments that contribute to a child's optimal physical, social-emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development. For working families, child care is also an essential resource that enables parents and caregivers to remain in the workforce. To ensure that all children have access to high-quality early care and education, the Los Angeles County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE), under the leadership of the Department of Public Health (DPH) and in partnership with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development (Roundtable) and the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee), presents the County of Los Angeles Unified Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education – 2020-2025 (the Plan).

A Unified Approach

Serving approximately 650,000 Los Angeles children under age 5, the early care and education system is a complex and disconnected matrix of services. Recently, support for our youngest children has risen as a priority issue with elevated political attention and increased public investment. This critical moment in time provides an opportunity to shift how early care and education is approached in Los Angeles County. The Plan was developed through

an innovative collaborative process involving almost 100 stakeholders including OAECE staff, Roundtable members, and Planning Committee members. The Plan documents shifts in the early care and education landscape, the history of each of three entities that developed the Plan, and the twelve-month process that brought unique perspectives together under a common vision. The Plan also uplifts OAECE as the Los Angeles County early care and education office and the transformative role it can serve as an educator, convener, data manager, strategist and advocate.

Strategic Priorities

As a north star for Los Angeles County early care and education efforts, the Plan offers a guiding framework for the OAECE, Roundtable, Planning Committee, and other stakeholders with four focus strategic areas: 1) access to early care and education, 2) early care and education quality, 3) early care and education workforce supports, and 4) family and community engagement in early care and education issues.

Implementation Planning

The four strategic priorities define a direction for early care and education systems and the Plan provides a starting place for collaborative work. A full implementation framework identifying specific activities in each of the four strategic areas, and the assumptions, tasks, roles, timeline, and resources required to achieve them will be completed by June 2020.



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Early care and education programs support the care and development of children birth to five years old, as well as out of school care for children to age 12. Program providers may include school districts, early care and education centers, licensed family child care homes, and family, friends, and neighbors who provide care. Across Los Angeles County, many families struggle to find services for their children that are high-quality and affordable. The average annual cost of child care is \$10,303 per preschooler in center-based care and \$8,579 per preschooler in family child care². During the recession, early care and education programs subsidized by the State of California for low-income families experienced budget reductions totaling \$1.5 billion³ impacting families with the greatest need. Over the past few years, modest increases have restored some funds to the subsidized system, although a substantial gap between funding and need remains.

State and Local Priorities

Most recently, attention at state and local levels to the importance of the early years has generated new public investments. Contributing to this momentum, the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education released its final report in April 2019 with a list of recommendations that called for significant funding and systems change. The 2019-2020 California Budget includes \$5 million for a Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, \$245 million for grants to child care and preschool providers for facilities expansions, and \$195 million for early learning and care workforce development grants.

Locally, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) lobbied successfully for State investment in the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Children in Foster Care. The Board also instructed the Chief Executive Office – Homeless Initiative to identify strategies to connect families experiencing homelessness with early care and education services and mandated the Chief Executive Office, in consultation with the Roundtable and the OAECE, to identify county-owned properties that could provide space for early care and education programming. Further local support is the identification of access to quality early care and education as a critical strategy for the prevention of child abuse and neglect as highlighted in the LA County's Office for Child

Protection's (OCP) *Countywide Child Protection Strategic Plan – 2016-21*⁴.

In Los Angeles County, responsibility for harnessing this new energy to create an early care and education system that meets child and family needs rests with three entities, the Planning Committee, the Roundtable and the OAECE housed within the DPH Health Promotion Bureau.

Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education

In 2000, the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care (OCC), the predecessor of the OAECE, was established under the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to address the child care needs of Los Angeles County employees and to staff a state-mandated local child care and development planning council (Planning Committee). Soon after the establishment of the Planning Committee, the Board called for the founding of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development to focus on early care and education policy and systems improvement. Management of both the Planning Committee and the Roundtable were assigned to OCC. In 2001, the role of the OCC expanded to workforce professional development with the Investing in the Early Educators Stipend Program, followed by the California Transitional Kindergarten Stipend Program (CTKSP). OCC developed and implemented the Steps to Excellence Program (STEP), a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) in 2007. Although OCC no longer leads a QRIS program, it continues to influence quality practices as a part of Quality Start Los Angeles. OCC changed its name to OAECE in 2016 and transitioned to DPH in 2018. The move to DPH reflected recognition of the vital role that early care and education plays in child development, family well-being and community health.

² Child Care Planning Committee. *The State of Early Care and Education in Los Angeles County – Los Angeles County: Child Care Planning Committee 2017 Needs Assessment Executive Summary*. March 2017.

³ California Budget Project. (2012). *Falling Behind: The Impact of the Great Recession and the Budget Crisis on California's Women and Their Families*.

⁴ See ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OCP/PDF/OCP%20Strategic%20Plan%20and%20Progress%20Updates/2016-10-20%20OCP%20Strategic%20Plan%202016-2021.pdf?ver=2018-10-23-170532-757.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Child Care Planning Committee

The Child Care Planning Committee is Los Angeles County's state mandated Local Child Care and Development Planning Council (LPC) funded by the California Department of Education (CDE). Established as the County's LPC in 1991, the Child Care Planning Committee is staffed by OAECE and is composed of 50 members including parents/consumers, early educators, board appointees and representatives of public agencies, community-based organizations, higher education, and resource and referral agencies. The State requires the Planning Committee to conduct county-wide planning to address access to quality, affordable early care and education.



Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development

The Roundtable, established in 2000, is a Board of Supervisors appointed body composed of 25 community leaders in early childhood, education, business, economics, and research and representatives of County Departments including Child and Family Services, Mental Health, Probation, Public Health, Public Social Services, and Parks and Recreation. The Roundtable is staffed by OAECE and charged with developing policy recommendations for elevation to the Board of Supervisors, advising County departments on early care and education programs, and identifying strategies to secure, coordinate, and maximize funding for high quality services.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning was launched in the fall of 2018 by the OAECE in partnership with the Planning Committee and the Roundtable. Funding from First 5 LA supported the Center for Nonprofit Management to facilitate the planning process. The proposal to bring these entities together to develop a unified plan demonstrates a recognition across all participating bodies that working together is a tremendous step toward a more cohesive system in Los Angeles County.

Values and Guidelines

Early in their work together, the three participant entities articulated a set of values to inform the planning process. They agreed that the process would 1) embrace a deliberate focus on equity, 2) inspire collaboration and partnerships with community stakeholders and meaningful engagement of authentic family and parent voices, 3) be trauma-informed, 4) promote policy and systems change, and 5) use data to inform planning and advocacy. These values informed the development of a set of guidelines that were intentionally aligned with the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education's approved principles. The guidelines served as a framework for the identification of strategic priority

areas and strategies. These guidelines focus on access, equity, quality, workforce, families, financing, targeted investments, data and advocacy. Going forward, the guidelines will be used to evaluate potential tactics and the crafting of implementation activities. To learn more about the guidelines, please see Appendix A.

One Vision, One Mission

The strategic planning process entailed review of the intersecting mission statements of the OAECE, Planning Committee, and Roundtable to arrive at the following united vision and mission statements:

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.

OFFICE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AS A CHANGE AGENT

With the shared vision and mission as the foundation, the OAECE, Roundtable and Planning Committee will implement the 2020-2025 strategic plan through a united effort managed by OAECE. As the Los Angeles County early care and education office, OAECE has a unique mandate to promote systems change through the advancement of new policy and program initiatives, based on the work of its collaborating partners. The strategic plan highlights the mandate of OAECE as an agent of policy and systems change through five primary roles.

Educator: It is the job of OAECE to inform partners, advise key stakeholders and publicly promote the importance of quality early care and education to support the well-being of children, strengthen families and help communities thrive.

Convener: The plan will require OAECE to convene and nurture committees, commissions and task forces to act as agents of change in early care and education policy and systems planning.

Data Manager: Reflecting the shared value noted above, it will be the task of OAECE to gather, organize, manage, and disseminate data related to family needs, system capacity, program quality and child and family outcomes to shape effective strategies and strengthen early childhood systems.

Strategist: Drawing on data, OAECE will be called upon to conceptualize, design, and implement innovative programmatic, policy, and systems change strategies.

Advocate: To assure implementation of system improvements, OAECE will need to mobilize and support advocacy for public policies (legislative and administrative) that build and strengthen the early care and education system in Los Angeles County.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The 2020–2025 strategic priorities will guide collective efforts of the OAECE, Roundtable, and Planning Committee over the next five years. Grounded in the Planning Committee’s 2017 needs assessment entitled *The State of Early Care and Education in Los Angeles County*,⁵ the priorities focus on 1) access to early care and education, 2) early care and education quality, 3) early care and education workforce supports, and 4) family and community engagement on early care and education issues. The paragraphs that follow provide a brief preview of each of the priorities and one example of the kinds of activities under each strategy that will be expanded upon in the implementation stage of planning.

Priority 1: Access

The early years are a critical period in human development. The foundation that is built through a child’s participation in quality early care and education is associated with positive economic, educational and social impacts lasting well into adulthood⁶, benefitting both the individual child, family and larger community. Unfortunately, many families in Los Angeles County do not have access to affordable, quality early care and education. There are approximately 650,000 children under five in Los Angeles County, but only 206,830 spaces in licensed centers and family child care. The 2017 early care and education needs assessment highlighted challenges like a shortage of infant and toddler care, the decline in family child care homes, increased participation in transitional kindergarten, and the high cost of child care.

Goal 1: Increase access to early care and education services for children birth to five years of age and out of school care for children to age twelve.

Strategies:

1.1: Reduce barriers and maximize resources to expand early care and education services to centers and family child care homes, prioritizing infants and toddlers, high-need families, and under resourced communities.

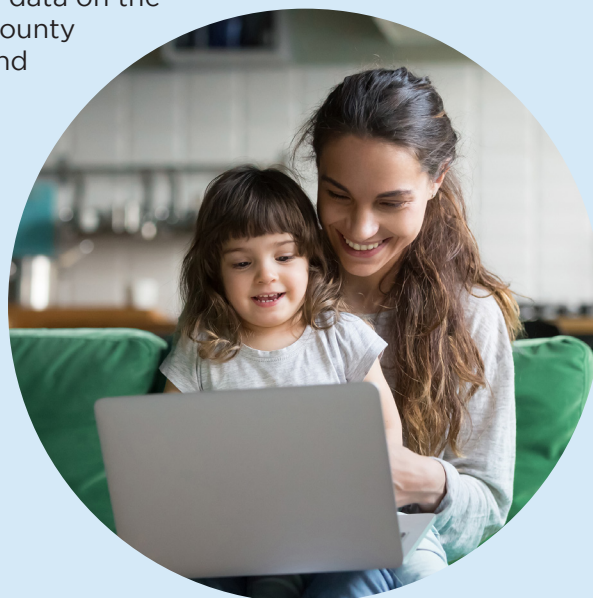
- **Example Activity** – *Finalize and promote a toolkit that helps early care and education providers navigate the facility development system including licensing, zoning, fire, and public health.*

1.2: Advocate for funding to build or upgrade early care and education centers and family child care homes.

- **Example Activity** – *Develop a cross-sector advocacy strategy for facilities funding and for tackling barriers to facility development.*

1.3: Lead the analysis of data on the needs of Los Angeles County families for early care and education services and share with stakeholders to inform local planning and increased early learning investments.

- **Example Activity** – *Launch an on-line dashboard to inform the public about the supply and demand of Los Angeles County early care and education services.*



⁵ Child Care Planning Committee. *The State of Early Care and Education in Los Angeles County – Los Angeles County: Child Care Planning Committee 2017 Needs Assessment Executive Summary*. March 2017. See childcare.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ECE-Needs-Assessment_Executive-Brief-03-30-2017.pdf.

⁶ Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Zongping, X., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., & Nores, M. *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40* (pp. 194–215). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. © 2005 by High/Scope® Educational Research Foundation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 2: Quality

Every parent should have the opportunity to enroll their child in a high-quality early care and education program. Research shows that there is a relationship between early care and education quality and children's academic achievement, as well as language and cognitive development.⁷ To increase the quality of care, initiatives like Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) have emerged across the country. Locally, Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA)⁸ has led the way in strengthening a county-wide quality improvement system. While QRIS is an approach to incentivize and support quality improvement, it is just one strategy on a continuum of quality improvement supports which may include *teacher-focused* efforts like training; *setting-focused* efforts like facilities grants; *family-focused* efforts like educating parents about quality; and *systems level efforts* which focus on setting and meeting standards.⁹

Goal 2: Strengthen the quality of early care and education services, especially for children and families most in need.

Strategies:

2.1: Partner with local quality improvement efforts to provide input, inform and influence quality improvement efforts.

- **Example Activity** – Launch a campaign in partnership with the Quality Start LA to promote what quality looks like in a program.

2.2: Advocate for increased quality improvement investments for all providers including centers, family child care, and family, friends, and neighbor care.

- **Example Activity** – Elevate quality improvement policy recommendations to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Roundtable.

2.3: Leverage data from local quality improvement efforts to publicly promote the importance of quality care.

- **Example Activity** – Release a “True Cost of Quality Care” infographic based on the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis funding model.

2.4: Promote integration across early childhood services and develop strategies that connect early childhood education with other child/family support systems.

- **Example Activity** – Create a handbook that helps parents navigate early childhood services such as early care and education, home visitation, developmental screenings, early childhood mental health consultation, kindergarten transition, library services, and parks and recreation.



⁷ Jeon, L. & Buettner, C.K. (2014). *Quality rating and improvement systems and children's cognitive development*. Child Youth Care Forum, 44, 191-207. Doi: 10.1007/s10566-014-9277-7.

⁸ Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) is a voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) designed to help parents of children birth to five choose the best early childhood education for their family.

⁹ Boller, K., Tarrant, K. & Schaack, D.D. (2014). *Early Care and Education Quality Improvement: A Typology of Intervention Approaches*. OPRE Research Report #2014-36. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 3: Workforce

The quality of early learning programs for children is intrinsically connected to the early care and education workforce. Given the importance of a workforce armed with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to achieve quality care, the Plan elevates workforce as a separate priority, rather than just a component of the quality priority discussed above. Numerous studies indicate that a well-educated workforce provides children with better quality care resulting in increased developmental gains.¹⁰ A key to enhancing the quality of the early care and education system lies in the professionalization of the workforce and a comprehensive professional development pathway comprised of college coursework, training, coaching and mentoring. Unfortunately, the early care and education workforce faces multiple challenges inclusive of low wages, limited education, and barriers to accessing professional development that must be addressed to achieve improved system quality.

Goal 3: Improve the compensation and qualifications of the early care and education workforce.

Strategies:

3.1: Advocate for increased compensation for the early care and education workforce.

- **Example Activity** – Release a policy brief advocating for a single reimbursement rate that incentivizes and compensates for the true cost of quality care.

3.2: Advocate for an efficient, comprehensive statewide data system to track information on the workforce and provide a portal for early educators to access professional development opportunities and build their career profiles.

- **Example Activity** – Integrate the Investing in Early Educators Stipend Program with the Early Care and Education Workforce Registry to reduce duplicated work and increase efficiency in serving the early care and education workforce.

3.3: Reduce barriers to professional development opportunities.

- **Example Activity** – Build a one-stop website that seamlessly connects Los Angeles County early educators to training opportunities of all kinds.



¹⁰ Saracho, O.N. & Spodek, B. (2007). *Early childhood teachers' preparation and the quality of program outcomes*. *Early Child Development and Care*, 177 (1), 71-91. Doi: 10.1080/03004430500317366.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 4: Families and Communities

To build an effective early care and education system in Los Angeles County, it is essential to incorporate the voices of parents, primary caregivers,¹¹ and communities. Children learn and grow in the context of overlapping spheres of influence,¹² so it is critical to build effective and reciprocal partnerships among early care and education programs, families, and communities. A key component for effective systems changes lies in authentically engaging parents, understanding the early care and education issues they face day to day, and inviting them to be partners in developing solutions.

Goal 4: Increase engagement of parents, caregivers and communities on early care and education issues.

Strategies:

4.1: Assure parent and caregiver access to research findings on early care and education issues.

• **Example Activity** – Release family-friendly materials that promote the importance of early care and education by collaborating with allies like Resource and Referral agencies.

4.2: Empower and mobilize families as advocates for early care and education resources.

• **Example Activity** – Launch an early care and education campaign that advances the authentic parent voice through parent testimonials.

4.3: Engage parents, families and community members as thought partners on early care and education issues through events and committees.

• **Example Activity** – Establish a parent/caregiver workgroup as a part of the Planning Committee to inform and influence early care and education planning across Los Angeles County.



¹¹ Primary caregivers include legal guardians, foster parents, and relative caregivers.

¹² Epstein, J. L. (1987). *Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement*. In K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufman and F. Loel (Eds.), *Social Intervention: Potential and Constraints* (pp. 121-136). New York: Walter de Gruyter.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

While this initial strategic plan will guide the direction of OAECE, the Planning Committee and the Roundtable over the next five years, the plan is very broad. An implementation plan, to be completed by June 2020, will bring the strategic priorities to life. Throughout the strategic planning process, OAECE has garnered a wealth of information that will inform the development of a comprehensive implementation plan that will identify specific actions needed to accomplish targeted goals. The next phase of the planning process will launch in January 2020 through an all-day input session with parents, early care and education providers, community organizations, public agencies, supervisorial representatives and various Los Angeles County Departments.

The implementation plan will tackle critical issues to guide success including:

- **Assumptions:** Articulate a clear set of assumptions about factors that shape access, quality, the workforce and family engagement.
- **Objectives:** Establish clear, measurable objectives for each strategy area.
- **Implementation Activities:** Develop activities for each of the four priority areas and strategies.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the distinct roles and responsibilities of OAECE, the Planning Committee, the Roundtable and other stakeholders within each strategy.
- **Timeline:** Create an implementation timeline with annual targets for outcomes and milestones for success.
- **Resources and Budget:** Produce an inventory of fiscal and in-kind resources needed to execute the implementation plan effectively.

If you are interested in participating in implementation planning, please contact the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education at (213) 639-6202.



APPENDIX A

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles, intentionally aligned with the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education's approved principles,¹³ provide direction for the identification of strategic priority areas and preliminary action items. Going forward, the guiding principles will be used to evaluate potential tactics and the crafting of additional action items.

Access: All children and their families should have access to nurturing, educational, culturally, linguistically and developmentally appropriate high-quality early care and education opportunities with a commitment to social, behavioral, cognitive and physical development and continuity of care.

Equity: Equity must inform all decisions and systems and implicit bias must be acknowledged and managed. Policies and systems should affirmatively remove obstacles and barriers for families seeking access to early care and education.

Quality: All families should have access to a variety of high-quality early care and education settings that meet their needs and that are affordable.

Workforce: High quality early care and education requires a competent, effective and well-compensated and professionally supported workforce who reflect the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity and needs of the children and the families they serve across the various roles and settings.

Families: Early care and education must be integrated with other supports and services that contribute to children's optimal development, engages and strengthens families, and builds upon the capacity of the workforce.

Financing: High quality early care and education requires leveraging financing that is adequate and sustainable with incentives for quality and targeted investments to ensure equity for children and families with the greatest needs.

Targeted Investments: Efforts are required to maintain services, prioritize areas of need by targeting investments, capitalize in what works, and build upon areas of success.

Data and Advocacy: The County of Los Angeles in partnership with its local stakeholders¹⁴ plays a significant role in advocating for legislative and administrative policies and investments informed by robust data and current research to meet the needs of our children and their families. Our work must be transparent, accountable, collaborative, and committed to equity, continuous improvement and responsive to emerging needs.

¹³ Adapted from the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education Principles approved on October 9, 2018. Their principles are posted at speaker.asmdc.org/sites/speaker.asmdc.org/files/pdf/BRC-Principles-Final-120318.pdf.

¹⁴ Local stakeholders are inclusive of parents and other primary caregivers (e.g. foster parents, legal guardians and relatives), early educators, institutions of higher education, child care resource and referral agencies, public agencies (i.e. County departments), philanthropy, advocacy organizations, businesses, and others concerned with the optimal well-being of children, families and communities.

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LA County Unified ECE Strategic Plan Implementation Dashboard

Priority 1: Access

Goal: Increase access to early care and education services for children birth to five years of age and out of school care for children up to age twelve.

Lead	On Hold Due to Pandemic	Planning Phase	In Progress	Completed
Roundtable	<p>1.1.1: Advocate for a single birth to kindergarten license for center providers.</p> <p>1.1.2: Advocate for and/or pilot a single eligibility system for families to apply for subsidized early care and education services.</p>	<p>1.2.1: Create tools to help ECE providers navigate county/municipal systems, jurisdictions, and departments that they must work with to open/expand facilities</p> <p><i>Deliverable-Conduct ECE Facility Development leadership institute to cultivate champions</i></p>		
OAECE		<p>1.2.1: Create tools to help ECE providers navigate the county/municipal systems, jurisdictions, and departments that they must work with to open/expand facilities</p> <p><i>Deliverable-Develop and distribute toolkit to help providers navigate ECE facilities development</i></p> <p>1.1.3: Support County departments to maximize resources and increase children's access to ECE</p> <p><i>Deliverable-Provide grants to support quality at County Employee ECE programs</i></p>		<p>1.1.5. Support the stabilization of ECE programs during COVID-19 recovery</p> <p><i>Deliverable-Create Family Child Care/Center Stabilization Fund and distribute operations grants. (\$9 million in CARES Act distributed)</i></p> <p><i>Deliverable- Provide child care vouchers to 6,000 families (\$17 million is CARES Act distributed)</i></p>
CCPC	<p>1.1.4: Strengthen the voluntary, temporary transfer of funds process to ensure funding is used to serve LA County children.</p>	<p>1.3.1: Strengthen the LA County ECE Needs Assessment to be a public facing tool to influence ECE practice and policy</p> <p><i>Deliverable: Conduct needs assessment and launch on-line dashboard/develop infographics to inform public about ECE services.</i></p>		

LA County Unified ECE Strategic Plan Implementation Dashboard

Priority 2: Quality

Goal: Strengthen the quality of early care and education services, especially for children and families most in need.

Lead	On Hold Due to Pandemic	Planning Phase	In Progress	Completed
Roundtable	2.2.1: Advocate for publicly funded quality improvement investments that are locally controlled	2.4.2: Convene a community of practice among LA County Departments' early childhood initiatives and programs to support quality, share tools and resources, and improve coordination <i>Deliverable: Map LA County early childhood programs and create a user-friendly guide for families to navigate and increase access to support programs.</i>		
OAECE	2.4.1: Integrate ECE with a centralized access point for a developmental screening (Help Me Grow)			2.1.1: Strengthen QRIS to reach the broader ECE community with quality improvement supports <i>Deliverable-OAECE holds seats and actively participates on Quality Start LA Leadership Council</i>
CCPC	2.3.1: Increase public awareness of the importance of quality through social media			2.1.1: Strengthen QRIS to reach the broader ECE community with quality improvement supports <i>Deliverable- CCPC holds seats and actively participates on Quality Start LA Leadership Council</i>

LA County Unified ECE Strategic Plan Implementation Dashboard

Priority 3: Workforce

Goal: Improve the compensation and qualifications of the early care and education workforce.

Lead	On Hold Due to Pandemic	Planning Phase	In Progress	Completed
Roundtable				3.1.1: Advocate for a single reimbursement rate that covers the cost of quality <i>Deliverable- Board of Supervisors adopts a pursuit of Position on AB 246 to support restructuring of State reimbursement system</i>
OAECE		3.3.2: Support COVID-19 recovery by expanding professional development opportunities, especially trainings in trauma informed care, dual language learners, COVID-19 health and safety, and diversity, equity and inclusion. <i>Deliverable- Develop and implement a professional development strategy to support ECE providers during COVID-19 recovery</i>	3.3.1: Integrate and maximize AB212 as an element of LA quality improvement system <i>Deliverable-Develop and implement career and college advisement program to support early educators along the career pathway</i>	3.3.1: Integrate and maximize AB212 as an element of LA quality improvement system <i>Deliverable-Host forum on LA professional development system and develop recommendations</i> <i>Deliverable-Develop and conduct training on College and Career Advisement toolkit</i>
CCPC				3.3.1: Integrate and maximize AB212 as an element of LA quality improvement system <i>Deliverable-Establish QSLA/CCPC joint workgroup to access LA County professional development landscape</i> 3.2.1: Support statewide implementation of a user-friendly workforce registry <i>Deliverable-Transition and implement AB 212/Workforce Pathways on-line through the ECE Workforce Registry</i>

LA County Unified ECE Strategic Plan Implementation Dashboard

Priority 1: Parent and Community

Goal: Increase engagement of parents, caregivers and communities on early care and education issues.

Lead	On Hold Due to Pandemic	Planning Phase	In Progress	Completed
Roundtable		4.2.1: Elevate parent testimonials and parent partnerships for ECE Advocacy <i>Deliverable-TBD</i>		
OAECE			4.1.1: Assure parent and caregiver access to research findings and early care and education issues <i>Deliverable- Hold community forums at least annually on early care and education practice and policy.</i>	
CCPC				4.3.1: Strengthen the parent leader voice in the Child Care Planning Committee <i>Deliverable-Establish a parent/caregiver workgroup as a part of the Planning Committee to inform and influence early care and education planning across Los Angeles County.</i>



Meeting Schedule and Proposed Agenda Items – 2021-22 (Working Document)

Centering equity and lifting community voices to build a path for transformative change in our early care and education system.

Meeting Date, Time, Location	Proposed Agenda Items
September 1, 2021 New Member Orientation 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief History and Role of the Child Care Planning Committee Goals and Priorities for 2021-22, Structuring the Work Aligning Our Goals: Professional, Organizational and Planning Committee
September 1, 2020 General Meeting 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of the Child Care Planning Committee Goals for 2021-22 and Structuring Our Work Work Group Updates and Recruitment
October 6, 2021 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report and Self-Evaluation: Reports to the California Department of Education – <i>Action Item</i> Child Care Planning Committee Policies and Procedures Revisions – <i>Action Item</i> Contributing to a Unified Equity Statement Preparing the Needs Assessment: Data Points, Potential Partnerships, and Tackling the Work
November 3, 2021 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winners and Also Rans: A Report on the California State Budget and Legislation – First Session of 2021-22 – Early Care and Education
December 1, 2020 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
January 5, 2022 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
February 2, 2022 General Meeting: 12:00 – 12:45 p.m. Public Hearing – LPC Local Funding Priorities 12:50 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Policy Report: Governor's Proposed Budget for 2022-23/Early Care and Education and Priority Legislation Public Hearing: LPC Local Funding Priorities
March 2, 2022 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LPC Local Funding Priorities – <i>Action Item</i> Public Policy Report Launch of Membership – 2022-23
April 6, 2022 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership Applications Due Launch of Voluntary, Temporary Transfer of Funds
May 4, 2022 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of Public Policy Platform – <i>Action Item</i>
June 1, 2022 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of Membership Slate for 2022-23 – <i>Action Item</i> Election of Officers for 2022-23 – <i>Action Item</i> Public Policy Report – Governor's May Revision to Proposed State Budget for 2022-23 – Early Care and Education Checking In and Gratitude