



Child Care Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2025

1. Welcome and Introductions

Manuel Fierro, Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee), began the meeting at 12:09 p.m. by welcoming members and the public. Chair Fierro shared the vision, mission statement and acknowledged the significance of the Planning Committee's work in bringing stakeholders together, particularly in light of recent challenges. He noted that Planning Committee meetings will incorporate a clearer distinction between Member discussions and public comment to ensure compliance with the Brown Act. Public comment will be integrated throughout the agenda. Chair Fierro invited attendees to introduce themselves, share their affiliated organization, and state their role within the Planning Committee.

2. Approval of Minutes – November 6, 2024

Vice Chair Andrea Fernandez Mendoza presented the November 6, 2024, Planning Committee minutes. Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza requested a motion to approve the November 6, 2024, Planning Committee minutes. Member Lisa Wilkin moved to approve the November 6, 2024, Planning Committee minutes, and Member Cristina Moore seconded the motion. Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza opened the floor for discussion. The motion to approve the November 6, 2024, Planning Committee minutes passed with three abstentions: Member Jessica Reynaga, Vanessa San Martin, and Samitha Givens.

3. 2025 Wildfires and Early Care and Education (ECE)

Debra Colman, Director of the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) provided a presentation on the 2025 Wildfire Response Team for Early Care and Education (ECE). She outlined efforts undertaken over the past 30 days to develop a comprehensive framework addressing wildfire response, recovery, and resilience. These efforts include organizing community calls, drafting community guidance—available on the OAECE website at childcare.lacounty.gov—and establishing protocols for facility damage assessments. Colman detailed the impact of recent wildfires on ECE facilities, reporting the following figures:

- Eaton Canyon Fire: 139 facilities impacted, 16 destroyed, 1 damaged, with 7,299 children affected by closures.
- Palisades Fire: 83 facilities impacted, 5 destroyed, 3 damaged, with 6,517 children affected by closures.

Colman shared countywide support initiatives, including trauma-informed self-regulation and mindfulness workshops designed to assist children, families, and educators in coping with the effects of the wildfires.

Cristina Alvarado, Executive Director of the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles (CCALA), provided an update on the challenges faced by parents and ECE providers in navigating FEMA assistance and



insurance claims. She emphasized the need for patience and understanding as circumstances continue to evolve weekly, creating ongoing uncertainties for those affected. Alvarado discussed efforts to support ECE providers through coordinated supply distribution in the Eaton Canyon and Pacific Palisades areas. She highlighted the involvement of the L.A. County Early Childhood Education Response Team and Planning Committee members at each distribution site. Specifically:

- Eaton Canyon Fire Response: SEIU Local 99 and Options for Learning led distribution efforts.
- Pacific Palisades Fire Response: Connections for Children, the City of Santa Monica, and the City of Los Angeles provided support.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Member discussion guided by Members Jen Baca Beltran, Manager, Government and Community Relations at SEIU Local 99 and Rachel Bocarsly, Senior Program Manager, Child Care Policy and Equity at the City of Los Angeles. The following highlights some of the comments provided:

- Emphasized the long-term, ongoing need for support in the wake of the wildfires. Noted the importance of learning from past experiences will be crucial as the recovery process continues. Acknowledged that this is not the first wildfire and highlighted that support systems and resources are often not fully in place at the outset, but continued advocacy is essential.
- Alvarado shared discussions with Sonoma Resource and Referral (R&R) Agencies underscored the importance of a structured emergency response plan while prioritizing immediate support for families and providers. The distribution of gift cards has facilitated access to essential supplies; however, delays in stipend distribution remain a challenge. Strategies to sustain the workforce, including temporary childcare pop-ups, are being explored, along with efforts to secure affordable spaces and necessary classroom resources.
- Efforts to rebuild and sustain childcare services in wildfire-affected areas remain a priority. Lessons from past disasters highlight the need for expedited licensing and targeted support for displaced providers. Challenges include FEMA restrictions, prolonged rebuilding timelines, and limited financial assistance for renters. The potential for donations, such as furniture and toys, was noted as a critical resource for affected programs.
- Opportunities for collaboration between programs and organizations to support families and childcare centers, including those in distant areas, are being explored.
- Questions were raised about the distribution of fundraiser funds and whether the Planning Committee could allocate funding to address barriers as a public entity.
- Emphasis was placed on ensuring that early childhood education is explicitly included in fundraising efforts to secure dedicated funding for this sector.
- Colman shared discussions with the Partnership for Early Childhood Investment, a coalition of public and private funding entities supporting early childhood programs in LA County and noted that the responses had been positive, helping to strengthen their case with funders. Regarding fire aid, she mentioned that the Annenberg Foundation is currently managing those funds but assured that she would advocate to ensure childcare is prioritized.

- Colman shared a call was planned with agencies that had experienced similar crises, with an emphasis on collaborating and sharing lessons learned to improve ongoing support effort.
- The immediate financial need for providers was raised, with a suggestion to explore creating a fundraising mechanism, such as a GoFundMe, through a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. It was noted that while FEMA assistance is helpful, it only covers a small percentage of the costs.
- Ongoing negotiations with Child Care Providers United (CCPU) and SEIU Local 99 were discussed, including a proposal submitted to assist affected providers, efforts to advocate for continued financial support for providers unable to return to normal operations, and the need for funding to cover disaster-related expenses. A fundraiser with philanthropy partners was shared, and a grant portal for business-related relief was announced. The portal will be open from February 6-24, 2025, and can be accessed at relief.oroportunity.lacounty.gov.
- Question raised about the challenges providers are facing and how the Emergency Response Team can offer support.
 - Emphasized that resources should be easily accessible, particularly wildfire-related resources on websites.
 - Highlighted that the OAECE has a dedicated resource page, directing providers to an ECE-specific webpage containing essential information.
 - Suggested that grant resources be shared with the OAECE list to streamline the distribution of funding opportunities and that materials are translated into multiple languages to accommodate families.
- The Vice Chair highlighted that many families served by the programs have lost both their homes and jobs, with undocumented families facing additional hardships due to limited access to resources. She urged that efforts be made to ensure these families are included in the recovery process.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Public Comment on discussion. The following highlights some of the comments provided:

- Community development financial institution (CDFI) is working in collaboration with capital partners to explore opportunities for financial support and are nearing the final stages of developing a program called LA Rise. Applications will be available soon, and it is encouraged to stay in touch with partners for more information. Emphasized the need for direct and accessible financial support without a complicated process.

4. Policy Update

Justin Blakely, Vice Chair of the Policy Roundtable for the Child Care and Development Commission (Policy Roundtable), presented on the Governor's Proposed Budget for 2025-2026. Blakely shared that the Governor's proposed budget was released on January 10th, outlining key dates in the California State Budget Process, including the State Legislature reconvening on January 6, 2025, the state's budget submission on January 10, 2025, and the May Revision set for May 14, 2025. Blakely emphasized that the proposed budget includes no cuts to ECE programs. Despite these positive indicators, he shared that challenges such as wildfires and the transition to a new federal administration remain ongoing concerns.



Blakely addressed several key topics, including the Alternative Reimbursement Rate Methodology, Cost of Care Plus Rate Payments, Child Care Spaces, and the CCPU Collective Bargaining Agreement. Blakely highlighted the necessity of advocacy, educating the new legislature, staying focused on ECE priorities, and collaborating with champions in both state and local government to ensure continued support for ECE.

Member Lisa Wilkin, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Legislation, presented on the 2025-26 Proposed Legislation and Child Care Regulation Update. Member Wilkin shared families displaced by the recent wildfires and seeking permanent housing may qualify for subsidized child care services under the “Homelessness” eligibility category through California State Preschool Program (CSPP), General Child Care and Development (CCTR), and California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP) funding. Member Wilkin outlined the necessary documentation required for eligibility and verification.

Important ECE related regulation updates include:

- AB 1808 (Nguyen): Child Care and Development Services: Eligibility
 - Extends eligibility for CalWORKs Child Care Programs from 12 months to 24 months, with implementation postponed no later than July 1, 2025.
- AB 2866 (Signed into Law 9/27/24):
 - Specific drowning prevention safety requirements for licensed child care centers with in-ground pools, and licensed family child care homes that are operated at private single-family homes with an in-ground pool.
- AB 49 (Muratsuchi):
 - Establishes entry requirements for school sites and day care centers related to immigration enforcement.
- SB 48 (Gonzalez):
 - Addresses immigration enforcement at school sites, prohibiting access, information sharing, and law enforcement collaboration.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Member discussion. The following highlights some of the comments provided:

- Highlighted ongoing state discussions on child care regulations, stressing the inclusion of both schools and home-based providers. Concerns were raised about the psychological impact on children interacting with caseworkers, particularly the potential for distress and trauma.
- Clarified that family childcare providers are not covered under the bill and are not required to comply with the discussed regulations.
- Need for comprehensive protections for all childcare providers was emphasized, with concerns about the trauma children could experience if caregivers are removed due to enforcement actions. There was a call to include family childcare providers in policy discussions, focusing on preventing interactions with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).



Chair Fierro opened the floor for Public Comment on discussion. The following highlights some of the comments provided:

- Raised concerns regarding privacy and the racial disparities that may arise in enforcement actions, stressing the importance of ensuring that children feel safe within child care environments.
- Update on the recent fires' impact on Community Care Licensing (CCL) staff, who have been managing waivers under PIN 2502. General waivers are available for items destroyed by the fires, but background checks and fire clearances are not waived.
- Emphasized the importance of complying with pool regulations effective January 1, 2025, urging providers to consult with their Licensing Program Analysts (LPA) for help with compliance and to ensure their facilities meet federal standards.

5. Creating Safe Space Policies for Early Childhood Programs

Liza M. Davis, Esquire, Director of Community Engagement and Strategies at The Children's Partnership, discussed efforts to create safe spaces in ECE programs. She shared the relaunch of the ALL IN for Safe Schools campaign, a nationwide initiative that partners with educators, policymakers, organizations, and community partners to ensure that schools and early learning centers are safe for all families. Davis highlighted the impact of immigration policies on access to ECE, addressing three key trends: increased immigration enforcement, the removal of legal protections for immigrants, and actions to reduce access to public benefits for immigrant families. These policies have heightened vulnerability, especially among children who may face separation from their families. She also discussed how schools and educators can support immigrant students and families and provided actionable steps for addressing these challenges. More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for member discussion. One member commented:

- Question was raised about California's status as a sanctuary state, with an emphasis on the importance of fully supporting that designation, rather than just claiming it.

Chair Fierro invited public discussion; one comment was discussed:

- Update on the current waiver policies, stating that CCL is not waiving fire clearances or criminal record checks. Flexibility is limited to areas under CCL's authority. CCL is working on fee waivers for those impacted by the fires, including waiving application and annual fee, noting that providers will receive a PIN that will provide more information on this process.

6. Governance Ad Hoc Update

Member Wilkin, Governance Ad hoc Co-chair, presented on the launch of the Planning Committee membership application for fiscal year 2025-2026. Member Wilkin discussed the membership application due date, March 7, 2025, highlighted the recruitment letter, and the membership term



limits. Member Wilkin shared plans to distribute the application across various platforms, including Quality Start Los Angeles and parent networks, to broaden recruitment efforts. Further details can be found on the PowerPoint.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Member discussion; no comments were discussed.

Chair Fierro invited public discussion; no comments were discussed.

7. General Public Comment and Announcements

Vice Chair Mendoza opened the floor for announcements and public comment.

- Gaby Acosta shared that the City of Long Beach is hosting the "Celebration of the Young Child" event on April 26, 2025, which focuses on resources for children, families, and professionals from birth to age 8. Registration for vendors is currently open. She also discussed a recent large grant awarded for early childhood mental health programs, which will involve hiring clinicians to provide mental health support to children, families, and staff in childcare centers, including home-based providers.
- John Gray announced that Los Angeles Center for Alcohol and Drug Addiction is partnering with OAECE and the Hilton Foundation to expand the Infant and Toddler Facility Fee Waiver to all child care facilities in LA County. Child care providers who want to renovate or construct facilities that will serve infants and toddlers are eligible to have city and county permitting and plan check fees waived. Contact John Gray at jgray@lacada.com for more information.
- Member Baca Beltran shared that CCPU is now offering vision and dental benefits, as well as additional healthcare benefits. Baca Beltran also stated that the state is still negotiating the cost of care, and the state's response to the report submitted on January 7, 2025, is still pending. Baca Beltran acknowledged with rates expiring on the 30th, there is no clear timeline for implementation. She encouraged everyone to take action, engage with state elected officials, and advocate for FCC providers to ensure their voices are heard.
- Azucena Hernandez, from Families In Schools, a nonprofit that supports families and children's education, shared that their LA Fires Initiative is deploying volunteers to collect book donations and is using a tiered approach to support families affected by the fires. The organization works closely with Los Angeles Unified School District and ECE centers, bridging gaps and supporting families in crisis.
- Member Stacy Lee encouraged attendees to call both their office and local offices to share how current issues, such as those related to Head Start and other early childhood programs, impact their work.

8. Call to Adjourn

Chair Fierro moved to adjourn the Planning Committee meeting. Member Samitha Givens seconded the motion. Chair Fierro opened the floor for discussion and asked if there were any objections. The motion

to adjourn the meeting was passed with no objections. The Planning Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Attendance

Public Agency

1. Alicia Rivas
2. Ufuoma Akwaja, alternate for Ana Lopez
3. Isidro Villanueva, alternate for Jessica Kim
4. Nellie Ríos-Parra
5. Rachel Bocarsly
6. Ranae Amezquita
7. Vanessa San Martin

Child Care Provider/Early Educator

1. Andrea Fernandez Mendoza
2. Brittie Crawford
3. Erendira Doherty
4. LaShon Tillie-Jones
5. Lisa Wilkin
6. Ancelma Sanchez, alternate for Lisa Wilkin
7. Saul Hurtado
8. Sylvia Hernandez

Parent/Caregiver

1. Christina Moore
2. Sonia Campos-Rivera, alternate for Humberto Manuel Estratalan
3. Jessica Reynaga
4. Mona Franco

Discretionary

1. Bobby Guerrero
2. Ivy Chang
3. Jen Baca Beltran
4. Jessica Guerra
5. Kimberly Dobson Garcia

6. Norma Herrera, Alternate for Kimberly Dobson Garcia
7. La Tanga Hardy
8. Sarah Soriano

Community Organization

1. Edilma Serna
2. Monica Hernandez, alternate for Edilma Serna
3. Gina Rodriguez
4. Stephanie Orozco, alternate for Gina Rodriguez
5. Ilyssa Foxx
6. Joelle L. Landazabal
7. Carlyne Crolotte, alternate for Kelly Reynolds
8. Manuel Fierro
9. Samitha Givens
10. Stacy Lee
11. Victoria Tarango

Public Attendance

1. Marcie Villasenor
2. Darlene Ayala
3. Brooke Loeffler
4. Mirel Herrera
5. Sharalyn Jenkins-Sweeten
6. Asha Nichols
7. Justin Blakely
8. Gus Bribiesca
9. Megan Thomas
10. Danielle Craig
11. Eva Rivera
12. Alicia Rivas
13. Claudia Guangorena

14. Chris Sears
15. Cindy Esquivel
16. Liza Davis
17. Zoila Carolina Tomas
18. Azucena Hernandez
19. Jackie Jackson
20. Gloria Santoyo
21. Terri Rivers
22. Cristina Alvarado
23. Monica Hernandez
24. Gaby Ayala
25. Amy Battle
26. Sharon Green
27. John Gray

28. Vanessa Macias
29. Crystal Thompson
30. Deborah Ajo

OAECE Staff Attendance

- 30 Debra Colman, *Director*
- 31 Charli Lewis, *Management Analyst*
- 32 Zenaida Meza, *Staff Analyst*
- 33 Alejandra Barrio, *Staff Analyst*
- 34 Ida Legesse, *Staff Analyst*
- 35 Nina Dubovitsky, *Management Analyst*
- 36 Erica Torres-Ness, *Management Analyst*
- 37 Simone Taylor, *Management Analyst*