

Child Care Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2025

1. Welcome and Introductions

Manuel Fierro, Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee), began the meeting at 12:08 PM 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 and asked members to keep these words in mind to guide the work through the year. Chair Fierro introduced himself and asked Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, Vice Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee to introduce herself. He then invited attendees to introduce themselves, share their affiliated organization, and state their role within the Planning Committee.

2. Welcome to Councilmembers and Presentation to Appointments

Chair Fierro presented on how the Planning Committee is integrated in the Los Angeles County (LAC) structure, noting the roles and priorities. Chair Fierro shared the importance of having council members who represent all of the early care and education sector, including parents, early educators, community organizations, public agencies, and appointees of the Board of Supervisors.

Chair Fierro shared that each year the Planning Committee installs a new membership slate, and that the membership is approved by the Planning Committee Chair, the County Board of Supervisors, and the County Superintendent of Schools. To honor the annual leadership change, Chair Fierro, alongside Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza, and the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) staff invited each Councilmember to receive their appointment letter and a LAC Pin to wear as their role as a Child Care Planning Committee Councilmember.

3. Strengthening the Early Care and Education Community in Times of Change

Chair Fierro provided comments on the current federal landscape and its impact on children and families. He referenced the Ecological Theory, noting that children and families exist within the microsystem and mesosystem. Chair Fierro then highlighted several federal policy threats:

- HR 1: Has negative impacts on whole-child and whole-family needs due to proposed cuts to SNAP/CalFresh, WIC, Head Start, and Medicaid/Medi-Cal, alongside funding increases for Homeland Security.
- Immigrant Children and Families: ICE raids at schools, neighborhoods, and communities have created an environment of fear and instability affecting students, families, schools, and providers.
- Early Learning Funding Fiscal Year 2026: Proposed changes impact the Child Care Development Block Grant, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Preschool Development Birth through Five

More information can be found on the PowerPoint.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Care Planning Committee for FY 25-26

Chair Fierro provided an overview of the Planning Committee and noted that there is a Local Planning Council (LPC) in every county of the State, administered by the California Department of Social Services. He highlighted the key responsibilities of the Planning Committee, which include:

- Coordinating the Voluntary Temporary Transfer of Funds process
- Completing the LPC Local Funding Priorities and certify membership annually
- Developing countywide Early Care and Education Strategic Plan every five years
- Developing a Child Care Needs Assessment every five years
- Informing the Integration of the Early Care and Education Mixed Delivery System with Universal PreKindergarten (UPK)
- Providing Input on early care and education policy issues to inform position pursued by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development

More information can be found on the PowerPoint.

Chair Fierro then opened the floor for member discussion. Highlighted are some questions.

- Several questions were raised regarding Ad hoc scheduling and which Ad hocs would be available for the current year. It was clarified that a later section of the meeting would provide additional information on the Ad hocs from the respective liaisons.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for public discussion. No comments were discussed.

5. Getting Grounded in Robert's Rules of Order and Brown Act

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza explained the governing process of the Planning Committee, emphasizing that it must adhere to both the Brown Act and Robert's Rules of Order since the Planning Committee is a government body. She provided an overview of the Brown Act and Robert's Rules of Order, including the process for proposing and voting on motions.

More information can be found on the PowerPoint slides.

6. Strategic Plan

Elizabeth Jacoby, Staff Analyst at OAECE, introduced the development of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Strategic Plan for 2026–2030. She explained that the Strategic Plan will be informed by the Child Care Planning Committee, Policy Roundtable Commission, OAECE, ECE providers, parents, the public, and relevant reports. Jacoby outlined the key roles of each contributing partner, including the Planning

Committee, Policy Roundtable Commission, OAECE, and contractors (Estolano Advisors). She also reviewed the planning timeline from September 2025 through June 2026, highlighting key milestone activities for each month.

More information can be found on the PowerPoint.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for member discussion. One comment was discussed.

- A question was raised regarding when the Planning Committee will meet throughout this process and what the meeting dates will be. It was clarified that an Ad hoc specifically for the Strategic Plan will be formed, and its key role will be to inform the plan. Updates will be provided during the General Meetings. Ad hocs do not have regular meeting dates and convene on an as-needed basis. The General Meeting dates and locations are included in the packet.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for public discussion. There were no comments discussed.

7. Ad Hoc Information

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza introduced the concept of Ad hocs and explained their role in guiding the Planning Committee throughout the program year. She noted that each Ad hoc is a temporary group of the Council formed to analyze a specific topic and make recommendations on related issues. Ad hocs are approved at the Planning Committee's September General Meeting, though additional Ad hocs may be added during the year. Participation is limited to Councilmembers and alternates, who are invited to join. While OAECE staff and Councilmembers may invite subject matter experts to present and inform discussions, members of the public may not participate. It was noted that Ad hocs meet virtually and on an as-needed basis. Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza shared that five Ad hocs are currently proposed and invited the designated Ad hoc Liaisons to provide brief overviews. She also directed Councilmembers to the final document in their packet, which contains an overview of the Ad hocs.

Debra Colman, OAECE Director; Erica Torres-Ness, OAECE UPK Coordinator; Nina Dubovitsky, OAECE UPK Coordinator; and Simone Taylor, OAECE UPK Coordinator, provided an overview of the proposed FY 2025-26 Planning Committee Ad hoc groups and their purpose. The four Ad hoc groups for FY 2025-26 include:

- Governance: To oversee the Planning Committee's governance and reporting processes, and to review proposed changes to the Planning Committee Member Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Family Access: To assess families' early care and education (ECE) needs and preferences, barriers to access, and utilization rates of ECE services.
- Special Needs and Inclusion: To promote the inclusion of children at risk for disabilities or with special needs in early care and education environments that are the least restrictive.
- UPK Workforce: To support planning for the early care and education workforce serving preschool children, ensuring alignment with the Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) system.

8. Consent Calendar

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza presented the Consent Calendar, which includes June 5, 2025, minutes and the creation of the Ad hoc committees, and asked for a motion to approve. Member Sarah Soriano made the motion to approve the consent calendar; Member Sylvia Hernandez seconded the motion.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for member discussion. Highlighted are comments that were discussed.

- A member inquired what impact the Workforce Ad hoc has on the infant, toddler, and school-age since it does not say UPK specifically. It was clarified that the Workforce Ad Hoc specifically serves children ages 3–4. While there is overlap with infant and toddler issues, the current focus remains on UPK.
- A related question was raised regarding the Family Access Ad hoc, asking whether opportunities will be available for infants and toddlers since the current focus is on preschool-age children. It was clarified that the UPK work is directed toward children ages 3–4. However, if the scope is not sufficient to address emerging needs, an additional Ad Hoc may be established.
- It was further clarified that UPK and Transitional Kindergarten benefit from funding through the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Mixed Delivery Grant, which allows space to address issues related to 3 and 4 year olds. It was also stated that the Strategic Plan Ad hoc is another venue for discussion around infant and toddler issues. Members interested in infant and toddler planning were encouraged to participate in the Strategic Plan Ad hoc.

To be noted, Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza asked Councilmembers to choose an Ad hoc that they are passionate about and reminded them about the expectation of attendance. She noted that members can join more than one Ad hoc. The motion on the consent calendar passed with no abstentions.

9. LA County Health Survey Presentation

Dr. Will Nicholas, Director at the LA County Public Health Center for Health Impact Evaluation, presented on the Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS) which is a population-based health survey that periodically collects data to serve LAC communities and residents. The survey is the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's primary vehicle for gathering data on a broad range of public health topics among county residents. As a part of the survey, there are several questions related to early care and education. Dr. Nicholas discussed the Child Care Use and Barriers In LA County from the Los Angeles County Health Survey in 2018 (562,000) and 2023 (447,000). Dr. Nichols presented the key takeaways related to child care access barriers, which were:

- Almost 40% of parents/guardians of young children have difficulty finding needed child care.
- Parents/guardians of 0-2 year olds have significantly more difficulty finding needed child care than parents/guardians of 3-5 year-olds.

- Cost and lack of available spots were the top reasons parents had difficulty getting child care, followed by location/hours and quality of care.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for member discussion. Highlighted below are several comments:

- Members inquired about survey methodology and administration. It was clarified that demographic estimates of the whole population were used; the survey is probability-based and randomly selects children within households. The survey was administered in the 10 threshold languages, and results were weighted.
- Questions were raised regarding the “no child care necessary” category, specifically whether it included families where a parent stays at home by choice or need. Dr. Nicholas noted that data could be examined by household composition beginning in 2026, when more granular data will become available.
- Clarification was requested on whether license-exempt care numbers included school districts. It was confirmed they did not; license-exempt refers to care provided in the caregiver’s or child’s home.
- Members expressed interest in breaking down data by age (3- and 4-year-olds), contract type, and payment type. It was noted that disaggregation by pay type will not be available until 2026.
- A question was raised about whether children with additional needs were included. Another question asked about disaggregation by population, ethnicity, and Service Planning Areas (SPA). It was clarified that the survey sample size is too small to separate data across multiple categories. However, data is always reported at the SPA level, and the sample was representative.
- Members noted that grouping family, friend, and neighbor care while distinguishing between paid and unpaid could help stabilize data and inform policy. Suggestions were made to ask families why they choose family care over licensed centers, considering factors such as access, culture, or cost.
- Members expressed interest in further analysis of how families mix multiple care types to meet needs, as well as data that supports a mixed delivery system.
- The importance of understanding families’ choices and trade-offs in accessing care was highlighted, as this information could inform provider strategies and reveal opportunities.
- Members suggested deeper analysis, such as regression or controlling for variables like income, age, race, and zip code, to determine true differences. Stratification by income within race and community-level analysis were also recommended.
- Appreciation was expressed for the descriptive statistics provided. Additional interest was noted in gathering survey data on how parents define a quality provider.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for public discussion. No comments were discussed.

10. Announcement & Public Comment

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

- Meliza Hernandez, Staff Analyst at OAECE, provided an overview of the Workforce Pathways LA Stipend Program. She reported that the program receives approximately 1,800 applications annually and provides stipends to eligible professionals in the ECE field. She noted that the application period will open on September 16, 2025, and close on September 30, 2025, with applications submitted online. Hernandez also discussed eligibility requirements and the four pathways through which applicants may qualify.
- Darlene Ayala from the United American Indian Involvement announced that the organization will host its Annual Indian Celebration on September 13, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Griffith Park. The event is free and open to anyone interested in learning more about Native culture and the organization's work.
- Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza reminded members to email any announcements they would like shared with the OAECE Listserv to Erica Weiss at OAECE.

11. Call to Adjourn

Chair Fierro moved to adjourn the Planning Committee meeting. The Planning Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Public Agency

1. Alicia Rivas
2. Bobby Guerrero
3. Gus Bribiesca
4. Kelly Fountain
5. Nellie Ríos-Parra
6. Tracey Washington
7. Vanessa San Martin
8. Rebecca Lynch, alternate for Vanessa San Martin

Child Care Provider/Early Educator

1. Ancelma Sanchez
2. Claudia Gutierrez, alternate for Ancelma Sanchez
3. Andrea Fernandez Mendoza
4. Justine Lawrence
5. Ana Valentin, alternate for Leidi Bernasconi
6. Saul Hurtado

7. Zoila Carolina Toma, alternate for Saul Hurtado
8. Sylvia Hernandez

Parent/Caregiver

1. Marcela Torres, alternate for Christina Moore
2. Crystal Thompson
3. Eli Pessar
4. Elsa Leal
5. Kelly Reynolds, alternate for Humberto Manuel Estratalan
6. Jessica Reynaga
7. Mona Franco
8. Nicole Baitx Kennedy
9. Natalie Anguiano, alternate for Sasha Duarte

Discretionary

1. Anna M. Lopez
2. Justine Francisco, alternate for Anna M. Lopez

3. Ivy Chang
4. Jessica Guerra
5. Sarah Soriano
6. Vanessa Macias
7. Cristina Gonzalez, alternate for Vanessa Macias

Community Organization

1. Darlene Ayala, alternate for Betty Collins
2. Monica Hernandez, alternate for Edilma Serna
3. Devon Turner, alternate for Fiona Stewart
4. Gina Rodriguez
5. Stephanie Orosco, alternate for Gina Rodriguez
6. Joelle L. Landazabal
7. Manuel Fierro
8. Mirel Herrera
9. Samitha Givens
10. Stacy Lee

Public Attendance

1. Will Nicholas
2. Laura Stroud
3. Ruben Guardado
4. Laureen Masai

5. Christina Ramirez
6. Patricia Pungprechawat
7. Erika Comal
8. Yamilet Guerra
9. Janet Perea
10. Chris Sears
11. Elizabeth Rodriguez
12. Yecenia Cardenas
13. Ilyssa Foxx
14. Mayra Gonzalez
15. Amy Battle
16. Claudia Mendoza
17. Gaby Acosta

OAEC Staff Attendance

1. Debra Colman, *Director*
2. Alejandra Barrio, *Staff Analyst*
3. Ida Legesse, *Staff Analyst*
4. Nina Dubovitsky, *Management Analyst*
5. Simone Taylor, *Management Analyst*
6. Erica Torres-Ness, *Management Analyst*
7. Meliza Hernandez, *Staff Analyst*
8. Betsy Jacoby, *Staff Analyst*
9. Leanne Drogan, *Deputy Director*