



Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026

1. Welcome and Introductions of Commissioners, Alternates, and Guests

Chair Justin Blakely opened the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development Commission (Policy Roundtable) meeting at 10:03 a.m. by welcoming Commissioners and guests.

2. Comments from the Chair

Chair Blakely shared that on January 6, 2026 the Board of Supervisors approved changes to the Policy Roundtable's Ordinance. Some of the changes include adding the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 99 to the Policy Roundtable's membership and clarifying Commissioner term limits. Chair Blakely acknowledged that families and communities are experiencing trauma and it is important for the Commission to stay rooted in its purpose and continue to engage with the Board of Supervisors.

3. Presentation on Child Care Planning Committee Activities for FY 25-26: State of Early Care and Education Workforce California Regions

Commissioner Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee) Vice Chair, provided an update on some of the Planning Committee's activities. The Planning Committee will soon open its membership for FY 2026-2027, propose adding a second vice chair position, and open leadership nominations. Commissioner Fernandez Mendoza also provided updates on the Strategic Planning process which includes reviewing data and beginning to review recommendations regarding the early care and education (ECE) workforce. Chair Blakely opened the floor for Commissioner discussion. No Commissioner comments were provided. Chair Blakely opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were provided.

4. Consent Calendar

4a. Approval of Minutes – December 10, 2025

4b. Approval of Policy Roundtable Commission Annual Report FY 2024-2025

4c. Approval of Appointment of Policy Roundtable Chair to First 5 LA Commission

Vice Chair Mercedes Santoro presented the Consent Calendar which included approving the minutes for the December 10, 2025 Policy Roundtable meeting, approving the Policy Roundtable Commission Annual Report FY 2024-2025, and appointing Chair Blakely to represent the Policy Roundtable on the First 5 LA Commission. Vice Chair Santoro asked for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Commissioner Robert Gilchick made a motion to separate items 4a and 4b from 4c and the motion was approved. Commissioner Fernandez Mendoza made a motion to approve agenda items 4a - minutes for the December 10, 2025 Policy Roundtable meeting and 4b - the Policy Roundtable Commission Annual Report FY 2024-2025. Commissioner Gloria Davis seconded the motion and the motion to approve agenda items 4a - minutes for the December 10, 2025 Policy Roundtable meeting and 4b - the Policy Roundtable Commission Annual Report FY 2024-2025 was approved with three abstentions: Commissioners Steve Sturm, Colin Legerton, and Ofelia Medina. Commissioner Gilchick made a motion to approve Chair Blakely to represent the Policy Roundtable on the First 5 LA Commission. Commissioner Jennifer Cowan seconded the motion. Vice Chair Santoro opened the floor for Commissioner discussion. The following highlights some of the points raised during discussion:



- What is the plan if the appointee cannot attend First 5 LA Commission meetings and is a plan needed. It was noted that the appointment is not a voting position on the First 5 LA Commission.
- First 5 LA focuses on a range of early childhood issues including ECE and the person appointed should have a strong understanding of these issues and has a relationship with First 5 LA
- Some organizations and Commissions handle appointments to Commissions differently and do not appoint their Chair
- The Policy Roundtable Chair from 2021-2023 was appointed to the First 5 LA Commission and recommended that the practice of the Policy Roundtable Chair serve as the Policy Roundtable's appointee to the First 5 LA Commission. This practice continued with the Policy Roundtable Chair that served from 2023-2025.
- It was clarified that the motion is not approving the position of Chair to be automatically the appointee going forward
- What is the benefit to the Policy Roundtable to participate on the First 5 LA Commission. It would be helpful to have information about First 5 LA shared back regularly to the Policy Roundtable.
- It would have been helpful to have more context for the appointment recommendation, the role, and supporting information prior to the meeting

Vice Chair Santoro called for the vote to approve Chair Blakely to represent the Policy Roundtable on the First 5 LA Commission. The motion passed with four abstentions: Commissioners Justin Blakely, Alejandra Albarran Moses, Jacquelyn McCroskey, and Ofelia Medina.

5. Presentation on Service Coordination Strategy: Action #3 – Early Care and Education Blueprint for Infant/Toddler Care Update

Leanne Drogin, Deputy Director of the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE), provided an overview and update on the Early Care and Education Blueprint for Infant/Toddler Care (Blueprint) which is the Policy Roundtable's Service Coordination Strategy Action #3. Drogin provided context for the development of the Blueprint including the Board of Supervisors directive to OAECE, in partnership with DEO, to develop a roadmap to improve the infant and toddler ECE system in LA County. She reminded the Commission that the Blueprint's 20 recommendations are data driven, vetted, and based on extensive research. The Blueprint is intended to be a resource for organizations to use to inform decisions to improve the infant and toddler ECE system. Drogin noted that the Policy Roundtable was instrumental in developing the Blueprint's policy recommendations. Drogin provided an update on the status the Blueprint recommendations and then introduced Carolyne Crolotte, Director of Policy, and Mirel Herrera, Senior Policy Analyst from Early Edge California (Early Edge), who shared how the Blueprint has informed Early Edge's policy work. Crolotte and Herrera shared that Early Edge established a Workgroup to identify policy actions to improve the infant toddler ECE system and the Workgroup is using the Blueprint to inform what actions to pursue. Further details are available in the PowerPoint presentation. Vice Chair Mercedes Santoro opened the floor for Commissioner discussion and the following highlights some of the discussion:

- Immigration policies and activities are having a high impact on families and ECE staff. For example, many families are fearful and are not bringing their children to ECE programs and ECE programs are experiencing a high disenrollment rate. Some ECE staff are being hindered from maintaining their immigration/work status by federal immigration activities. Additionally, lower enrollment will impact the level of federal funding ECE programs may receive.
- It is difficult to recruit people to staff infant and toddler ECE programs for various reasons
- Infant and toddler ECE staff are having difficulty obtaining higher education units and professional development needed to work in infant and toddler ECE programs



- Options for Learning converted 20 classrooms on school sites to build more infant and toddler ECE capacity and it is important to note that this takes time and funding

Vice Chair Mercedes Santoro opened the floor for public comment and the following highlights some of the points raised:

- Community ECE programs continue to lose children to Transitional Kindergarten
- Need to present ECE information to policy makers through an affordability lens

6. Presentation on Status of State and Federal Public Policies and Joint Committee on Legislation

Chair Blakely provided an update on the Governor's Proposed Budget for FY 2026-27 as it relates to ECE. Chair Blakely shared that the Governor's May Revised Budget will likely have significant changes from the January Proposed Budget. One of the Budget items Chair Blakely reviewed is a cost of living adjustment (COLA) that will be provided to child care subsidized programs. Other Budget items Chair Blakely noted included there are no changes to the Emergency Child Care Bridge funding, no proposed plan for implementing prospective pay, and no changes to reimbursement rates or proposals for single rate structure. Chair Blakely also outlined the freeze on Child Care Development Funds (CCDF), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) for five states including California. Chair Blakely noted that \$5 Billion of the \$10 Billion in frozen federal funding is earmarked for California and a 14-day Temporary Restraining Order has been imposed on the funding freeze. Chair Blakely also shared that there is a possibility there could be another federal government shutdown if a continuing resolution is not agreed upon by January 31, 2026. Debra Colman, OAECE Director, reviewed the impact of freezing these funds on ECE in LA County. Colman also shared that LA County's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations is taking steps for LA County to join the lawsuit to stop the federal freeze. Additional details are available in the PowerPoint presentation. Chair Blakely opened the floor for Commissioner discussion and the following highlights some of the points raised:

- LA County Department of Children and Family Services could potentially lose one-third to half of its funding
- California Attorney General Bonta advised programs receiving CCDF, TANF, and SSBG funding to continue to operate as usual
- Data collection for government funded subsidized programs will continue to be a focus going forward
- There is a need to resolve how programs will be reimbursed whether reimbursement is based on attendance or enrollment
- Administration for Children and Families has proposed rule changes and the public comment period to address these rule changes is 30 days from January 5, 2026
- ECE needs to maximize its resources such as utilization of Emergency Child Care Bridge funding

Chair Blakely opened the floor for public comment and the following highlights some of the points raised:

- SEIU has joined the lawsuit to block freezing CCDF, TANF, and SSBG funding and SEIU has members in the five states targeted by the funding freeze
- It is important to track potential policy changes regarding funding based on enrollment versus attendance and prospective pay

7. Announcements and General Public Comment

Chair Blakely opened the floor for announcements and public comment and no announcements or public comments were provided.



8. Meeting Review and Call to Adjourn

Commissioner Blakely made the motion to adjourn the January 14, 2026 meeting; Commissioner Albarran Moses seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed with no objections. The Policy Roundtable meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Attendance

Commissioners Attendance

1. Justin Blakely, *Second Supervisorial District*
2. Gloria Davis, *Second Supervisorial District*
3. Jennifer Cowan, *Third Supervisorial District*
4. Amber Rivas, *Third Supervisorial District*
5. Alejandra Albarran Moses, *Fourth Supervisorial District*
6. Ricardo Mota, *Fourth Supervisorial District*
7. Kanchana Tate, *Department of Mental Health*
8. Mercedes Santoro, *Department of Parks and Recreation*
9. Robert Gilchick, *Department of Public Health*
10. Nurhan Pirim, *Department of Public Social Services*
11. Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, *Child Care Planning Committee*
12. Paul Pulver, *Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles*
13. Jacquelyn McCroskey, *Commission for Children and Families*
14. Ofelia Medina, *First 5 LA*

Alternate Commissioners Attendance

1. Steve Sturm, *Department of Children and Family Services*
2. Colin Legerton, *Los Angeles County Office of Education*
3. Dora Jacildo, *Commission for Children and Families*
4. Ranae Amezquita, *Los Angeles Unified School District*

Guests Attendance

1. Mirel Herrera, *Early Edge California*
2. Carolyne Crolotte, *Early Edge California*
3. Jessica Guerra, *Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles*
4. Zeila C. Tome, *ECE Provider*
5. Jenn Baca Beltran, *SEIU Local 99*
6. Rachel Bocarsly, *City of Los Angeles*
7. Natalie Lucero, *Foothill Family*
8. Tessa Graham, *Child Development Institute*

Staff Attendance

1. Diana Alvarado, *Policy and Program Specialist*
2. Alejandra Berrio, *Program Manager*
3. Debra Colman, *Director*
4. Leanne Drogin, *Deputy Director*
5. Simone Taylor, *Local Planning Council Coordinator*