



## **Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development Meeting Minutes**

March 11, 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 acknowledged that March is Women's History Month and that the majority of the child care workforce is comprised of women. He noted the leadership of women in general and in child care. Chair Blakely highlighted the importance of continuing to invest in the early care and education (ECE) system.

### **3. Approval of Minutes – February 11, 2026**

Vice Chair Mercedes Santoro presented the minutes for the February 11, 2026 Policy Roundtable meeting and asked for a motion to approve the February 11, 2026 minutes. Commissioner Gloria Davis made the motion to approve the February 11, 2026 minutes; Commissioner Kanchana Tate seconded the motion. The motion to approve the February 11, 2026 minutes was approved unanimously.

### **4. Presentation on Child Care Planning Committee Activities for FY 25-26 Update**

Debra Colman, Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) Director, provided an update regarding some of the Child Care Planning Committee's (Planning Committee) activities. Colman shared that one of the Planning Committee's state mandated responsibilities is to develop Local Funding Priorities (LFP) for LA County and submit the LFP to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Colman reviewed the factors and process for identifying LFP and that a public hearing to gather input to inform the LFP will be held April 1, 2026. Additional details are available in the PowerPoint presentation.

### **5. Presentation on Service Coordination Strategy: Highlights of Early Care and Education Supports Provided by Various LA County Departments**

Vice Chair Santoro shared that the Policy Roundtable identified as part of its Service Coordination Strategy the practice of LA County departments providing presentations on key department activities that intersect with ECE services. The following LA County departments provided an overview of one to two key department activities that supports ECE.

- Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR): Vice Chair Santoro shared that DPR and OAECE are partnering to improve child development programs implemented at LA County parks. As part the Child Development Program Improvement Project, some of DPR's activities include professional development, curriculum development, and creating drop-in indoor and outdoor play centers for children ages three to five years old.
- Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS): Commissioner Steve Sturm highlighted DCFS' Child Care Alternative Payment Program and its Emergency Child Care Bridge Program (Bridge) which collectively serve approximately 2,500 children in LA County. These programs provide immediate access and certification for child care to children who are in the child care foster care system. Commissioner Sturm noted that child care is a life changing factor for children, particularly children in the foster care system. Commissioner Sturm shared that data shows the recidivism rate to return to foster care is reduced by half if the child attends child care.

- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS): Commissioner Nurhan Pirim shared that CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care Program (Stage 1) is one of the many programs administered by DPSS. Commissioner Pirim noted that families who receive cash aid are automatically eligible for Stage 1 child care assistance and when families stop receiving cash aid then they move to the CalWORKs Stage 2 Child Care Program. Commissioner Pirim highlighted that approximately 18,000 children utilize child care funded by Stage 1 and this totals approximately \$22 million monthly.
- Department of Mental Health (DMH): Commissioner Kanchana Tate highlighted DMH's 1) Early Childhood Fellowship Program and 2) Friends of the Children Program. Commissioner Tate shared that its Fellowship Program is partnering with UCLA and the Program helps Fellowship participants develop leadership skills to strengthen communities and systems that serve young children. DMH is also partnering with the national Friends of the Children Program to provide mentors to work long-term with children and families to help children meet educational goals. Commissioner Tate also noted that one of the Program's goals is to reduce child welfare contacts.

Additional details are available in the PowerPoint presentation. Vice Chair Santoro opened the floor for Commissioner discussion. The following highlights some of the discussion:

- The Bridge Program identifies additional resources for families and provides child care providers trauma informed care training
- Senate Bill 1051 was highlighted as proposed legislation DCFS might be interested in tracking
- Are there opportunities to help children on Resource and Referral (R&Rs) agency child care waitlists access child care programs operated by DCFS and/or Los Angeles Unified School District more immediately. Additionally, R&Rs are able to better help support families if the R&R is aware of a family having an open DCFS case.

Vice Chair Santoro opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was provided.

#### **6. Presentation on Status of Local, State and Federal Public Policies and Joint Committee on Legislation**

Alternate Commissioner Colin Legerton presented updates on the state budget process noting that Trailer Bills continue to be posted on California's Department of Finance website. Alternate Commissioner Legerton reviewed proposed state legislation, such as AB 1981 - Subsidized Child Care: Reimbursement Rates: Reporting and AB 2379 - Child Care Workers: Immigration Rights. Alternate Commissioner Legerton also provided an update regarding implementation of AB 495: Family Preparedness Plan Act of 2025 that was signed into law in 2025. Some of the federal public policy activities Alternate Commissioner Legerton shared included the President's budget is expected to be released in late March 2026 or April 2026 and multiple bills were introduced that focus on addressing possible fraud in child care and nutrition programs.

Chair Blakely provided an overview of the process and roles of the Policy Roundtable, Planning Committee, and Joint Committee on Legislation (JCL) to develop a Pursuit of Position. Chair Blakely shared the requirements of a Pursuit of Position and reviewed the draft Pursuit of Positions which focus on: 1. support implementation of reimbursement rate alternative methodology; 2. support immigration protections for ECE providers and the children they serve; and 3. support wildfire recovery and rebuild. 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:



- Additional information about AB 2092 Early Childhood Integrated Data System and AB 2314 Child Care: Regulations was provided
- It was confirmed that the JCL can recommend federal legislation and budget items as priority policy issues to the Policy Roundtable

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

- There were eight federal anti-fraud child care bills introduced
- AB 2379 Child Care Workers: Immigration Rights is a follow up bill to AB 495 Family Preparedness Plan Act chaptered on October 12, 2025

## **7. Approval of Pursuit of Positions**

**7a.** Support AB 1981 and similar measures that require the CDSS to provide a definitive timeline and annual updates regarding CDSS's transition to new reimbursement rates based on the alternative methodology

**7b.** Support AB 2379 and similar measures that strengthen protections for immigrant child care providers and the children they serve by notifying child care providers of their constitutional rights when confronted by immigration enforcement

**7c.** Support proposed FY 2026-2027 Budget item and similar measures that strengthen child care infrastructure, specifically targeted toward communities impacted by recent fires

Chair Blakely presented the Pursuit of Positions. Chair Blakely asked for a motion to approve the Pursuit of Positions: **7a.** support AB 1981 and similar measures that require the CDSS to provide a definitive timeline and annual updates regarding CDSS's transition to new reimbursement rates based on the alternative methodology; **7b.** support AB 2379 and similar measures that strengthen protections for immigrant child care providers and the children they serve by notifying child care providers of their constitutional rights when confronted by immigration enforcement, and **7c.** support proposed FY 2026-2027 Budget item and similar measures that strengthen child care infrastructure, specifically targeted toward communities impacted by recent fires. Commissioner Alejandra Albarran Moses made a motion to approve the Pursuit of Positions. Commissioner Amber Rivas seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Pursuit of Positions was approved unanimously.

## **8. Announcements and General Public Comment**

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

- Commissioner Albarran Moses announced that the Long Beach Early Education Committee will host its Early Childhood Symposium on Saturday, March 14, 2026
- Colman announced that the LFP Public Hearing will be held on April 1, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at The California Endowment and the next Planning Committee meeting will be held on April 1, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. at the same location

## **9. Meeting Review and Call to Adjourn**

Commissioner Santoro made a motion to adjourn the March 11, 2026 Policy Roundtable meeting; Commissioner Albarran Moses seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed with no objections. The Policy Roundtable meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

## **Attendance**

### **Commissioners Attendance**

1. Justin Blakely, *Second Supervisorial District*
2. Gloria Davis, *Second Supervisorial District*
3. Amber Rivas, *Third Supervisorial District*
4. Alejandra Albarran Moses, *Fourth Supervisorial District*
5. Ricardo Mota, *Fourth Supervisorial District*
6. Olga Vicuna, *Department of Children and Family Services*
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. Jacquelyn McCroskey, *Commission for Children and Families*
12. Ranae Amezcua, *Los Angeles Unified School District*

### **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*

### **Guests Attendance**

1. Carolyne Crolotte, *Early Edge California*
2. Lisa Wilkin, *Child Development Consortium of Los Angeles*
3. Jessica Guerra, *Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles*
4. Miguel Angel Segura, *Parent Institute for Quality Education*
5. Nicole Jain, *Department of Economic Opportunity*
6. Eva Rivera, *City of Pasadena*
7. Joyce Robinson, *Low Income Investment Fund*

### **Staff Attendance**

1. Diana Alvarado, *Policy and Program Specialist*
2. Alejandra Berrio, *Program Manager*
3. Debra Colman, *Director*
4. Leanne Drogin, *Deputy Director*
5. Sergio Fierro, *Senior Operations Liaison*
6. Sheronda Helton, *UPK Research Specialist*