



Child Care Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2026

1. Welcome and Introductions

Manuel Fierro, Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee), began the meeting at 12:16 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, particularly in light of recent challenges. Chair Fierro invited attendees to introduce themselves, share their affiliated organization, and state their role within the Planning Committee.

2. Family Access Ad Hoc Update

Member Sylvia Hernandez, Family Access Ad Hoc Co-Chair, presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025–2026 Local Planning Council (LPC) Local Funding Priorities Report, which compares the number of income-eligible children in Los Angeles County to those enrolled in subsidized early care and education. She noted the report is used by the state for funding allocation, by LPCs for strategic planning, by providers for funding applications, and by family-serving programs to target services. Member Hernandez reviewed the State Zip Code Priority criteria, identifying Priority 1–3 thresholds based on the percentage and number of unserved eligible children. She also summarized key findings across infants and toddlers, preschool-age, and school-age categories, highlighting continued gaps in access to subsidized care.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

3. Consent Calendar – February 4, 2025

Vice Chair Andrea Fernandez Mendoza presented the Consent Calendar, which included the February 4, 2026, Planning Committee minutes and the LPC Local Funding Priorities Report. A motion was requested to approve the Consent Calendar. Member Eli Pessar moved to approve, and Member Rachel Bocarsly seconded the motion. The Vice Chair opened the floor for discussion. The motion passed with 31 approvals and 1 abstention by Member Nellie Ríos-Parra.

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

- A question was raised about whether school-age (5-12) data reflects provider reality or demand. It was noted that Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) and After School Education and Safety Program (ASES) data are limited due to inconsistent and non-systematic collection, with no current state solution, though future improvements may be developed.



- A follow-up question noted the remaining gap is between subsidy voucher data and population-level data.

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza opened the floor for Public Comment on the discussion. There were no comments.

4. Governance Ad Hoc Update

Members La Tanga Hardy and Saul Hurtado, Governance Ad Hoc Co-Chairs, provided an update on the committee's work. Member Hardy explained that the Governance Ad Hoc oversees Planning Committee governance and reporting processes and reviews proposed changes to the Policies and Procedures Manual. Member Hurtado provided updates on the FY 2026–2027 membership application process, noting the April 17, 2026, deadline and reporting 22 new and 39 returning member applications received to date. He stated that the ad hoc will review applications after the deadline and develop a proposed membership slate for review and vote at the June 2026 meeting.

5. Presentation of Leadership Candidates

Chair Fierro spoke on the importance of leadership within the Child Care Planning Committee. He stated that candidates for Chair, First Vice Chair, and Second Vice Chair have been confirmed and will each have two minutes to share their background and reasons for running. He noted that the election will take place at the same meeting as the membership slate approval in June 2026. The candidates are Chair: Andrea Fernandez Mendoza; First Vice Chair: Rachel Klein Bocarsly and Sarah Soriano; and Second Vice Chair: Kelly Fountain, Saul Hurtado, and Christina Moore.

6. Special Needs Ad Hoc Update

Members Saul Hurtado and Sylvia Hernandez, Special Needs and Inclusion ad hoc Co-Chairs, provided an update on the Special Needs and Inclusion Landscape Analysis. Member Hurtado explained that the ad hoc focuses on advancing inclusion for children ages 3–4 who are at risk for disabilities or have special needs, with an emphasis on least restrictive, inclusive early care and education (ECE) environments. He noted the goal is to better understand how families access support, how systems interact, and where barriers and opportunities exist to strengthen coordination and inclusion.

Member Hernandez outlined the project timeline, noting that the fall phase focused on design and alignment, the winter phase focused on data collection, and the current phase is analysis and validation, with completion planned for summer 2026, including the final report, executive summary, and recommendations. Member Hurtado shared that to date, 20 stakeholder interviews have been scheduled and 13 completed across Resource and Referral (R&R) agencies, direct service providers, professional development providers, and system leadership. Next steps include completing remaining interviews, continuing systems mapping and analysis, and



preparing for parent focus groups, with ongoing ad hoc review to validate emerging themes and inform recommendations to strengthen inclusion and access across Los Angeles County.

More information can be found on the PowerPoint slides.

7. Policy Update

Member Sarah Soriano, Chair of the Joint Committee on Legislation, provided an update on the Joint Committee on Legislation and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development. She reported that three Pursuits of Position were approved by the Policy Roundtable on March 12, 2026 including 1)Implementation of Alternate Reimbursement Rate Methodology; 2)Strengthen Measures that Protect Immigrant Children, Families, and Staff; and 3)Wildfire Rebuild Recovery.

Member Soriano explained that the alternative reimbursement rate methodology seeks to reimburse ECE providers based on the true cost of care and is expected to be implemented by summer 2026, with ongoing funding needed to sustain it. She also noted support for legislation strengthening protections for immigrant children by limiting immigration enforcement access to schools and child care settings without legal authorization. It was further noted that related legislation has transitioned from AB 49 to AB 495, with similar protections included and an urgency clause allowing immediate implementation upon the Governor's signature.

Member Rachel Bocarsly provided an update on the State's proposed budget and related legislation, noting that the Governor's January proposal outlines the upcoming fiscal year priorities. She highlighted that the current proposal does not include new child care spaces or updates to rate reform and emphasized expectations for a tighter budget in the May Revise. Advocacy efforts are focused on maintaining cost-of-living adjustment and wildfire-related funding while protecting existing ECE investments from potential cuts.

Member Bocarsly also provided an update on federal policy, noting that current legislative activity includes bills under review that impact the ECE sector. She noted that an update was provided from Senate and education committee discussions highlighting bipartisan recognition of the high cost and need for child care. Several bills focused on increasing oversight, monitoring, reporting requirements, and fraud prevention measures related to child care and nutrition programs at the federal level. Below are bills that were discussed:

- AB 1981 relates to alternative reimbursement rates and would require CDSS to provide the Joint Legislative Budget Committee with an anticipated transition timeline if full implementation is delayed. The bill would also extend quarterly implementation reports until the new rates are fully implemented beyond 2027.
- AB 2379 focuses on immigration protections for child care providers and facilities. Discussion noted that earlier language connected to AB 495 regarding child care facilities was removed, though there remains strong interest in ensuring protections specifically

address ECE settings. The bill would require training and guidance related to Fourth Amendment rights and immigration enforcement policies for child care.

- AB 1110 was discussed in relation to the end of “hold harmless” provisions and a proposed 15% flex factor intended to protect contractors from funding losses if enrollment falls below contract levels. Concerns were raised about programs returning to attendance-based funding and the potential fiscal impacts on providers.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Member discussion; highlighted are comments that were discussed:

- Emphasized monitoring impacts related to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), toddler programs, and school-age services due to implications for LPC and center-based programs. Noted that rate reform workgroups meet weekly, and stakeholders were encouraged to submit comments and feedback through established channels.
- It was noted that State early care and education data system improvements were previously paused for several years, with current legislation seeking to reinstate and advance this work.
- It was shared that AB 2092 was referenced as missing a “cradle-to-career” component, limiting the ability to fully understand early childhood and family experiences.
- Highlighted Voluntary Temporary Transfer of Funds deadlines and related timelines as important considerations, particularly in relation to the potential end of hold harmless provisions.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Public Comment on discussion; highlighted are comments that were discussed.

- It was suggested to engage gubernatorial candidates by submitting questions related to child care and early learning, framing this as an opportunity to inform and influence future leadership. It was noted that organizations such as The Children’s Partnership and Children Now, along with the Children’s Movement of California, are coordinating candidate forums where child care and ECE priorities have been raised, though candidates’ commitments remain general. Stakeholders were encouraged to continue engaging with communities and candidates directly.
- An update was provided on state early childhood data systems, noting ongoing efforts to integrate data across ECE programs. The initiative has received significant funding, but continuity is uncertain due to potential funding lapses, though work to advance system integration is ongoing.
- It was clarified that programs meeting the enrollment threshold of 85% or above may receive full funding adjustments and raised concerns about fiscal cliffs for contractors. It was noted that state contractors are aware of these risks and are engaging with the State to plan for potential impacts.

8. Strategic Planning Update

Eli Pessar, Chair of the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc, provided an update on development of the 2026–2030 Early Care and Education Strategic Plan. He explained that the strategic plan will guide public and private investments in the ECE system, inform local, state, and federal policy priorities, and serve as a framework to unify the ECE system across Los Angeles County. He reported that the ad hoc met in February and March 2026, with discussions and recommendations focused on ECE facilities, workforce compensation, and workforce well-being.

More information can be found on the PowerPoint slides.

Vice Chair Mendoza Fernandez facilitated and opened the floor for Member discussion regarding workforce wellbeing, workforce compensation, and facilities. The following highlights some of the comments provided:

- Facilities discussion focused on reducing burden on providers by clarifying coordination and case management roles, including opportunities to learn from other municipalities to improve alignment and reduce disconnects.
- Developer fees were noted as helpful but insufficient given high costs of living; suggestions included dedicating spaces for child care use or providing multiple reserved spaces for workers.
- Emphasized the need to better align public and private investment in child care facilities, including co-locating services on Local Education Agencies (LEA) campuses and reducing barriers related to licensing and access.
- Noted that counties and partners are exploring solutions such as navigator roles, pre-submittal review boards, and coordinated permitting processes to streamline approvals and reduce delays for providers.
- Highlighted ongoing permitting challenges, including zoning misunderstandings and certificate of occupancy requirements, underscoring the need for clearer guidance and safeguards.
- Discussed the need for cross-sector coordination tools, such as matrices mapping facilities across LEAs and jurisdictions, to avoid duplication and improve planning.
- Raised broader systems question of how to prepare LA County for growth, including categorizing issues by city, county, or state responsibility and identifying cost-effective solutions.
- A question was raised about potential alignment between linkage fees and Mello-Roos funding as a possible financing strategy.

Vice Chair Mendoza Fernandez opened the floor for Public Comment on discussion. There were no comments discussed.



Demetria Murphy, Estolano Advisors, facilitated a Strategic Planning session on access to early care and education services, focused on Local Funding Priorities. The discussion was guided by three key questions:

- How Los Angeles County should adjust preschool strategies given that 66% of eligible preschool-age children are now served through Transitional Kindergarten and UPK expansion;
- What strategies are needed to increase access for infants and toddlers, where only 14% of eligible children are currently enrolled; and
- What opportunities exist to expand before- and after-school care for school-age children, where only 5% of eligible children are served.

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

- It was noted that despite the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) in school districts, capacity remains insufficient, and many families are still unable to access preferred programs, leading to ongoing unmet demand. Parental choice is often limited by availability, scheduling mismatches, and lack of alignment in pricing, and hours, which impacts family decision-making and access to care.
- Discussions highlighted structural barriers between LEA-administered programs and community-based child care systems, including differences in enrollment processes and limited guidance from front office staff on alternative options. This can restrict families' ability to access care near their work or preferred location rather than only near their residence.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of consistent, developmentally appropriate messaging to families regarding program differences (e.g., TK vs. CSPP), which affects understanding of available options.
- For infant and toddler care, participants emphasized significant gaps in supply, funding constraints, and workforce capacity challenges, noting that only 14% of eligible children are currently served. There was discussion on the need to better understand unmet need, improve workforce compensation, and gather direct parent input on decision-making factors.
- For school-age care, it was noted that available data is limited, primarily coming from administrative sources such as 21st Century and ASES programs, which do not fully capture ZIP code-level unmet need. Survey data may be needed to better understand demand and gaps.
- It was suggested to revisit prior system elements such as child care Resource and Referral lists to improve visibility of available child care options.
- Participants emphasized the importance of holding LEAs and the County accountable for ensuring access to developmentally appropriate Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK) spaces and learning from other states' models rather than creating new approaches in isolation.



- Overall, there was recognition that families experience significant stress navigating the child care system in California due to limited availability and complex program structures.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for public discussion; highlighted are comments that were discussed.

- Noted upcoming elections in November for Governor, State Superintendent, and Mayor. Suggested leveraging this period to host panels, including engagement with the New York City office, to inform broader policy discussions and shape key questions in advance of September.
- Discussed concerns related to early care and education planning, emphasizing the need to ensure 2- and 3-year-olds are not overlooked within UTK and targeted preschool expansion efforts for 4-year-olds.

9. General Public Comment and Announcements

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

- The United American Indian Involvement is hosting a free food distribution event on April 8, providing produce in partnership with the Food Bank.
- There is a free tax filing opportunity available for community members earning under \$69,000 through the City of Los Angeles.

10. 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 2:22 p.m.

Attendance

Public Agency

1. Alicia Rivas
2. Bobby Guerrero
3. Ufuoma Akwaja,
4. Gus Bribiesca
5. Isidro Villanueva, alternate for
Jessica Kim
6. Kelly Fountain
7. Nellie Ríos-Parra
8. Rachel Bocarsly
9. Tracey Washington

Child Care Provider/Early Educator

1. Ancelma Sanchez
2. Andrea Fernandez Mendoza
3. Justine Lawrence
4. Rocio Bach
5. Saul Hurtado
6. Sylvia Hernandez

Parent/Caregiver

1. Christina Moore
2. Stephanie Garcia, alternate for
Christina Moore
3. Eli Pessar

4. Elsa Leal
5. Jessica Reyana

Discretionary

1. Eva Rivera
2. Jessica Guerra
3. La Tanga Hardy
4. Sarah Soriano

Community Organization

1. Betty Collins
2. Jeana Courson, alternate for Betty Collins
3. Edilma Serna
4. Monica Hernandez, alternate for Edilma Serna
5. Devon Turner, alternate for Fiona Stewart
6. Bianca Castellanos, alternate for Joelle L. Landazabal
7. Manuel Fierro
8. Mirel Herrera
9. Samitha Givens
10. Stacy Lee

Public Attendance

1. Lisa Wilkins
2. Gloria Santiago
3. Chris Sears
4. Austin Land

5. Jose Ramos
6. Norma Rivera
7. Parker Cross
8. Miguel Angel Segura
9. Adela Arellano
10. Ashley Alvarez
11. Ruben Guardado
12. Demetria Murphy
13. Zenaida Meza
14. Josie Bartalo
15. Brooke Loeffler
16. Amy Battle
17. David Tokotsly

OAECE Staff Attendance

- 30 Debra Colman, *Director*
- 31 Leanne Drogin, *Deputy Director*
- 32 Ida Legesse, *Child Care Choices Program Manager*
- 33 Sheronda Helton, *Research Specialist*
- 34 Sergio Fierro, *Senior Operations Associate*
- 35 Diana Alvarado, *Policy and Program Specialist*
- 36 Simone Taylor, *LPC Coordinator*