



Child Care Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2026

1. Welcome and Introductions

Manuel Fierro, Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee), began the meeting at 12:09 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 expressed gratitude to all the councilmembers. Chair Fierro invited attendees to introduce themselves, share their affiliated organization, and state their role within the Planning Committee.

2. Policy Update

Member Sarah Soriano, Chair of the Joint Committee on Legislation (JCL), provided an update on the JCL's legislative activities, including the California May Budget Revise, Pursuits of Position, and state and federal policy updates. She shared that Los Angeles County Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations approved the three Pursuits of Position and advocacy efforts have begun. The approved Pursuits of Position include:

- Support AB 1981 and similar measures requiring the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide a definitive timeline and annual updates regarding the transition to new reimbursement rates based on the alternative methodology.
- Support AB 2379 and similar measures to strengthen protections for immigrant child care providers and the children they serve by ensuring providers are informed of their constitutional rights when encountering immigration enforcement.
- Support proposed FY 2026–2027 budget items and similar measures to strengthen child care infrastructure, particularly in communities impacted by recent wildfires.

Member Soriano highlighted key components of the Governor's May Revise for FY 2026–2027, including a reduced 2.01% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for child care and state preschool programs, a \$20 million ongoing investment for the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), increased administrative funding for Alternative Payment agencies, and one-time infrastructure funding for child care facilities impacted by natural disasters. She noted that while the May Revise maintains some existing investments, it does not provide a comprehensive strategy to address ongoing ECE system challenges, including workforce stability, expansion of child care slots, cost-based reimbursement, community-based preschool stability, and facilities and licensing barriers.

Member Soriano also provided state and federal legislative updates, including AB 1981, which passed the Assembly unanimously, and AB 2379, which passed the Assembly. She shared that the Supporting Early-Childhood Educators' Deductions (SEED) Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives, while federal fraud-related bills remain pending. Additional updates included the publication of the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule and the Head Start Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on May 11, 2026.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.



3. Governance Ad Hoc Update

Members La Tanga Hardy and Saul Hurtado, Governance Ad Hoc Co-Chairs, presented the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026–27 Child Care Planning Committee Membership Slate. Member Hurtado shared that the Governance Ad Hoc met on May 20, 2026, to review membership applications, paying close attention to membership category, Race/Ethnicity, Service Planning Area, and Supervisorial District. Member Hurtado discussed the membership breakdown by Service Planning Area, Supervisorial District, and race/ethnicity, noting the intention to ensure the Membership Slate reflects the diversity of Los Angeles County.

Member Hardy presented on the election of officers for FY 26-27. Member Hardy first reviewed the candidates under each category: Chair, First Vice Chair, and Second Vice Chair. Then she reviewed the responsibilities of each role.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

4. Approval of Membership Slate for FY 2026-2027

Vice Chair Andrea Fernandez Mendoza presented the Proposed Child Care Planning Committee Membership Slate FY 2026-27. Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza requested a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Member Sarah Soriano moved to approve the Consent Calendar. Member Christina Moore seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza opened the floor for member discussion. Highlighted are three comments:

- Inquired about the vacancy for the Supervisorial District 1 seat and whether it would be filled. It was explained that, despite ongoing communication with the Supervisorial District 1 office, no appointee had been submitted. Once the membership slate is approved, it cannot be amended during the fiscal year under state statute. It was also noted that the current seat will remain vacant, and the Supervisor's term expires in November.
- Requested corrections to the membership slate, including updating Ivy Chang's affiliation to "Department" rather than "Division" and updating Eva Rivera's affiliation to the Office of the Young Child, City of Pasadena.
- Requested clarification on the abbreviations "SPA" and "SD" listed on the membership slate and confirmed the correct Supervisorial District designation.

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza opened the floor for public discussion. No comments

The motion to approve the Consent Calendar passed with no abstentions.

5. Election of Officers for FY 2026-2027 – Chair Opens and Closes Polls

Chair Fierro opened the election polls for the FY 2026–2027 officer elections. Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) staff distributed ballots to councilmembers, or to alternates serving in their place. Councilmembers and alternates were allotted 10 minutes to cast their ballots. Polls were open from 12:45 PM to 12:55 PM. At the close of the voting period, Chair Fierro officially closed the polls, and OAECE staff began tallying the ballots.

6. Special Needs and Inclusion Ad Hoc Update

Member Sylvia Hernandez, Special Needs and Inclusion Ad Hoc Co-Chair, and Sheronda Helton, Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Research Specialist, provided an update on the Ad Hoc's work for FY 2025–2026. Member Hernandez stated the purpose of the Ad Hoc is to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities or special needs in the least restrictive early care and education environments while identifying opportunities to strengthen coordination, access, and inclusion across systems. The landscape analysis included a review of existing data, policies, referral pathways, and guidance documents; key informant interviews with 23 representatives from education, health, child care, and community organizations; and systems mapping to better understand how children and families navigate services.

Ms. Helton then presented the key themes that emerged from the landscape analysis and systems maps, highlighting family experiences, areas where transitions and referrals can become unclear or challenging, and opportunities to strengthen support and make special needs and inclusion services more accessible and navigable across the mixed-delivery early care and education system. Key findings included:

- Pediatric guidance may not always be clear, creating challenges for families seeking support and services.
- The transition to school district services at age three can be confusing for families navigating special needs identification and support systems.
- Workforce capacity to support children with special needs varies across the early care and education mixed-delivery system.
- Strengthening navigation support and coordination across systems is critical to helping families, providers, and partners better access and understand available special needs and inclusion resources.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

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

- Discussed the need for a more coordinated care navigation system for families, noting that organizations such as Help Me Grow LA and ENRICH provide family navigation and support, but services are delivered inconsistently across the county. Some questions were raised about who should be responsible for coordinating these efforts across systems.
- Raised concerns about delays in identifying developmental needs, noting that pediatricians may recommend a "wait and see" approach rather than making early diagnoses, resulting in missed opportunities for early intervention. Chair Fierro emphasized the importance of increasing education for pediatricians and expanding programs that provide family navigation and support through clinical settings.
- Discussed the need to strengthen the confidence of early care and education providers in having conversations with families about developmental concerns. It was also noted that children who qualify for services through a Local Education Agency (LEA) generally receive those services only if they attend the LEA program, creating challenges for families who choose other early learning



settings. Sheronda Helton added that under IDEA, all school districts are required to provide the services, even if the child is not currently enrolled in an LEA program.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for Public Comment on discussion. There was one comment:

- Commended the landscape analysis and inquired whether quantitative data, such as the number of children identified and referred to through LEAs or school districts, had been collected in addition to qualitative findings. It was clarified that the current phase focused on qualitative data, with quantitative data to be incorporated in future phases to help inform solutions.

7. Strategic Planning Ad hoc Update

Debra Colman, Director at OAECE, grounded the discussion by providing context on the role of the Local Planning Council (LPC) in leading the development of the Strategic Plan. She clarified that, per Welfare Code requirements, the LPC's role is to develop a plan to increase public and private investment in the Early Care and Education (ECE) system and contribute to a broader countywide strategy representing Los Angeles County. She emphasized that the Strategic Plan is not an OAECE strategic plan or an implementation plan, and that as a government body, the LPC must operate within appropriate guardrails. The LPC's role is to educate, plan, and engage the ECE community, rather than serve as an advocacy organization.

Eli Pessar, Chair of the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc, provided an overview of the Strategic Plan development process and timeline. He shared that the Strategic Plan process began in September 2025, with the ad hoc meeting four times between January and April 2026. The ad hoc reviewed multiple data sources, incorporated feedback from the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, and will continue refining recommendations by assessing dependencies, priorities, and the LPC's unique role. The draft Strategic Plan is expected to be developed in Fall 2026, presented for approval at the November 2026 Planning Committee, and submitted to the state in December 2026.

Key takeaways from the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc discussions on access to ECE included:

- A desire to strengthen the impact of current Strategic Plan access strategies.
- The need to improve data availability and use compelling narratives to support ECE planning and communication efforts.
- Addressing persistent inequities in access to child care.
- Improving coordination and navigation across the ECE system.
- Building on lessons learned from COVID-19 to strengthen long-term ECE system sustainability.

Raahi Reddy, Principal at Estolano Advisors, presented the draft Strategic Plan recommendations and highlighted recurring themes identified throughout the process, including fortifying the ECE system, maximizing and fully utilizing available resources, and supporting the well-being, stability, and sustainability of the ECE workforce. Ms. Reddy introduced the three priority areas identified in the draft Strategic Plan:

- Priority Area 1: ECE Workforce, including compensation, financial support, and workforce well-being (mental and physical health).
- Priority Area 2: Access to ECE, including family access to ECE regardless of income and access to subsidized ECE.



- Priority Area 3: ECE Infrastructure, including ECE facilities development and ECE operations.

More information was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

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

- Expressed concern that equitable compensation strategies should be paired with sustainable funding, noting that increasing wages without additional funding could place financial strain on providers and small businesses.
- Discussed workforce well-being, noting that increasing operational demands, federal policy changes, and immigration-related concerns are contributing to provider burnout. It was suggested that strategies explicitly address operational burdens as a key component of workforce well-being.
- Emphasized the importance of expanding access to workforce development opportunities, noting that low wages can make it difficult for educators to pursue higher education and professional advancement.
- Questions were raised about the proposed apprenticeship strategy, with members requesting clearer language to distinguish apprenticeships from existing teacher qualification pathways. It was clarified that apprenticeships are intended to create additional entry points into the workforce rather than replace child development permit requirements. Members also suggested broadening the terminology to encompass workforce development programs.
- Discussed barriers related to facilities development and licensing, emphasizing the need to identify permitting challenges for small businesses, streamline licensing processes, and explore partnerships with school districts to repurpose unused classrooms for early care and education programs.
- Supported exploring a "one-stop shop" approach to help families access information about eligibility across multiple child care programs and funding streams. It was suggested that stronger cross-agency coordination or a backbone organization could improve communication and navigation across systems.
- Recommended broadening outreach strategies to include all new parents, not only parenting students, by leveraging trusted community settings such as pediatric offices and health clinics to increase awareness of child care options and available subsidies.

Chair Fierro opened the floor for public discussion; one comment was discussed.

- Shared that the Long Beach Early Care and Education Hub integrates access to child care, food resources, WIC, and CalFresh, with plans to incorporate Transitional Kindergarten eligibility in collaboration with Help Me Grow. It was noted that lessons learned from the hub model will help inform the Strategic Plan.

8. Announcement of Election Results



Chair Fierro announced the results of the FY 2026–2027 Leadership Team election. The elected officers are as follows:

- Chair: Andrea Fernandez Mendoza
- First Vice Chair: Rachel Bocarsly
- Second Vice Chair: Christina Moore

9. Consent Calendar – Approval of April 1, 2026 Minutes and Vote to Dissolve Child Care Planning Committee Ad hocs for Fiscal Year 2025-26 Including Family Access, UPK Workforce, Governance, Special Needs and Inclusion

Chair Manuel Fierro presented the approval of the April 1, 2026 meeting minutes and the dissolution of the Child Care Planning Committee Ad Hocs for Fiscal Year 2025–2026, including Family Access, UPK Workforce, Governance, Special Needs and Inclusion, and Strategic Planning. Chair Fierro requested a motion to approve both items. Member Ancelma Sanchez moved to approve the April 1, 2026, minutes and dissolve the FY 2025–2026 Ad Hocs, and Member Nellie Ríos Parra seconded the motion. Chair Fierro opened the floor for discussion. The motion passed with no abstentions.

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

- Clarified that ad hocs are established as needed to address specific issues and are dissolved once their purpose has been completed. At the end of each program year, remaining ad hocs are dissolved to allow for the development of the new program year's priorities and leadership structure beginning July 1, 2026. Councilmembers and alternates will receive communication during the summer regarding ad hoc committee assignments for the upcoming year.

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

10. General Public Comment and Announcements

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

- Members expressed gratitude to Chair Manuel Fierro for his dedication and commitment to the Planning Committee, as well as to Councilmembers Dr. La Tanga Hardy and Edilma Serna for their advocacy, leadership, and contributions to the Committee's work.
- Nellie Ríos-Parra expressed appreciation to leadership and fellow councilmembers for their support, flexibility, and continued participation throughout the year. A request was made for a group photo to commemorate the end of the FY 2025–2026 program year.
- Betty Collins, United American Indian Involvement, shared an upcoming opening of a resource and child care center serving Indigenous, Alaska Native, and Native communities in Antelope Valley in June, as well as a Pow Wow event planned for July at California State University, Los Angeles.
- Lisa Wilkin highlighted the importance of supporting the full child care system, including families who pay out of pocket and community-based providers, noting concerns about the loss of

nonprofit child care programs and upcoming discussions on the issue of the disappearing nonprofit child care system.

- La Tanga Hardy reflected on the importance of the Planning Committee’s work and encouraged continued commitment to improving early care and education systems by keeping children and families at the center of the work.
- Alejandra Berrio, Child Care Choices Program Manager, shared an update on the Child Care Choices trainings, which focus on increasing awareness of early care and education options and supporting families in navigating child care resources and services. Over 600 staff have been trained to help connect families with available child care options.

11. Call to Adjourn

Vice Chair Fernandez Mendoza moved to adjourn the Planning Committee meeting. Member Alicia Rivas seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting was passed with no objections. The Planning Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Attendance

5. Nicole Baitx Kennedy

Public Agency

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

Child Care Provider/Early Educator

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

Parent/Caregiver

1. Christina Moore
2. Eli Pessar
3. Elsa Leal
4. Kelly Reynolds, alternate for Humberto Manuel Estratalan

Discretionary

1. Eva Rivera
2. Ivy Chang
3. Jessica Guerra
4. La Tanga Hardy
5. Sarah Soriano
6. Vanessa Macias

Community Organization

1. Betty Collins
2. Manuel Fierro
3. Mirel Herrera
4. Samitha Givens
5. Leticia Casillas-Sanchez, alternate for Stacy Lee

Public Attendance

1. Shay Scott
2. Amanda Hsu
3. Hazel Naal
4. Dave Scahill
5. Chris Sears
6. Whitney Leathers
7. Alejandra Albarran Moses
8. Gloria Santoyo

9. Andrea Basa
10. Zenaida Meza
11. Karina Agredano
12. Jill Cipresso
13. Lisa Wilkin
14. Josie Bartolo
15. Sheron Barker
16. Norma Rivera
17. Melita Ferguson
18. Adela Arellano
19. Veronica Torres
20. Ruben Guardado

OAECE Staff Attendance

1. Debra Colman, *Director*
2. Leanne Drogin, *Deputy Director*
3. Meliza Hernandez, *Program Manager*
4. Betsy Jacoby, *Program Manager*
5. Ida Legesse, *Program Manager*
6. Alejandra Berrio, *Program Manager*
7. Sheronda Helton, *Research Specialist*
8. Simone Taylor, *LPC Coordinator*
9. Maryam Diaab, *UPK Program Specialist*
10. Sergio Fierro, *Senior Operations Associate*
11. Diana Alvarado, *Policy and Program Specialist*