COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CHILD CARE PLANNING COMMITTEE
POLICY • PLANNING • PRACTICE

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES Public Health

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
OFFICE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Los Angeles County
Early Care and Education Strategic Plan
2026 – 2030

DRAFT

Note: This is a text copy draft.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hilda L. Solis
First District

Holly Mitchell
Second District

Lindsey P. Horvath
Third District

Janice Hahn
Fourth District

Kathryn Barger
Fifth District

LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Munto Davis, M.D., M.P.H.
Los Angeles County Health Officer

Anish P. Mahajan, M.D., M.S., M.P.H.
Chief Deputy Director

Priya Batra, MD, MS
Deputy Director, Health Promotion Bureau

Debra Colman, M.S.W.
Director, Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education

DRAFT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM CHILD CARE PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIR.....4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....5
VISION, MISSION, AND EQUITY STATEMENT.....6
LA COUNTY CHILD CARE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.....7
A SNAPSHOT OF THE LA COUNTY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION LANDSCAPE.....8
FROM PLANNING TO ACTION: HOW TO USE THE STRATEGIC PLAN.....10
PRIORITY AREA 1: WORKFORCE.....11
PRIORITY AREA 2: ACCESS.....12
PRIORITY AREA 3: INFRASTRUCTURE.....13

DRAFT

Dear Colleagues,

The early years of a child's life are a profound window of limitless potential, building the cognitive, social, and emotional foundations that shape an entire lifetime. Across Los Angeles County (LA County), our early care and education (ECE) system serves as the heartbeat of our communities and the engine of our economy. By championing our youngest learners and supporting working families, we do more than prepare children for kindergarten and beyond; we unlock their future ability to thrive, dream, and succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Yet, our ECE community stands at a vital crossroads. Navigating a landscape reshaped by economic pressures, political agendas, shifting educational structures, and evolving community demands require more than resilience; it demands bold vision and collective action. To meet this moment, the Child Care Planning Committee, alongside the Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) and nearly a hundred dedicated civic leaders, educators, and advocates, has forged a unified path forward. We are proud to present the **2026–2030 LA County Unified Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education**, anchored in three transformative priorities:

- **Workforce:** Our early educators are the soul of this system, yet they face immense professional and personal strain. We must champion true livable compensation, elevate workplace mental health and well-being, and fortify career pathways so that those who care for our children are deeply valued, sustained, and respected.
- **Access:** Every family, regardless of zip code or background, deserves a clear, welcoming door to high-quality care. We are dedicated to tearing down navigational barriers, streamlining family enrollment, and expanding financial resources so that equitable, affordable early learning is a reality for every child, especially our most vulnerable.
- **Infrastructure:** The severe shortage of physical spaces, particularly for our youngest infants and toddlers, demands urgent innovation. By untangling complex permitting processes, easing regulatory burdens, and expanding capital investments, we will help our providers build, sustain, and grow the physical environments where children safely flourish.

A vision of equity and excellence cannot be achieved in isolation. It relies on the fierce dedication of every partner in our ecosystem, from educators and parents to policymakers, business leaders, and philanthropy. We invite you to join hands with us, lending your unique voice, passion, and expertise to bring this strategic vision to life. Together, let us build an enduring legacy where every child in Los Angeles County is healthy, thriving, and empowered to reach their highest aspirations.

Warmly,
Andrea Fernandez Mendoza
Chair, Child Care Planning Committee

DRAFT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Child Care Planning Committee extends its deepest gratitude to partners and community members who devoted their time, energy, and expertise to the development of this strategic plan. Notably, the Child Care Planning Committee formed a Strategic Planning Ad Hoc to review input from various sources, offer their knowledge, and provide feedback based on their diverse experiences.[1] Their hard work grounds this unified approach to strengthen ECE across LA County.

Child Care Planning Committee – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Dr. Alicia Rivas
Alsu Muftakhova
Ancelma Sanchez
Andrea Fernandez Mendoza**
Anna M. Lopez
Aurora Lopez
Betty Collins
Bobby Guerrero
Brianna Harvey
Brittie Crawford
Carol Sigala
Christina Moore
Crystal Thompson
Danielle Craig
Deidre Corwin
Dianne Philibosian
Edilma Serna
Eileen Dominguez
Eli Pessar
Elsa Leal
Erendira Doherty
Eva Rivera
Fiona Stewart
Gina Rodriguez
Gus Bribiesca
Humberto Manuel Estratalan
Ivy Chang
Jen Baca Beltran
Jessica Guerra
Jessica Kim
Jessica Reynaga
Jill Lee
Joelle L. Landazabal
Jose Ramos
Justine Lawrence
Kelly Fountain
Kelly Reynolds
La Tanga Hardy
LaShon Tillie-Jones
Leidy Milla Bernasconi
Manuel Fierro*
Melita Ferguson
Miguel Segura
Mirel Herrera
Mona Franco
Natalie Lucero
Nellie Ríos-Parra
Nicole Baitx Kennedy
Rachel Bocarsly
Samitha Givens
Sarah Soriano
Sasha Duarte
Saul Hurtado
Stacy Lee*
Sylvia Hernandez
Thomas Sullivan
Tracey Washington
Ufuoma Akwaja
Vanessa Macias
Vanessa San Martin

Los Angeles County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education

Alejandra Berrio
Betsy Jacoby
Charles White
Claudia Valle
Debra Colman
Diana Alvarado
Elizabeth Casprowitz
Erica Weiss
Ida Legesse
Leanne Drogin
Maryam Diaab
Meliza Hernandez
Simone Taylor
Sheronda Helton
Sergio Fierro

Strategic Plan Consultant Team

Beda Castillo, Associate, Estolano Advisors
Demetria Murphy, Senior Associate, Estolano Advisors
Raahi Reddy, Principal, Estolano Advisors

[1] Child Care Planning Committee Chair FYs 2024-2026 denoted by *; Child Care Planning Committee Chair FYs 2026-2028 denoted by **.

DRAFT

VISION, MISSION, AND EQUITY STATEMENT

As the Local Child Care and Development Planning Council, the Child Care Planning Committee embraces the following vision, mission, and equity statements to guide its work:

Vision

Children are healthy, thriving and have equitable opportunities to achieve optimal development and succeed in life.

Mission

Lead, build, and strengthen an affordable and high-quality ECE system for the children and families in LA County.

Equity Statement

The Child Care Planning Committee firmly believes that all young children in Los Angeles (LA) County have an undeniable right to develop and thrive without explicit and implicit biases. Existing systemic educational and societal barriers have led historically marginalized communities to lack access to education, healthcare, and other services necessary for their growth and development. Acknowledging and eliminating the various layers of inequities is essential and central to ensuring that children, families, and child care providers will be recognized as valued members of society. The Child Care Planning Committee will also work diligently to make a collective impact in advancing equity for child care providers by influencing and championing training, development opportunities, and a diverse workforce. To accomplish this, we must normalize a holistic, intentional investment in children, families, and child care providers. As influencers, we strive to create conscious, collaborative communities of leaders, policy makers, educators, and parents. The Child Care Planning Committee is dedicated to challenging one another to engage in a full spectrum of diverse perspectives amongst subject-matter experts and the community at-large. The Planning Committee is committed to being a catalyst of advocacy for equitable public policies and supporting and sustaining effective quality early care and education through recommendations to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

DRAFT

LA COUNTY CHILD CARE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

LA County Child Care Planning Committee

The Child Care Planning Committee, LA County's state-mandated Local Child Care and Development Planning Council (LPC), is funded by the California Department of Social Services. LPCs are state-mandated, county-level bodies responsible for planning, coordinating, and prioritizing child care and early education services based on local family needs. Established as the County's LPC in 1991, the Planning Committee is comprised of 50 councilmembers representing parents/consumers, early educators, community organizations, public agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, institutions of higher education, and Board of Supervisor appointees. One of the roles of the Child Care Planning Committee is to develop a 5-year comprehensive countywide child care plan to mobilize public and private resources to address identified needs.

Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education

The Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE), a division of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, envisions a high-quality ECE system accessible to all families that nurtures children's healthy growth and early learning, fosters protective factors in families, and strengthens communities. As the LA County hub that strengthens ECE practice, public policy, and systems, OAECE serves as staff to the Child Care Planning Committee.

Strategic Planning Process

Grounded in data, the strategic planning process launched in September 2025 by showcasing critical research at the Planning Committee General Meetings. Between September 2025 and April 2026, the Planning Committee hosted various presentations including Los Angeles County Public Health's Child Care Survey, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment's State of the ECE Workforce, Dr. Bruce Fuller's report on Transitional Kindergarten in California, and the Local Planning Committee's 2026 Local Funding Priorities. Alongside meeting discussions, the Planning Committee formed a Strategic Planning Ad Hoc to critically explore issues and provide input on the Strategic Plan's priority areas, goals, and example strategies. The Strategic Planning Ad Hoc brought these ideas back to the Planning Committee General Meetings for additional discussion, feedback and refinement. As an aligned government body with a focus on ECE policy issues, the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development also informed the plan. To complement these activities, one-on-one interviews were held with key ECE systems leaders like First 5 LA, the LA County Office for Education, and the Child Care Alliance of LA.

DRAFT

A SNAPSHOT OF THE LA COUNTY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

The Foundational Impact of Early Learning and Child Care

According to the 2023 Los Angeles County ECE Needs Assessment, LA County is home to 1,388,212 children from birth to age 12, with 595,314 children under 5 years old.[2] A robust array of research states that during the first five years of a child's life, the brain undergoes its most rapid development, building foundational cognitive, social, emotional, and physical capacities that directly drive lifelong success.[3] ECE programs are a critical support for the development of young children, while also serving as a child care resource for parents who are working or going to school. According to the 2023 California Resource and Referral Network's Data Tool , Los Angeles County's ECE Landscape has a rich mixed delivery system of 79 school districts, 2,379 licensed centers, and 5,061 licensed family child care homes, as well as an invisible support system of Family, Friend, and Neighbor care.[4] Currently, there is limited supply of licensed ECE spaces with 12,341 slots for infants and toddlers from birth to 23 months of age, 130,047 slots for preschool age children 2 to 5 years old only, and 17,659 slots for school age children 6- 12 years old.[5] Although there has been a significant increase in availability with the number of preschool age children accessing programs due to the expansion of transitional kindergarten (TK), the licensed child care system has limited capacity to serve LA County's infants and toddlers. Growing the physical capacity of ECE spaces is constrained by high administrative fees and start-up costs ranging from $10,000–$50,000 per site. In addition, facility development is a lengthy process with site plans taking months before being approved. The California Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program eased some of the financial burden of ECE infrastructure development by awarding $74.2 million to 799 LA programs. These grants directly funded small-scale facility construction, renovations and repairs, and new construction to serve over 25,200 children. In addition to the limited capacity of ECE programs, child care is a significant expense for many families with infant and toddler full-time care ranging from an annual cost of $13,363 - $14,787, and preschool age services costing $11,529 - $11,699.[6] Although child care is expensive for many families, children most in need are often eligible for a wide array of subsidized ECE like Head Start, Early Head Start, California State Preschool Program, General Child Care, California Alternative Payment Program, CalWorks and Emergency Child Care Bridge. In addition, California recently expanded TK, a free program for all 4-year-old children.

At the center of the early learning ecosystem is the ECE workforce. Although early educators are the heartbeat of ECE, workers often face low compensation which impacts workforce stability and retention. The median annual wage reached $50,100 for center lead teachers, $43,700 for assistant teachers, and between $45,000 and $55,000 for large family child care providers in 2025.[7] For context, the 2026 Living Cost Index estimates the annual average cost of living in Los Angeles to be from $59,700.00 for a single person to $110,466.00 for a family of four. Many early educators and family child care home providers may also have limited benefits as a part of their compensation. As a result of low wages in 2025, 43% of Family Child Care Home providers and 27% of center educators and directors utilized public assistance.[8] Early educators also experience physical and mental health challenges. In a 2025 survey conducted by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 57% of family child care home providers, 66% of center directors, and 71% of center teaching staff met the threshold for significant

[2,4,5,6] *Child Care Data Tool.* (2026). California Resource and Referral Network. Retrieved September 29, 2026, from https://rrnetwork.org/research/child-care-data-tool#.

[3] Linda K. Smith et al., " Building Bipartisan Support for Child Care Toolkit: 2021 Update," Bipartisan Policy Center, April 2021, 65, https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/BPC-Child-Care-Toolkit.April-2021.pdf.

[7, 9] Powell et. al., "State of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Los Angeles County."
Powell et. al., "State of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Los Angeles County."

stress.[9] According to the 2025 State of the Early Education Workforce Report, the majority of California's early educators worry about the ability to pay for basic expenses contributing to overall stress.[10]

The Resilience of the ECE Community: Public Health Emergencies and Natural Disasters

Since the launch of the *LA County Unified Strategic Plan for ECE 2020–2025*, the ECE landscape has been reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and unforeseen LA County wildfires. These compounding issues elevated the vital role early educators play as a part of essential community infrastructure. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a disruption in the ECE landscape with many child care providers closing or reducing the number of children they could serve. By December 2020, 296 Los Angeles County ECE facilities ended their operations, impacting an estimated 7,500 child care spots. Fortunately, the resilience of the ECE sector emerged through the LA County COVID-19 ECE Response Team which conducted informational webinars, coordinated vaccines for early educators, and distributed masks and test kits. The response team received a coveted award from the National Association of County and City Public Health Officials for their innovation. Once the COVID-19 crisis passed, the Eaton and Palisades wildfires of 2025 introduced new operational disruptions and environmental stressors for ECE providers. More than 1,000 child-care slots were impacted when the Eaton fire damaged or completely destroyed over half of Altadena's family child care homes and centers.[11] Once again, the LA County ECE Response Team was activated to conduct informational webinars, distribute supplies, and partner with State and County departments to support the child care system.

A Time of Transformation

In 2026, the ECE sector faces transformation with the expansion of TK through school districts and charter schools and its unintended impact on community-based ECE programs. Although TK has increased access to free early learning for all 4-year-old children, it has also disrupted the business models in private and community based ECE programs that relied on the enrollment of preschool age children to balance operating costs for infants and toddlers. In addition to the impact of TK, intensive immigration enforcement has introduced trauma and stress for immigrant families and educators alike. In a 2026 national survey of parents and child care providers, nearly one-third of surveyed providers observed the impacts of immigration enforcement in their community. This figure rose to 48% among immigrant providers.[12] Heightened federal immigration operations instilled fear in families and educators, driving down child care attendance and educator employment.[13] Although the ECE system has benefited from investments in facility development and an increase in enrollment for preschool age children, there is still a long road ahead to strengthen ECE access, workforce, and infrastructure. In this time of change, how does the ECE community meet the moment to fortify and expand the system? Within this time of transformation, there is an opportunity to re-envision child care access, embrace innovation in supporting early educators, and collaboratively build a stronger early learning infrastructure for all LA County children.

---

[9] Harris, K. M., Gaffey, A. E., Schwartz, J. E., Krantz, D. S., & Burg, M. M. (2023). The perceived stress scale as a measure of stress: Decomposing score variance in longitudinal behavioral medicine studies. Annals of Behavioral Medicine: A Publication of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, 57(10), 846–854. https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaad015.; Powell et. al., "State of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Los Angeles County."

[10] Wanzi Muruvi et. al., The Economic Well-Being of Early Educators in California, Early Educator Well-Being Series, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley, 2024, https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/report/CA-economicwellbeing-2024.

[11] Kate Sequeira, "Altadena, Pasadena Child Care Rebuilding After LA Fires (Eaton Fire)," Los Angeles Times, February 24, 2026, https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2026-02-24/altadena-pasadena-child-care-rebuilding-la-fires-eaton-fire.

[12] "Listening to Caregivers of Young Children About Immigration Enforcement," RAPID Survey Project, Stanford Center on Early Childhood, Stanford University, February 24, 2026, https://rapidsurveyproject.com/article/listening-to-caregivers-of-young-children-about-immigration-enforcement/.

[13] "Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis," American Immigration Council, December 11, 2025, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/immigrant-workers-childcare-crisis/; Silvia Muñoz and Caitlin McLean, "Immigration Policies Harm the Early Childhood Workforce and the Communities They Serve," Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley, April 22, 2025, https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/brief/immigration-policies-harm-ece/.

DRAFT

FROM PLANNING TO ACTION: HOW TO USE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

A North Star for ECE in LA County

The strategic plan serves as a guiding framework for LA County's ECE system. Developed by the LA County Child Care Planning Committee, the strategic plan fosters collaboration to ensure all children from birth through age five and school age children in before or after school programs have access to high-quality ECE. Every LA County partner has a role to play in the implementation of the plan. Early educators, families, community organizations, systems leaders, elected officials, business leaders, philanthropy, and school districts each play an essential part in mobilizing resources, building partnerships, and advancing the strategic plan's core goals.

Priorities, Goals and Example Strategies

The LA County Child Care Planning Committee worked collaboratively to design the strategic plan's priority areas, goals, and example strategies. A goal is what the Strategic Plan would like to change in the ECE system, while an example strategy is an idea that demonstrates a way to obtain the goal. The example strategies are not the only way to impact change but simply a starting place to begin the conversation.

- **Priority Area**
  - Key focus that guides the strategic plan (i.e., ECE workforce)
- **Goal**
  - What the strategic plan would like to change (i.e., Align, expand and strengthen ECE pathways for recruiting and preparing new early educators)
- **Example Strategy**
  - An idea that demonstrates a way to obtain the goal. (i.e., Engage private sector organizations as partners in ECE workforce development such as chambers of commerce, industry-specific trade associations, and the Southern California Business Alliance.

How To Use the Strategic Plan

As a common tool to guide ECE policy, practice, and investment across LA County, stakeholders can leverage this framework in various ways.

- **Unify Approaches:** Share with early educators, child care providers, and practitioners to align regional priorities.
- **Empower Families:** Equip parents and families with the tools and information needed to advocate effectively for the ECE system.
- **Guide Planning:** Utilize as a foundational resource for community-based organizations and public agencies during strategic planning and program design.
- **Inform Policy:** Provide elected officials with strategies to elevate local, state, and federal legislation.
- **Influence Leadership:** Present examples to LA County and city leaders, as well as business partners, to demonstrate how they can become ECE champions.
- **Engage Philanthropy:** Explore with philanthropic partners to inform targeted investments.

DRAFT

PRIORITY AREA 1: WORKFORCE

Across LA County, low wages, operational pressures, and external stressors contribute to ECE workforce issues. In 2025, nearly two-thirds of family child care home providers (62%) and 42% of center directors identified "earning a sufficient income" as a key operational challenge.[14] Simultaneously, annual turnover rate among center-based lead teachers (21%) and assistant teachers (19%) remains high.[15] External pressures such as federal immigration enforcement and the COVID-19 pandemic have further strained staff shortages. Across the country, ECE providers (49%) and parents (61%) reported a reduced sense of safety, unity, or belonging in their communities due to immigration enforcement in 2025.[16] ECE professionals are also experiencing mental health challenges. In a 2025 survey conducted by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 57% of family child care home providers, 66% of center directors, and 71% of center teaching staff met the threshold for significant stress.[17]

Goal 1.A. Promote increased compensation for the ECE workforce.

- **Example Strategy: 1.A.1.** Establish state subsidy reimbursement rates for licensed ECE providers at 100% of the true cost of care, inclusive of compensation at a living wage with benefits.
- **Example Strategy 1.A.2.** Establish a dedicated and ongoing local revenue source to augment the reimbursement rate paid to early education centers, family child care homes and Family, Friend, and Neighbor care providers.

Goal 1.B. Expand access and awareness of workplace well-being strategies that promote the mental health of the ECE workforce and address external stressors in the workplace.

- **Example Strategy: 1.B.1.** Assess the mental health needs of the LA County ECE workforce to identify gaps and develop a resource guide to support the needs of early educators in center-based care and family child care homes.
- **Example Strategy: 1.B.2.** Expand access to "know your rights" and legal resources for ECE workforce navigating the impacts of federal immigration enforcement.
- **Example Strategy: 1.B.3.** Develop an emergency preparedness toolkit for ECE centers and family child care homes.

Goal 1.C. Align, expand and strengthen ECE workforce development pathways for recruiting and preparing new early educators.

- **Example Strategy: 1.C.1.** Convene an apprenticeship community of practice to strengthen ECE workforce pathways in collaboration with ECE providers, child care resource and referral agencies, community-based organizations, local education agencies, the county office of education, institutions of higher education, and the economic development department.
- **Example Strategy: 1.C.2.** Engage private sector organizations as partners in ECE workforce development such as chambers of commerce, industry-specific trade associations, and the Southern California Business Alliance.

[14,16] Powell et. al., "State of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Los Angeles County," Additional Tables.

[16] RAPID Survey Project, "Listening to Caregivers of Young Children About Immigration Enforcement."

[17] " Harris, K. M., Gaffey, A. E., Schwartz, J. E., Krantz, D. S., & Burg, M. M. (2023). The perceived stress scale as a measure of stress: Decomposing score variance in longitudinal behavioral medicine studies. Annals of Behavioral Medicine: A Publication of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, 57(10), 846–854. https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaad015.; Powell et. al., "State of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Los Angeles County."

PRIORITY AREA 2: ACCESS

The high costs of child care and complex enrollment processes hinder access to ECE for families of all income levels. According to the 2023 ECE Needs Assessment Brief, LA County has the licensed capacity to serve only 24% of children ages birth to12 years whose parents are in the labor force.[18] Even with increased investment in subsidized care to reduce costs, families are unaware of available publicly funded child care or resources to navigate ECE access. For example, only 8% of eligible infants and toddlers were served in subsidized programs in 2025.[19] These challenges leave low-income children unserved, indicating that there is greater systemic collaboration needed to ensure all children have access to quality, affordable ECE through streamlining navigation for families, forging cross-system partnerships, scaling sustainable local funding, and using data to drive expansion.

Goal 2.A. Strengthen and simplify access to ECE programs for LA County families.

- **Example Strategy: 2.A.1.** Develop and maintain a user-friendly, centralized online platform to help families locate ECE services and navigate enrollment in partnership with child care resource and referral agencies and the local county office of education.
- **Example Strategy: 2.A.2.** Expand public awareness of subsidized/publicly funded ECE programs through collaborative campaigns, social media, and public service announcements.

Goal 2.B. Build partnerships that connect the ECE sector with other social services systems that support families with young children.

- **Example Strategy: 2.B.1.** Advance cross-system collaboration between early education centers, family child care homes, LA County departments, and social service organizations to improve coordinated access to subsidized child care services.
- **Example Strategy: 2.B.2**. Strengthen partnerships with community colleges and universities to increase awareness of and access to ECE programs and comprehensive supports for parenting students.

Goal 2.C. Expand financial investments to support sustainability and expansion of ECE programs.

- **Example Strategy: 2.C.1.** Expand California State Preschool Program funding models administered through Family Child Care Home Education Networks (FCCHENs) to increase preschool instructional options as a part of Universal PreKindergarten.
- **Example Strategy: 2.C.2.** Increase investments in locally financed child care voucher programs, like LA County's Child Care Choices, by leveraging funding for justice reform and homeless services.

Goal 2.D. Expand access to publicly available, user-friendly tools and data resources that support local planning for ECE expansion.

- **Example Strategy: 2.D.1.** Increase stakeholder knowledge by developing public-facing dashboards that track the capacity of the ECE system and enrollment of eligible children in publicly funded child care.
- **Example Strategy: 2.D.2.** Strengthen LA County ECE data collaboratives to develop research briefs that are meaningful for early educators, families, advocates, community organizations, philanthropy, business, and elected officials.

[18,20] "Early Care and Education Access Brief, 2023 Los Angeles County Early Care and Education Needs Assessment," Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, Department of Public Health, County of Los Angeles, May 6, 2025, https://childcare.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ECE-Needs-Brief-FINAL-5.6.25-002.pdf.

DRAFT

PRIORITY AREA 3: INFRASTRUCTURE

Fortifying the ECE infrastructure is a critical need. According to the 2022 ECE Needs Assessment, LA County only has licensed capacity to serve 4% of children from birth to 23 months. Lengthy permitting processes, costly regulatory requirements, restrictive zoning, and limited access to capital hinder child care providers' development, expansion, and operation of ECE programs. Addressing the challenges faced by ECE providers in expanding their capacity will help LA County increase the number of child care spaces needed to meet demand. Although there are tremendous efforts underway to build infrastructure, site plan approvals for ECE facilities can take several months. The costs for just facility development plans can range from $253 to $3,766 per site, and administrative procedures are challenging for ECE providers to navigate amidst other operational priorities.[20] Combined with restrictive zoning and limited access to capital, these administrative processes and financial burdens hinder child care providers' development, expansion, and operation of ECE programs.

Goal 3.A. Strengthen, streamline and simplify ECE facility development across LA County.

- **Example Strategy: 3.A.1.** Encourage cities across LA County to provide early educators with easy-to-use tools, templates, and guidance to streamline ECE facility development processes.
- **Example Strategy: 3.A.2.** Invest in ECE facility renovation and development to address the expansion of ECE programs that serve infants and toddlers through innovative strategies like capital stacking, an approach that combines different types of capital—such as debt, equity, and specialized financing—into a structured hierarchy to fund a project efficiently.

Goal 3.B. Increase ECE facility renovation and/or development for programs that serve infants and toddlers.

- **Example Strategy: 3.B.1.** Support efforts to reassess California Community Care Licensing square footage regulations for licensed infant and toddler programs to support capacity building efforts.
- **Example Strategy: 3.B.2.** Galvanize creative collaborations with school districts to renovate unused schools to become ECE programs for infants and toddlers in collaboration with the ECE mixed delivery system.

Goal 3.C. Improve connections between ECE providers and operational resources that help reduce program costs and support business sustainability.

- **Example Strategy: 3.C.1.** Develop a toolkit of LA County and community resources to reduce operational costs of early education centers, family child care homes, and Family, Friend, and Neighbor care.
- **Example Strategy: 3.C.2.** Partner with the economic development entities and workforce investment boards to provide small business training specifically geared towards family child care homes.

Goal 3.D. Elevate the importance of ECE as a priority in LA County municipalities.

- **Example Strategy: 3.D.1.** Promote the adoption of ECE strategies and child care friendly policies in local government by convening municipalities in local learning sessions.
- **Example Strategy: 3.D.2.** Encourage child care navigation training for all LA County staff, as well as for employees of the various cities throughout the County.

[20] *Fees - LA County Planning*. (2026, March 2). LA County Planning., accessed September 29, 2026, https://planning.lacounty.gov/fees/.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank.

DRAFT