



Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting Summary: August 24, 2020

Attendees: Alicia Lieberman, Antoinette Jacobs, Carola Olivia Olson, Cheryl Polk, Dean Tagawa, Amelia Soto, Ann Louise Bonnitto, Debra Ward, Donna Sneeringer, Janet Zamudio, Kim Pattillo Brownson, Kimberley Johnson, Khydeeja Alam Javid, Laura (Kay) Ruhstaller, Maria "Lupe" Jaime, Mary Ignatius, Mayra E. Alvarez, Miren Algorri, Nadine Burke Harris, Naima Facih, Natali Gaxiola, Patricia Alexander, Patricia Lozano, Patrick MacFarlane, Paula Merrigan, Robin Layton, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Scott Moore, Sheryl Shushan, Sonia Jaramillo, Stephanie Myers, Tonia McMillan, Virginia Eigen, Yenni Rivera

Number of virtual participants: 481

1. Welcome and Introductions (Chair Burke Harris)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Nadine Burke Harris presented an overview of some of the salient themes from the June 8, 2020 ECPC meeting which included discussions on the state budget and proposed cuts related to early learning and care and the importance of elevating racial justice and equity as a central lens to the Council's work. Another theme from the June 8 meeting was the Council's desire to provide more input to the Master Plan. As a result, the Master Plan team invited each Council member to engage with them one-on-one to contribute their deep expertise to the plan.
- Chair Nadine Burke Harris encouraged members of the public to continue providing input outside of official ECPC meetings by submitting all suggestions, advice, recommendations or questions to the ECPC email address (ECPC@chhs.ca.gov) .

2. Early Childhood Policy Council Advisory Committees Update

- Parent Advisory Committee Chair Mary Ignatius and Workforce Advisory Committee Chair Tonia McMillan presented updates on their first committee meetings. Within their updates, both chairs explained that they each had a few remaining seats on their committees to be filled by their appointing bodies. As such both chairs are postponing selecting two members from their respective committees to be appointed to the full Council until their committees seats are filled.
- The meeting summaries from the Parent and Workforce Advisory Committee meetings can be found on the Early Childhood Policy Council website using the links below:
 - July 22, 2020 Parent Advisory Committee meeting (https://chhs-data-prod.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads/2020/08/03141041/ECPC-July-22-Parent-Committee-meeting-summary_final.pdf)
 - August 6, 2020 Workforce Advisory Committee meeting (https://chhs-data-prod.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads/2020/08/25134917/ECPC-August-6-Workforce-Committee-meeting-summary_final.pdf)

3. Preschool Development Grants (Initial and Renewal) Update

- Deputy Superintendent Sarah Neville-Morgan and Deputy Secretary Kris Perry presented updates on the federal Preschool Development Grant Initial (PDG-I) and the Preschool Development Grant Renewal (PDG-R). The purpose of the federal PDG opportunities is to support states in their ability to analyze their early learning and care (ELC) mixed-delivery systems and implement changes to the system that maximize the availability of high-quality ELC options, streamline administrative infrastructure, improve state-level ELC



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funding efficiencies and improve the quality of care. California was awarded both PDG grants to support ELC system enhancements and provide critical investments to enhance California's ELC system.

- Deputy Superintendent Sarah Neville-Morgan shared highlights from some of the PDG-I activities including the Statewide Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, Parent Cafes, Parent Committee, progress made toward enhancing an online Parent Portal, Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) planning, Local Planning Council (LPC) support and capacity building, establishing a Tribal Peer Learning Network, and the creation of a cross-agency State Stewardship Team (SST).
- Deputy Secretary presented an overview of the PDG-R administered by the California Health and Human Services Agency. California was awarded \$13.4 million per year for a total of \$40.2 million over the three-year grant period. The PDG-R builds on the initiatives and lessons learned from the PDG-I to create sustainable systems for early learning and care and to deliver what all kids in California need: comprehensive early learning and care—from the day they are born through to their start in school. The PDG-R will catalyze progress toward the state's goals through essential investments in workforce development systems, integrated data systems, and comprehensive family supports in alignment with other statewide initiatives to ensure that successes garnered are carried forth through sustainable, systems improvements in service of the state's long-term goals.
- The full Preschool Development Grants (Initial and Renewal) presentation can be found on the official Early Childhood Policy Council Website (https://chhs-data-prod.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads/2020/08/24084038/PDG-Slides-August-24-2020-ECPC-Meeting_COMPLIANTv2_ADA.pdf)

4. Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

- Master Plan for Early Learning and Care team members Jannelle Kubinec and Lupita Alcala presented an update on the plan development process and facilitated a discussion around how to advance equity through policies and practices for children and families.
- Feedback gathered during one-on-one interviews with Council members highlighted the importance of addressing existing inequities for children, parents, caregivers, and educators; embracing diversity; and advancing quality. Building on this feedback, the Master Plan team facilitated a discussion with the Council and members of the public to discuss strategies to combatting systemic inequities using the following approaches: ending discriminatory practices; embracing diversity; removing barriers to access; preparing and supporting the workforce; collecting and using data for accountability; providing technical assistance to build and sustain an equity-focused approach to early childhood; and restricting funding consistent with equity and expectations for care and learning.
- The full Master Plan for Early Learning and Care presentation can be found on the official Early Childhood Policy Council Website (https://chhs-data-prod.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads/2020/08/26072207/ECPC_Aug24_Master-Plan.pdf)

A high-level, thematic summary of Council discussion and public comments received during the meeting can be found in the following pages.



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Summary of Comments from the Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting

This Summary provides themes and illustrative quotes from participants in the Early Childhood Policy Council Meeting on August 24, 2020.

The Early Childhood Policy Council is an advisory body to the Governor, Legislature, and Superintendent of Public Instruction on statewide early learning, care, and child development. It will provide recommendations on all aspects of the state's early childhood system, including support for the demographic, geographic, and economic diversity of the state's children and families and ways the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Early Childhood Education's (ECE) final report can be updated and improved.

Summary of Comments and Questions by ECPC Council Members and the Public

The following highlights themes from the August 24, 2020 Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC) meeting based on recurring comments from ECPC members and the public.

The themes include:

- Funding of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program
- Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Frequently Used Assessments May Be Biased and Perpetuating Inequities
- Whole Child/Whole Family
- Highlighting the Needs of Families and Children
- Building State-Level Agency Partnerships and Streamlining Funds to Support Families
- Meeting the Needs of Children and Families by Investing in ELC and Providers
- Invest in Leveraging Partnerships with Community Colleges
- Challenges to Engaging ELC Providers in Professional Development
- Reassessing Early Learning
- Voices from the Field Are Vital in Informing Policy Change

Funding of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program

Many members of the public expressed support in the continued funding of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. The Program was highlighted for its features of equity, compensation, preparation, increasing the ELC workforce, and meeting the needs of children, families, and communities. Concern was expressed about how a lack of funding for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program could impact the future of the workforce.

“The mentor program helps educate the future teachers in the early childhood field and supports them as they begin to learn and hone their craft.”

“One way to increase and expand professional development is to continue to support and expand this program.”



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Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

QRIS was thoroughly discussed by both Council members and the public. Most prominently, comments were made about systemic and institutional racism that were framed by “stating that QRIS is racist.”

Others highlighted the need to address systemic and institutional racism, including racism that is perpetuated by the overrepresentation and underrepresentation of populations in research and data. Other Council members commented on the changes they would like to see in QRIS data.

“Would love to see our QRIS data collected and disaggregated so we can better assess and improve how quality improvement supports and ratings processes may affect participants across race, ethnicity, and setting.”

“We need a common data collection protocol and system for QRIS data, and to re-visit the way in which scores are calculated in order to make more meaning with the data.”

One member of the public supported the expansion of Quality Counts California throughout the state, claiming that it will help ensure “high quality early experiences for children regardless of what setting they are in (family child care, federal or state funded child care, or private full or part day child care).”

Frequently Used Assessments May Be Biased and Perpetuating Inequities

In alignment with the discussions about quality and data, others reflected on biases that exist in California data collection tools and approaches and in ELC-related research.

“FCCs told QRIS commissions prior to the inclusion of assessments and indicators of quality which included the ERS and CLASS assessments which are White normative and require great funding.”

“We need to review our assessments which are Eurocentric and disadvantage non-white, American born children.”

“There is not equity in ECE research for family child care. So, drawing from the literature will continue the systemic biases that have previously existed.”

Whole Child/Whole Family

The public wants to ensure a whole child/whole family framework that involves a multi-system approach and addresses issues of equity for children, families, and providers.

During the summary of the ECPC Parent Meeting, members of the public liked the summary Mary Ignatius provided, as well as the comments that Tonia McMillan provided.

“Really insightful comments, Mary! Love the Whole Child/Whole Family frame and how the examples you provided makes it come alive.”



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“Looking forward to continued partnership to strengthen whole family approaches to those households you identified [and those families who] may be participating in multiple programs and [are] most in need of resources.”

An “equitable whole child and whole family system” entails developing “a comprehensive plan to fund what California’s children, families and child care providers need to survive and thrive.”

A member of the public representing the Whole Child Equity Partnership suggested that the ECPC:

Make “sure equity-focused data driven policies and practices are part of the solution to address root causes and not just outcomes.”

“We offer a Whole Child Equity Need Index, realizing equity requires targeted funding like that of an equity-based funding index that identifies.”

“Echo[es] sentiment of needing to narrow down definition of equity and what we mean by whole child to drive this work.” Other members of the public agreed.

Highlighting the Needs of Families and Children

During the presentation by the California Department of Education and WestEd, several members of the Council and public expressed a sense of urgency to create change.

The attendees were alarmed to learn that “93% of infant and toddlers” are unserved by ELC settings in California.

The presentation also prompted members of the public to underscore the importance to meet the needs families. One member of the public commented on the need to help families who are on the verge of moving out of the country because they cannot afford living in the state.

There are “families moving across the border because they cannot afford rent. It takes those families up to three hours to come to work, many are opting to keep their children with a friend or family member.”

Several members highlighted information and requested data that specifically spoke to the needs of tribal families, particularly those facing poverty.

Building State-Level Agency Partnerships and Streamlining Funds to Support Families

The presentation summarizing the meeting with parents prompted comments that reiterated the challenges families have in asking for help and navigating resources and supports, particularly when the family is navigating through multiple systems and services.

“Families are having a difficult time navigating through the CalWORKs system to access child care for our most vulnerable and youngest children, especially with housing and child care access from county to county.”



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“Hope we can build stronger partnerships, collaboration and to learn from one another” to help families.

“A relatively easy-to-implement solution would be ensuring that organizations are staffed with communications specialists who have an understanding of the needs of parents and childcare providers/early learning teachers.” This would help government agencies be best equipped with “communicating requirements, regulations, and benefits.”

One member of the public asked about what is currently being done to support families in poverty and what are opportunities to partner and help serve these families.

“What are other state departments doing to move families out of poverty and reduce the poverty numbers in CA? How can we in ECE better partner with them? How can we influence equity in the distribution of their services, so we are working together towards a common goal?”

One member of the public shared how aligning funding streams can create a more equitable system.

It is “important that we have better alignment between all of the types of contracts and funding streams. It is not equitable for programs and families when the funding and state contracts do not align well.”

“The PDG process appears to address many of the issues California faces in our field. It appears as if the renewal grant will be used as a way to improve our systems and move us forward in consolidating the ELCD with DHHS.”

“Funds need to flow down to those who do the work daily in the field.”

Meeting the Needs of Children and Families by Investing in ECE and ECE Providers

Some members of the public linked meeting the needs of children and families with meeting the needs of child care providers.

“Meeting the diverse workforce where they are and supporting them to have the resources they need to effectively support children and families can help us meet children and families where they are since so many educators, particularly home-based educators, are very similar to the children and families they serve.”

A member of the public alluded to how identifying funding for ECE can also help address the inequities with regard to compensation and resources in the field.

“I’m looking forward to upcoming discussions to identify financial resources to implement and improve these systemic issues of the ECE profession.”

“Family child care providers still do not earn a livable wage or wages that are equitable to the work that we do. There is a problem... 100% rooted in system racist policies.”

One provider highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the discrepancy between the state’s financial investment in ECE and the expectations of providers.



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The COVID-19 pandemic, “has dramatically demonstrated that if we continue to underfund and undervalue ECE and the ECE workforce, we do so at our own peril societally.”

“Many people in this field have been laid off due to funding issues, and many of us that are still employed have taken pay cuts to stay open.”

Invest in Leveraging Partnerships with Community Colleges

Several members of the public highlighted the value of partnership and involving community colleges and institutions of higher education. They indicated the need to further invest in community colleges because they offer programs and resources that support the training of ECE teachers.

“...In policy and funding discussions, [community colleges] are often overlooked.” This member of the public listed how community colleges offer the mentor program, pre-service teacher programs, and lab schools, all of which “need [continual] funding.”

Other members of the public emphasized the importance of creating and strengthening partnerships with community colleges and institutions of higher education in creating career pathways and addressing inequitable compensation.

“Degree options, if we are discussing equity in pay, is an essential pathway.”

Credentials and add-on trainings “would be an important first step for bridging the systems and the expectations for children and families and would also be a step in pay equity.”

Community colleges were described as vital in facilitating teacher programs that provide opportunities for skill development and the enhancement of knowledge. Members of the public highlighted the need to strengthen community colleges so that programs and professional development opportunities could continue to be offered. One member of the public mentioned,

“Community college pre-service teacher programs in California are in need of support for the infrastructure that provides the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge that positively impact children and families in our communities.”

This member alludes that supporting the programs will in turn “positively impact children and families” in the community.

Another member highlighted how partnerships with community colleges and institutions of higher education are essential in strengthening ECE and the ECE workforce.

The member of the public stated, “How can we work together - and across systems (e.g., workforce development, higher education) - so that compromise will not be necessary?”

Challenges to Engaging ECE Providers in Professional Development

“Child care providers work hard not only at providing the best quality of care possible, but also on their academic and professional development.”



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“The toughest part of these trainings is the money but also the time it takes away from being in the [child care] center.”

One member of the public listed barriers providers experience in attending or participating in trainings.

“No or difficult transportation to training; hours of training are inconvenient for providers who work long hours all week; cost of training is prohibitive or difficult; online training is convenient if you have a computer and an Internet connection, which are expensive, but many of the providers with whom I speak do not have computers.”

Technology and computer literacy were also highlighted by other members of the public.

“There are still areas of the state where there are no stable internet service providers.”

“Access is the first and sometimes the most difficult barrier. Simply completing the application is a nightmare.”

“Ensuring equity requires that both access to higher education systems that were not historically created for the diverse women who comprise the existing ECE workforce, and varied supports that create pathways into and through many different professional learning opportunities.”

Providers “need ongoing updates and education to close the opportunity gap and provide play-based learning and guidance that supports school readiness as well as critical thinking skills.”

“Education and training including English language proficiency and computer literacy, are ways to support social and structural mobility for individuals and the field as a whole. We want to see more women, particularly women of color, in positions of leadership within all organizations.”

“How do we improve areas such as compensation?”

Members of the public described a type of ripple effect in how inequity in pay “negatively and disproportionately impacts” women of color who are in the ECE field, women of color who rely on affordable high quality child care, families who may not be able to afford to pay for quality child care out of pocket, and communities that thrive when children are raised in healthy environments.

One member of the public highlighted the need for more accurate “state level labor market information... for the field of ECE.”

More equitable “compensation will also help family child care providers hire qualified teachers” particularly those who “continue working on [an Associate’s of Art (AA)], [Bachelors of Science (BS)] or any studies.”

Reassessing Early Learning

Some members of the public agreed with the need to reassess the academic and developmental milestones that children are expected to meet in the early years of schooling.



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“Maybe the academic system for kinder needs to be reassessed. Kinder work is truly 1st grade. Developmentally, it is overwhelming.”

“Systems need to consider why there are expectations of children that are not necessarily developmentally appropriate, what is the purpose? These expectations create unnecessary stress for the child, the parent, and the teacher.”

Another member of the public suggested that the points raised during the meeting highlighted the need for universal preschool.

“TK is a great start, but does not serve enough students in need of an additional year of a developmentally appropriate program that serves all students in the public education system. “

“...including the Transitional Kindergarten in schools, family childcare, childcare centers...” since many “childcare centers or schools don’t offer... the Transitional Kindergarten option.”

Voices from the Field Need to be Included and Are Vital in Informing Policy Change

“Input is reflected of those early educators who live and/or work in varied communities - urban, rural, military, and tribal communities.”

Mary Ignatius responded to this comment by sharing how the Master Plan includes a process for parent engagement.

“Conversations with the field (providers, parents, and IHE faculty) is imperative for policy makers to understand the realities of this most important work.”

“I want to elevate Tonia’s comment ‘No more planning about us, without us.’”

The need to have “meetings be recorded and published in multiple languages, so providers who want to be part of it still have the access to it” was noted.

“I would like to strongly second the need for meetings (Zoom or otherwise) to be at times that are more fully accessible by child care providers.”

“Please let CDE/ELC get us [providers] in the field involved in the roll out plan to ensure success for our children.”

“I just think you need to take more time on gathering providers and the parents and getting their stories, their stories.”

Members of the Council and public agreed that there is a need to further include family child care providers in data collection activities and activities related to the Master Plan.