



February 2014

On behalf of the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, we are encouraged by the fact that the Assembly Democrats, “Blueprint for a Responsible Budget,” as well as legislative proposals, call for additional investment in early learning programs for young children.

We would also like to express several items for consideration regarding Senate Bill 837, a proposal to expand Transitional Kindergarten services to all four-year olds.

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) is an integral force for quality child care and development services in California. We are dedicated to addressing unmet child care needs and improving access to services for all children, especially infants and toddlers and children with disabilities/special needs, while ensuring geographic and economic equity. Our priority is to preserve and protect the integrity and improve the quality of the existing child care delivery system. Quality child care and early learning services play a critical role in ensuring positive child outcomes and school readiness. In addition, these services support working families as productive employees.

In light of our role in the child care and development infrastructure and work with both parents and providers, we would like to put forth the following considerations:

	SB 837: Transitional Kindergarten Expansion	Existing Transitional Kindergarten	Existing State Preschool Program	Head Start	Network Recommendations & Considerations
Year Established	Proposed to begin 2015-2016	Enacted in 2010	1940s	1965	As CA determines how to expand early learning opportunities for young children, we should build upon, and improve the quality of, the existing child care delivery system.
Numbers of Children Currently Served	~350,000 additional children	~51,000	~136,000	~89,000	Increase funding for child care and early learning services to meet the needs of children and families. Children ages 3 to 5 in California are being served in the settings included here as well as through the Alternative Payment Program (APP) voucher system, by family child care providers, informal caregivers, and more. Expansion proposals should consider how to strengthen and protect the integrity of the existing delivery system.
FUNDING					
Per child	~6,000 per child, for part-day	\$5,516 or \$6,620 per child, for part-day	~\$3,700 per child for part-day, \$6,000 per child for full-day	~\$7,600 per child, for part-day	Our child care and early learning system is grossly underfunded. The amount of reimbursement per child varies significantly depending on the funding source. Per child spending should take into account the need for quality programming, comprehensive services for the child and their family, and the true cost of providing these services.
Total Investment	~\$2.1B	\$345M (Prop. 98)	\$607M (\$507M – Prop. 98, \$100M General Fund)	~\$750M	
Eligibility	4 year old children whose fifth birthday falls within the school year	4 year olds whose fifth birthday falls between September 1 and December 1	3 and 4 year olds whose family's income is below 70 percent of the State Median Income (\$42,216 a year for a family of three)	3 to 5 year olds whose family's income is below the federal poverty line (\$19,530 a year for a family of three)	All families should have access to early childhood settings that will support the optimum development of their child(ren). There are currently 1.5 million children ages 3 to 5 in CA. 1 in 4 children under six years old are living in poverty, and 64% are at 300% of FPL, or living in families earning below the State Median Income. We must ensure that CA's most vulnerable children have access to quality child care and development services.
Staff Qualifications	On or before 7/1/15, TK teacher must hold an AA degree, and have a PD plan that provides for a BA degree with at least 24 units in ECE and a teaching credential by 7/1/19. Associate Teacher must have 24 units in ECE, and a PD plan that provides for an AA degree by 7/1/19. On or before 7/1/19, all TK taught by a teacher who holds a BA degree with at least 24 units in ECE and a teaching credential. Associate Teacher must have AA degree with at least 24 units in ECE.	Bachelor's Degree and Multiple Subject Teaching Credential	Child Development Teacher Permit (24 units of ECE/CD plus 16 GE units)	An AA, BA, or advanced degree in ECE; or related field with experience teaching preschool-age children; or BA degree in any field and has met additional Teach For America program requirements	The workforce should be required to have some knowledge of child development and early learning. In order to obtain this information, the workforce must have increased access to educational opportunities and must be compensated as they reach higher levels of educational attainment. Intentional efforts must also be made to ensure that the workforce reflects the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the children they serve.

	SB 837: Transitional Kindergarten Expansion	Existing Transitional Kindergarten	Existing State Preschool Program	Head Start	Network Recommendations & Considerations
Maximum Student-Teacher Ratios	10:1 adult -child ratio and 20:1 teacher-child ratio	31:1 teacher-child ratio	8:1 adult -child ratio and 24:1 teacher-child ratio	10:1 adult -child ratio and 20:1 teacher-child ratio	Maximum ratios should not exceed what is currently required for State Preschool and Head Start programs. A 31:1 teacher-child ratio is not acceptable for our youngest children or workforce.
Delivery	Local Education Agencies (LEA) with option to subcontract	Public school districts and charter schools	Public and private providers that contract with CDE.	Public and private providers that contract with the Administration for Children & Families.	Mixed delivery is essential to meet the diverse needs of CA's families. As currently proposed, subcontracting to local private providers would likely be limited based on the funding mechanisms and contracting requirements.
Hours/Days of Service	Part-day, Part-year	Part-day, Part-year (175 days per year)	Part-day, Part-year (175 days per year) and Full Day, Full Year (246 days per year) offered	Part-day and full-day programs offered	Working families need access to full-day, full-year services. Funding to expand any part-day options must be coupled with funding to support wrap around services. Nearly half of all Head Start slots in CA are braided with State Preschool spaces to offer families full-day options.
Programmatic Standards	Requires the creation of Transitional Kindergarten standards	Locally developed, modified Kindergarten curriculum	Preschool Learning Foundations	Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework	The CA Dept. of Education's Preschool Learning Foundations should be utilized. The Foundations define age-appropriate expectations about what children should know and be able to do at 48 and 60 months of age.
Additional Oversight	None	None	Community Care Licensing (CCL)	Community Care Licensing (CCL)	Programs serving young children should meet the basic health and safety standards set forth by CCL. CCL also specifies requirements around building and grounds design and maintenance and outdoor space and equipment that are age appropriate for the children being served. In addition, the vast majority of before and after school programs are exempt from licensure. If these programs will provide extended care for younger children, additional protections/requirements should be considered.
Consumer Education & Parental Choice	Parents likely learn about TK opportunities through school districts.	Parents likely learn about TK opportunities through school districts.	Child Care Resource & Referral Programs, outreach from programs and Centralized Eligibility Lists that still exist.	Child Care Resource & Referral Programs, outreach from programs and Centralized Eligibility Lists that still exist.	Preserve parents right to choose the setting that they believe will best support the optimal development of their child. Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) services are available to parents to help them learn about what options are available to them and to receive support in identifying wrap around services. Child Care R&R Agencies are located in every county in California and provide information about the choices parents have in their community. Ensure that R&R programs are provided data related to TK programming in their communities.

*Excerpts taken from, "What Are California's Major School Readiness Programs?" Legislative Analyst's Office. January 2014 www.lao.ca.gov

In addition to the considerations included in the chart, we also want to emphasize the following points:

Building on the Existing Child Care & Development System

- As stated above, 3 to 5 year olds are currently utilizing a wide variety of child care arrangements across California. Serving this age population is what allows many private providers to maintain their business. With smaller ratio requirements for infants and toddlers and part-day rates for school age children, the 3 to 5 year olds are a core component of a provider's budget. Without thoughtful consideration on how to ensure mixed delivery, the TK expansion proposal could significantly reduce the supply of licensed child care in California.

Continuity of Care

- Recognize the importance of continuity of care for children and positive attachment and interactions with those who care for them. Program designs should take into account the need for continuity and minimal transitions for young children.

Dual Goals

- A quality early learning experience is not only important for the long term development of the child; the ability to have access to child care and early learning for one's child is an important employment support as well. They go hand in hand.

Family Engagement

- Successful school readiness programs, such as the national Head Start program, also incorporate guidance and support for the parent and build the competencies of parents to be their child's first teacher. What happens outside of the school setting is just as important for the child's success as it is within it. Thus a robust parent support system and access to comprehensive services enhances any preschool investment to ensure its successful in the long run.

Funding for CA's Youngest Learners

- Support for infants and toddlers also has to be codified, protected, invested proportionately so we make most of the child's developing brain, and lay the foundation of positive experience from which the child can continue to build upon. While we are striving to serve more 4-year olds we must also be mindful that we are only serving 8% of the subsidy-eligible infants and toddlers.

Inclusive Planning

- Include the voice of parents in the development of this proposal. We actively promote and support the full participation of families in policy discussions and decisions that impact the programs and choices available for their children.

Quality Investments

- As a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) state, California has created comprehensive plans to transform early learning systems for children, birth to age five, with better coordination and assessment mechanisms, clearer learning standards, and meaningful workforce development and family engagement initiatives in 16 counties across the state. We must maximize this investment and utilize the lessons learned through this initiative as we consider expanding services to young children.

Workforce Qualifications, Access to Education and Training, and Compensation

- Workforce qualifications and continuous professional development opportunities are essential to work with young children. Current measures such as having a teaching credential or child development teacher permit, and/or a combination with a Bachelor's or Master's degree, are all good proxies for demonstrating the potential for caring and educating a child. However, to ensure we have both a mixed delivery system and a qualified workforce, we have to build the capacity of our workforce so they have the knowledge, skills and abilities they need. The time and resources to allow the workforce to meet any new educational and/or training requirements must be built in. As the workforce demonstrates their competencies in working with young children, they must be compensated accordingly.

We appreciate your consideration of these points and look forward to discussing how to best meet the needs of California's children and families.

Sincerely,



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