

2006 Public Policy Platform

“Providing leadership for the assessment, development and sustainability of quality child care and school age recreation options in Santa Cruz County”

The Santa Cruz County Child Care Planning Council (SCCCPC) is comprised of our major stakeholder groups: Consumers, Child Care Providers, Community Representatives and Public Agency Representatives. Our purpose is to promote, support, and improve the coordination of local efforts to provide quality early care and education services for all children and families in Santa Cruz County.

Priorities:

- Ensure that child care funding remains a priority in the state budget.
- Ensure basic health & safety protections for all children in child care.
- Seek continued funding to maintain and increase child care capacity for children with special needs.
- Ensure parental engagement and awareness of the emerging universal preschool systems and the integration of existing child care and development services into local plans.

I. Child Care Planning Services:

This section addresses the urgent concern to maintain existing funding and support for child development services.

1. Sustain all existing CCPC funding, emphasizing the integral role of Child Care Planning services in the child care system.
2. Continue to cultivate a relationship with the State and Federal level administrations to define the pivotal role Child Care Planning plays in promoting quality, accessible and affordable child care for all families.

A. Promote the Importance of Local Child Care and Development Planning by:

1. Encouraging the utilization of existing local child care and development planning resources (i.e. Local Child Care Planning Councils, City and County Child Care Representatives, etc.) for child care and development programs (i.e. Centralized Eligibility Lists, Preschool for All, etc.)
2. Increasing the visibility of LPCs, and City and County Representatives both within our counties and at state level (i.e. role, uniqueness, accomplishments, etc.) as part of the child care and development infrastructure
3. Improving communication between Planning Councils and CDE (i.e. priorities, allocations, consultant work plans, and reallocation of funds)
4. Encouraging the CDE to meet with representatives of the CCCCA on a regular basis to embed the Planning Council function within the broader functions of CDE’s work.

B. Access & Affordability:

1. Maintain child care subsidies for low-income working families.
2. Promote the use of a State Median Income (SMI) or an alternate measure that reflects accurate and up-to-date California income.
3. In coordination with partnering organizations advocate for a regional market rate (RMR) that is equitable and ensures parents a full-range of child care options.

C. Licensing:

1. Advocate for a fully funded child care licensing system with standards that ensure safe and healthy environments for all children in California.
2. Ensure a maximum group size for license-exempt care not to exceed the capacity for a small licensed family child care home and maintain a distinct division for child care licensing at the State level.

D. Revenue & Budget:

1. Ensure that child care contracts continue to receive funding in the event the budget isn't signed in a timely manner.
2. Coordinate with partnering organizations to seek multiple-year contracts for child development service programs.

II. Expand Access to Quality, Safe Child Care for All Families

This section addresses the need to improve and expand quality child care services for all children and families in California.

A. Child Care Planning Services:

1. Support innovative strategies for consumer education that foster awareness of all available child care resources, increase parental understanding of the regulatory process and increase understanding of the importance of quality child care in all settings.
2. Support a CDE review of the formula used to determine LPC allocations (consider growth factors)
3. Promote continued funding for support and technical assistance through R&R's to maintain and increase access to child care for families of children with disabilities through quality child care funds and other funding sources.
4. Promote the continued utilization of CCPC data in public policy discussions and planning.

B. Access & Affordability:

1. Maintain tax credits and incentives for working families and promote their use.
 - Promote the expansion of subsidies to fully fund all eligible families.
 - Advocate for a review of the family eligibility criteria to ensure that low income families have greater access to child care and development services in all regions.
2. Promote increased funding as needed for the established statewide Central Eligibility List (CEL) system.
3. .Promote the inclusion of Local Planning Councils and Planners with Centralized Eligibility Lists
4. Maintain a diverse child care delivery system that respects the culture, language and working patterns of all California families regardless of income.
5. Improve access to child care for families with parents and/or children who have disabilities.

C. Trustline:

1. Promote increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Trustline Registry system by:
 - a. stopping payment when a Trustline applicant background check triggers an automatic disqualification, exemption process or investigation
 - b. increase the Resource and Referral Network's access to applicant information from CDSS; and
 - c. increase monitoring of nanny agencies.
2. Expand Trustline coverage to all license-exempt providers receiving public subsidies.

D. Child Care Systems:

1. Ensure a continuum of basic health and safety protection through training and technical assistance opportunities for all types of child care providers including license-exempt, family child care and child care centers.
2. Provide for adequate training/education, support and salary to recruit and maintain a high quality workforce.
3. Address unmet needs and advocate for facility development and improvement that includes accessibility and appropriate environments. Support the establishment of a streamlined process for child care facilities development.
4. Promote a system that rewards higher quality child care and reimburses operators for the actual cost of providing child care and development services.
5. Support development of a Child Care Master Plan for a fair and equitable child care system in California that incorporates an inclusive planning process and focuses on all age groups including infants, toddlers and school age children.
6. Work to expand the supply of quality infant toddler care in a variety of settings in response to the documented acute shortage of these services.

E. Universal Preschool System:

Promote the development of a Preschool for All system that:

1. Supports the inclusion of early learning standards for social and emotional development and physical learning (as the basis of all learning)
2. Utilizes existing local child care and development planning resources to ensure an appropriate plan that meets local needs (i.e. data/needs, advisory body, etc.)
3. Builds on the strengths of the existing child care and development system and does not divert resources from the current system.
4. Meets the needs of working families (i.e. provides full-day options)
5. Meets the needs of all families including children with special needs and disabilities, English language learners, and other special populations
6. Aligns its quality criteria with the quality criteria of other widely accepted programs
7. Provides adequate resources for full implementation and reflects the true cost of providing high quality preschool services.

Advocate for planning and support for the child care and development needs of children ages 0-3 (infants and toddlers) and School Age in the context of a PreK focused environment

F. Infrastructure Supports

1. Advocate for a comprehensive child care quality improvement plan that addresses the infrastructure needs for program support; the maintenance of basic health and safety in child care programs; recruitment, preparation and training of the child care workforce; consumer support, information and assistance for parents; and implementation of curriculum appropriate to the age of the child.
2. Advocate for changes to the child development permit matrix to broaden the acceptable training options.
3. Work toward improved compensation and benefits for child care staff and licensed family child care providers.
4. Improve access to quality school age child care in local communities.
5. Support efforts to continue the Child Care Food Program and advocate for streamlined administrative requirements, increased reimbursements and explore other funding sources.
6. Support efforts to streamline administrative procedures and increase resources for the administration of all child care programs.

Promote the needs of the Child Care and Development Workforce by:

1. Encouraging the education and broader community to recognize the Early Care and Education/Child Development (ECE/CD) field as a viable career/profession (parity with K-12) and an essential workforce
2. Encouraging increased compensation for the workforce
3. Encouraging high quality educational attainment for the workforce
4. Encouraging institutions of higher education to address workforce issues in ECE/CD (i.e. articulation b/w community colleges and 4 year institutions, accessibility of Bachelor & Masters degrees, and alignment with CD Permit/Credential)
5. Encouraging First 5 and the CDE to coordinate workforce development and retention incentive programs such as CARES and AB 212, so that local needs can be addressed effectively

G. Federal Funding:

1. Monitor Federal legislation and policies that have an impact on child care in California.
2. Support efforts to reauthorize and improve CCDF, TANF, Head Start and the Higher Education Act.

H. Collaboration:

Strengthen Relationships with other Related Organizations such as the Resource & Referral Network, CA Child Development Administrators' Association (CCDAA), CA Alternative Payment Program Association (CAPPA), Child Development Policy Institute (CDPI), CA Welfare Directors' Association (CWDA), CA Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC), and others to Develop a United Voice on Child Care Issues by:

1. Improving communication between the Association and other organizations
2. Identifying common issues (licensing, SRR, etc.)
3. Supporting each other's positions when feasible