



# CHILD CARE LAW CENTER

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November 24, 2009

Glen Thomas  
Secretary of Education  
1121 L Street, Suite 600  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Jack O'Connell  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
1430 N Street, Suite 5602  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Joe Munso, Chairperson  
California Children and Families Commission  
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 260  
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Secretary Thomas, Superintendent O'Connell and Chairperson Munso:

The Child Care Law Center looks forward to working closely with the California State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Council). Enclosed is a letter signed by numerous California organizations calling on you to form two work groups, one focused on expanding access to under-served populations and the other on cultural/linguistic inclusion, both of which are topics that fall within the charge of the Council.

We believe this is an important opportunity to build on the strengths of our current system and develop proposals to increase access to high quality programs for all California's children with a focus on children and families in greatest need of quality care. Please feel free to contact me at [nstrohl@childcarelaw.org](mailto:nstrohl@childcarelaw.org) 415-394-7144 to discuss these recommendations or other aspects of the Council's work.

On behalf of all the signers, I thank you for your consideration of our proposals.

Sincerely,

Nancy Strohl  
Executive Director

November 24, 2009

Glen Thomas  
Secretary of Education

Jack O'Connell  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Joe Munso, Chairperson  
California Children and Families Commission

Dear Secretary Thomas, Superintendent O'Connell and Chairperson Munso:

We want to first welcome you as the co-chairs of the newly formed California State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Council). We look forward to working with the Council to meet the purposes outlined by the Head Start Reauthorization Act and the Governor in his Executive Order. We also write to urge that the Council form two work groups, one focused on expanding access to under-served populations and the other on cultural/linguistic inclusion, both topics fall within the charge of the Council.

In particular, the Child Care Law Center and the undersigned of this letter are writing in support of a recommendation developed by the Water Cooler Work Group on Access Barriers to Quality ECE Programs and Facilities. The Water Cooler provides an opportunity for California advocates for children from birth to five years old to share ideas in an effort to discover common policy ground and coordinate advocacy efforts. The Water Cooler does not formally endorse positions but rather makes policy positions available to its member organizations for endorsement. The Access Work Group presented these recommendations to Water Cooler participants at the November 9th meeting.

The early care and education community looks forward to a robust partnership with the Council. We will offer proposals and provide background in numerous areas, as we have with the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (ELQIS) which is now a committee of the Council. We are presenting this recommendation at this early date in the formation of the Council because we believe the Council must immediately focus on underrepresented and underserved children and families if it is to successfully meet both federal requirements and the Council's stated objectives.

We think it is vital that the work of the ELQIS Advisory Committee be seamlessly integrated into the Council. We recognize, however, that the Council has a more expansive charge. Unlike ELQIS, the Council has specific responsibility for developing a needs assessment or recommendations on issues related to access for the families who are currently underserved by our high quality early care and education system.

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-134) charges the Council with assessing the needs of children from birth to age five and recommending ways of increasing access and coordination among early childhood education providers. We refer to two of the Council's required responsibilities:

“(I) conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in the State;

“(III) develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.” See 42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(1)(D).

To respond to these two federal purposes and to ensure California is building systems and developing programs and policies to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and families, we the undersigned organizations support the following proposal:

Council Workgroups: The Council should include focused work groups, including one that focuses on access and underserved populations and one that focuses on cultural and linguistic inclusion. The work groups should include a wide variety of ECE practitioners, advocates, stakeholders and consumers.

- Access and Underserved Populations Workgroup:
  - Unmet Need: Identify current and unmet need among our lowest income children, children birth to 5, and hard-to-reach and at-risk families. Develop plans to meet that need.
  - Special Needs Inclusion: Develop a plan for inclusive services in California that focuses on providing all children with access to appropriate ECE programs to serve each child’s unique needs. Ensure coordination of state and local programs and services that support or provide early recognition of individual needs and a tiered system of responses, including intervention for children with special needs and a review of physical access barriers.
  - Infants/Toddlers: Develop a plan to expand services to our youngest children, birth to three, including a review of funding formulas and solutions to non-funding barriers including licensing, regulatory and facilities barriers.
- Cultural/Linguistic Inclusion Workgroup: Ensure all ECE programs and systems are culturally and linguistically competent, relevant and provide outreach to culturally/linguistically underserved families and children.

We look forward to working with the Council to meet our common commitment to ensure that all California’s children have access to high quality early care and education services. Please feel free to contact Nancy Strohl of the Child Care Law Center at [nstrohl@childcarelaw.org](mailto:nstrohl@childcarelaw.org) 415-394-7144, co-chair of the Water Cooler Access Committee that developed these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Nancy Strohl  
Child Care Law Center



Sharon Scott Dow  
Advancement Project

**Organizations signing in support:**

Advancement Project

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

BANANAS, Inc.

California Association for the Education of Young Children

California Child Care Coordinators Association

California Childcare Health Program

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network

California Federation of Teachers

California Head Start Association

California Alternative Payment Program Association

Child Care Law Center

Child Development Department, Los Angeles Valley College

Continuing Development Incorporated

Child Development Institute

Choices for Children

Early Childhood Department, Las Positas College

First 5 Association of California

Holy Trinity Child Care Center

Infant Development Association of California

League of Women Voters of California

The Link to Children

Lutheran Office of Public Policy - California

National Council of La Raza

Service Employees International Union