

## ADVISORY BODY ANNUAL REPORT

Advisory Body Name: Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education

Advisory Body Meeting Time/Location: 3:00-5:00 pm at 77 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill

Chair (during the reporting period): Dr. Crystal McClendon-Gourdine

Staff Person (during the reporting period): Monica Joseph, LPC Coordinator

Reporting Period: July 1,2023-June 30,2024

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### BACKGROUND:

The Contra Costa County Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education (LPC) was established in April 1998. As required by AB 1542, which was passed in 1993, thirty members of the LPC were appointed by the County Board of Supervisors and the County Superintendent of Schools. Childcare consumers and providers, public agency representatives, and community representatives each comprise 20% of the LPC. The remaining 20% are discretionary appointees. Membership is for a three-year term.

On January 7, 2003, membership was decreased from 30 to 25 members, due to the difficulty being experienced in filling all of the seats. On September 19, 2012 membership was decreased from 25 to 20, due to difficulty in filling vacant seats. Official reduction of appointed seats provides flexibility to ensure quorum is met to conduct Council business.

### **I. ACTIVITIES**

**New LPC Coordinator** – A new LPC Coordinator was hired in September 2023.

**Young Children’s Issues Forum** was held on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center. One hundred guests attended the forum on a very stormy Saturday. Guest speakers were Mary Ignatius Executive Director of Parent Voices California, Dr. Lawanda Wesley Child Care Resource Center as Director of Government Relations, and Ken Carlson District 4 Supervisor and Dr. Ruth Fernandez Executive Director of First 5 Contra Costa. The theme of the event was *Advocacy to Advance Equity for All Children*. Responses from the attendees were positive with compliments to the speakers, the interactive engagement during presentations, and the overall feeling of the event. The message of advocacy, emphasizing the importance of sharing stories to influence decisions and secure potential funding for our youngest learners, was heard.

## **Advocacy**

In collaboration with First 5 Contra Costa, CocoKids, Employment & Human Services, and other community members a Workforce Study was performed in Contra Costa. Using the study, an ECE Guaranteed Income Advisory Committee was formed. The advisory committee is tasked with developing a feasible model for a compensation enhancement pilot for ECE providers in Contra Costa County. The committee are in the beginning stages of the pilot development and hope to have a model plan by June 2025.

Advocacy is crucial in highlighting the need for wages that retain workers, ensuring fair cost of child care that does not place undue hardship on families, and creating a more effective communication method to educate all families and community members about the child care and education program choices in Contra Costa. The LPC has a very strong and active advocacy representative, Benu Chhabra.

## **LPC sponsored the event Building Bridges: Supporting Children Experiencing Homelessness.**

1. Hosted by California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), and California Homeless Education Technical Assistance Centers (HETAC). – *Connecting Early Childhood & TK-12 Systems CPIN Symposium.*
  - Attendees learned about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and education rights for children experiencing homelessness.
  - Hidden trends of homelessness and the developmental impact on infants and toddlers.
  - Removing barriers for children experiencing homelessness to increase enrollment in early childhood programs.
  - Ways to collaborate and services to support families.

**LPC Coordinator is CCCOE’s administrator for the California State Preschool Program QRIS Block and the Quality County California QRIS Block Grant Contracts for Contra Costa County.** The LPC is actively involved in the local planning, coordination, and implementation of quality improvement services, professional development and growth activities and incentives, and countywide efforts to increase public awareness of “quality indicators” through the *Contra Costa Quality Matters* program.

**Plan and Conduct the Contra Costa County Child Care Needs Assessment** – The Countywide Child Care Needs Assessment was completed in 2022. The LPC Coordinator will investigate revising the Child Care Needs Assessment using post-pandemic data. The Air Early Learning Needs Assessment Tool which is used to provide county data should have updated information by February 2025.

**II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The LPC has offered multiple professional growth and development services and incentives in Contra Costa County:

**Professional Development Program (PDP) Services and Incentives:** During fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024, the Contra Costa LPC/CCCOE continued the partnership with First 5 Contra Costa for Professional Development Program funding. This program is funded as part of the Quality Counts California Workforce Pathways Grant. The following chart summarizes participant data for the 2023-2024 PDP Program:

Total Cumulative Number of PDP Participants Eligible for Stipend	100 Participants
Total numbers of units completed by all participants	753 Units
Total Education Milestones Reached	10 (5 Associate’s Degrees, 3 Bachelor’s degrees, 1 graduate, 1 credential)
Total number of PD hours completed	1690 Professional Development Hours
Total Stipends Issued (both agencies)	\$141,300

**Permit Applications:** Staff continued to assist early childhood educators to apply for new, renewal and upgrade Child Development Permit applications and to receive Temporary County Certificates. A total of 139 permit applications were accepted and processed during 2023-2024. Additionally, 222 individuals received Professional Growth Advising.

**CA Early Care and Educator Workforce Registry (The Registry)** – All Quality Matters participating sites/staff have a workforce registry number. The registry is used county-wide, serving as a one-stop repository for documents such as transcripts, training certificates, and other pertinent information.

**III. ATTENDANCE/REPRESENTATION**

The LPC currently has three seat vacancies, with 17 of the 20 seats filled. The current vacancies are for Child Care Consumer (West, East & Central South) seats. The shift from virtual to in-person meetings, has caused members to reflect upon their commitment to the LPC causing a request for a hybrid method (in-person & virtual), unfortunately requirements of in-person meetings stands currently. The good news is there are fewer cancellations of meetings than the previous year and quorum has been consistent. The membership includes representatives such as child care providers (both private and state-funded), community and public agencies, and discretionary appointees. The LPC is actively recruiting for Child Care Consumer seats, which have been historically difficult to maintain.

**IV. TRAINING/CERTIFICATION**

All new LPC members recently appointed in May/June 2024 will complete the three mandatory trainings (Brown Act & Better Government Ordinance Training, Ethics for Local Government, and Implicit Bias (every two years), within three months of their appointments. They will also participate in

a Local Planning and Advisory Council orientation/retreat. Copies of training certifications will be kept on file with the CCCOE LPC assistant.

## **V. PROPOSED WORK PLAN/OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT YEAR**

The LPC will continue to oversee the design and implementation of the following projects and priority activities:

**Implement the California Department of Social Services Early Learning and Care Quality Counts California Workforce Pathways Grant** – Allocation of \$264,400. This funding will continue to support teacher incentives and professional development supports through the Professional Development Program offered in partnership with First 5 Contra Costa.

**Participate, support and align funding** goals to support county wide efforts to improve the quality of all Early Care and Education programs through the Quality Matters (QM) program.

**Plan, Coordinate and Host the Annual Young Children’s Issues Forum** – Planning for March 8, 2025. The LPC is looking for intentional speakers to address hot topics such as wages to keep workers working, affordable child care for families, educating families and the future workforce on the variety of choices of early care and education in Contra Costa. The LPC Advocacy committee is working on the details of this event with a lot of enthusiasm.

**Research** updated data to revise the 2022 Needs Assessment to reflect post-COVID information.

**Participate in workgroups throughout Contra Costa** that are addressing issues related to Guaranteed Income models and pilot programs, affordable child care cost for families, recruitment of ECE workforce, and support education and obtaining a degree efforts by the ECE workforce.

**Partnership with libraries in Contra Costa** to organize a Back to School backpack give away. The materials will include basic supplies such as crayons, glue sticks, pencil bag for supplies, fidgets and a book that address separation anxiety. A one-page laminated information sheet that provides tips such as early bedtimes, reading at least 15-20 minutes every day, health snacks, etc. will be included in the backpack.