



# Progress Report: California's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

December 2024

## ABOUT THE MASTER PLAN FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CARE

In December 2020, California launched the [\*\*Master Plan for Early Learning and Care\*\*](#), which provided a road map for building a stronger, more equitable early learning and child care system. The Master Plan provided direction for building a comprehensive system over time — one that partners with families, takes a whole-child approach to ensure the best outcomes, and supports the advancement of early learning and care professionals to ensure that families across California have equitable access to quality care and learning support.

Since the launch of the plan, funding for child care and development programs has increased drastically - **from a total of \$3.53 billion in fiscal year 2020-21 to \$6.05 billion in fiscal year 2024-25**. Supported by this continued, increasing investment into children and families, **California has made substantial progress toward the goal areas outlined in the plan**.



## Goal 1 | Unify and Strengthen Programs and Services to Support Children's Learning and Development

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Child Care Expansion:** The Governor and Legislature have made historic investments to expand access to child care and development programs. Since 2021, more than **129,000 additional child care subsidies are funded for children** across California.
- **State Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Expansion:** California has more than doubled its investment in the California State Preschool Program since 2021 and tripled its investment in TK. Families of 4-year-olds will soon have free, universal access to TK, and in many cases, after-school care. The majority of school districts now offer TK at all

sites and all children who have their fifth birthday between September 2 and June 2 are now eligible for TK.

- **Paid Family Leave Expansion:** The Governor and Legislature enacted [\*\*SB 951\*\*](#) to [\*\*boost leave benefits for lower- and middle-income\*\*](#) workers, including child care and development employees.
- **Working Toward Equitable Treatment:** The Governor and Legislature enacted [\*\*AB 1363\*\*](#), [\*\*AB 210\*\*](#), and [\*\*AB 393\*\*](#), which created a process for identifying dual language learners in early learning and care programs. The [\*\*2022-23 State Budget\*\*](#) also provided eligibility for children with disabilities in the California State Preschool Program. [\*\*AB 2806\*\*](#) introduced requirements to limit suspension and expulsion in early learning and care programs, ensuring that children are instead provided the **behavioral and mental health resources** they need to thrive.

## Goal 2 | Support Children's Learning and Development by Enhancing Educator Competencies, Incentivizing and Funding Career Pathways, and Implementing Supportive Program Standards

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program:** The Governor and Legislature invested **\$163 million** to expand the [\*\*Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program\*\*](#), which funds infrastructure, professional development, and other elements necessary to support students in inclusive classrooms.
- **Training and Development:** In January 2023, the California Health & Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in partnership with WestEd, announced [\*\*12 new online courses for professional development\*\*](#) designed for early learning and care professionals. Also, through the [\*\*California Commission on Teacher Credentialing\*\*](#), **\$650 million from 2021-2023 was provided** for local education agencies to develop, expand, and/or improve teacher residency programs that support shortage fields.
- **Training Partnership Fund:** Under a first-ever memorandum of understanding that was reached in 2021, the State and the Child Care Providers United-CA (CCPU) established a \$40 million Joint Child Care Providers United-State of California Training Partnership Fund to expand and strengthen training opportunities for family child care providers. Under a successor agreement reached in 2023, the State agreed, for each year of the agreement starting July 1, 2024, to make a single contribution to the fund should the balance drop below \$15 million.



## Goal 3 | Unify Funding to Advance Equity and Opportunity

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Updating California's Child Care Rate Structure:** To increase positive outcomes for children, families, and the early care and education workforce, California is moving to a single rate structure that is informed by the actual cost of providing services. The CDSS worked with national experts to survey the field and develop a cost estimation model. For additional information, access this recent status report. While the CDSS has been making progress in constructing a new single rate structure, the COVID-19 pandemic created financial instability for child care providers. The CDSS issued the following supplemental payments and stipends:
  - **Supplemental Rate Payments to Providers:** In April 2022, the CDSS announced one-time supplemental rate payments, distributed to eligible family child care providers, to support critical access to quality, affordable child care and services. The payments, enacted due to an agreement between the Governor, Legislature, and CCPU, **totaled \$144.5 million**.
  - **Incentive Payments and Stipends:** The CDSS provided a one-time \$500 incentive payment to eligible family child care home licensees to boost child care capacity. Also, child care and development providers serving children receiving specified State-subsidized child care services have received, since 2023, three rounds of stipends totaling **\$2,157 per-child-enrolled**.
- **Reduced Family Fees:** Historic investments, including \$56 million in 2023-24, were made to support revisions to the family fee schedule for child care and development programs. This included limiting fees to one percent of families' monthly income and prohibiting fee assessments for families with a monthly income below 75 percent of the state median income.

## Goal 4 | Streamline Early Childhood Governance and Administration to Improve Equity

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Historic Partnership with CCPU:** In 2023, as noted above, the State and the CCPU union fully ratified a new memorandum of understanding, providing more than **\$1 billion in funding** to further stabilize the child care and development workforce and invest in California's children and families. This agreement built on a previous agreement and expanded upon the **many recent, unprecedented investments to support the early learning workforce**. For example, the State made a one-time contribution of **\$80 million for a retirement trust to be administered by the CCPU, a first-in-the-nation investment**. The State will make additional contributions to keep the balance of that trust above \$80 million.

- **Streamlining Programs:** In 2021, more than **\$4 billion in child care and nutrition programs** were transferred from the California Department of Education to the CDSS to support the State's commitment to building and strengthening an equitable, comprehensive, quality, and affordable child care and development system for children and families. The transition integrated programs that address social determinants of health, adverse childhood experiences, quality learning and care for children, and economic and other supports for family mobility and opportunity, recognizing that these are critical determinants to better life outcomes for children, and that California's system of early learning and care must address inequities and disproportionalities. This aligns program administration with the CalHHS [\*\*Guiding Principles\*\*](#), which continue to underpin California's progress.

- **Improving Data Coordination:** Recent crises in California, ranging from wildfires to the COVID-19 pandemic, underlined the need for comprehensive, integrated, State-maintained early childhood data. To this end, efforts are underway to [\*\*better coordinate publicly available data\*\*](#) to inform how government is doing in serving our youngest learners, while also ensuring access and equity. Significant progress was made on the development of the **Early Childhood Integrated Data System**, which will support State leaders' comprehensive understanding of early childhood programs and services through data-driven insights.



- **Renovation Funds Awarded to Child Care Programs:** On July 23, 2021, the Legislature enacted the Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program, a \$350.5 million investment in the child care infrastructure across California. The [\*\*Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program\*\*](#) has increased capacity to serve children by funding infrastructure grants for the acquisition, construction, development, and renovation of licensed child care programs serving children birth to age five. The program prioritized expanding child care capacity for infants and toddlers in areas experiencing a shortage of care.
- **Expanded Kindergarten Facilities:** The Governor and Legislature enacted [\*\*AB 1808\*\*](#) and [\*\*AB 130\*\*](#), which established, and expanded access to, the [\*\*Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program\*\*](#).

## LOOKING AHEAD

California must continue to implement the [\*\*Master Plan for Early Learning and Care\*\*](#) to improve access to quality early learning and care programs for children and families. Together, we can reduce inequitable outcomes and foster greater achievement and well-being for children, families, and communities.

For more information, resources, or to share feedback on the Master Plan and learn how you can get involved, please visit: <https://californiaforallkids.chhs.ca.gov>.