

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS INVOLVING HEAD START

From the CA Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission Final Report



April 2019



Head Start
CALIFORNIA

CONNECTING | ENGAGING | ADVOCATING
for our highest needs children

Overview

The CA Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education (BRC) Report was released on April 29, 2019. It provides a balanced, comprehensive and bold vision for early childhood education in California. The report makes recommendations in the areas of access for families, a strong workforce, facilities, data systems, inter-agency collaboration, policy and regulation alignment, funding and more. There are 30 recommendations that specifically include Head Start and Early Head Start.

The recommendations are numbered sequentially for ease of references in this document; they do not correspond to the numbering in the draft report, but each recommendation notes the page numbers from the draft report where the recommendation can be found. Also, some report recommendations are cross-referenced in the draft report (appear more than once, noted in page numbers) but are not duplicated here for the sake of simplicity and brevity.



Access for Children and Families

Access to Birth to Five

1. Expand ECE programs that provide care during nontraditional hours and that are responsive to flexible schedules. Provide incentives and appropriate guidelines for this care and remove barriers to participation in programs such as State Preschool, [Head Start](#), and voucher programs in order to meet the family's needs. (p. 34)
2. Prioritize investment for infants and toddlers for all services including child care subsidies that can be used for family child care, family friend and neighbor (FFN) care or a child care center and Title 5 centers.
 - Remove barriers to collaboration and coordination with [Early Head Start](#) to ensure California utilizes all available federal [Early Head Start](#) funds. (p. 35)
3. Expand access to ECE programs including preschool for all 3 and 4-year old children. Expansion should begin with those in low-income families, ensuring full-day care with wrap around services available. Options for expansion include but are not limited to:
 - Expand effective access to [Head Start](#) for eligible 3 and 4-year old children by using state funds to expand HS program to full-day, full-year for all those meeting [Head Start](#) eligibility. Ensure California utilizes all available federal [Head Start](#) funds. (p. 35)
4. Develop a whole family approach, so the system is not set up that only one child receives services while other eligible children in the family do not due to their age or other factors. We need to ensure the whole family is being served.
 - Remove barriers to integrating vouchers, state contracted programs, and [Head Start](#). (p. 36)

Families in Crisis

5. Establish a Families in Crisis Fund for immediate access to care and expedited eligibility and navigation with contracted slots available.
 - Allow choice of Family Friend and Neighbor care with appropriate supports to ensure screening, assessment and connection with trained trauma-informed care providers through [Head Start](#), [Early Head Start](#) or another program. (p. 38)

Targeted Families and Children

Children and families in poverty including CalWORKs

6. Facilitate [Head Start](#) and [Early Head Start](#) enrollment. Require all ECE providers to share pertinent information about all program options available, including [Head Start](#), to interested and eligible families within a service area. (p. 39)

Children with disabilities, mental health and other special health care needs

7. Establish a Task Force of stakeholders including CDE, ECE, K-12, DDS, DSS, DPH, First 5, DMHS, SELPA, Regional Centers, legal advocates, Pediatricians and [Head Start](#) with strong parental and provider representation to reform our bifurcated funding and administrative system which leads to delayed transition between programs at age 3, under identification and provision of early intervention services, and barriers to participation in inclusive ECE. The Task Force should build on the work of the State's 2015 Special Education Task Force (p. 90)

Eradicating Systemic Barriers

8. Immediately ensure [Head Start](#) enrollment does not eliminate eligibility for CalWORKs Stage 2 and 3 vouchers during or after [Head Start](#) participation. (p. 47)

Workforce and Quality

Family Friend and Neighbor Care (FFN)

9. Remove barriers to participating in [Head Start](#), State Preschool Program or other center-based programs for families receiving full-time FFN care. (p. 58)



Coordination and Alignment

TK-12 Articulation

10. As required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the California Department of Education should provide guidance to encourage locally driven agreements between LEAs and [Head Start](#) and other entities carrying out early education development programs. (p. 64)

11. The state should leverage the existing CalPADS data infrastructure and fund the remaining elements of a longitudinal data system to include a unique child identifier across all programs from birth to 12th grade and include postsecondary education and workforce outcomes.

All children from birth to age 3 involved in publicly supported programs should be included. Those programs include, but are not limited to, subsidized child care, [Head Start](#), preschool, home visiting, child welfare services, Early Start, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) part B provided by public school districts. (p. 64)

12. Align with [Head Start](#) by allowing providers a longer timeframe of up to 30 days to fill empty CSPP slots before funds become unearned and thus disallowed. Providers should be allowed to start enrolling children in the spring, in addition to the fall, and be given flexibility and discretion to align with kindergarten registration. (p. 64)

Head Start (p.66-67)

13. Expand effective access to [Head Start](#) for federally eligible 3 and 4-year-old children by using state funds to expand [Head Start](#) program to full day, full year for all those meeting HS eligibility.

14. Support [Head Start](#) home visiting funding. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) should permit [Head Start](#) agencies to receive the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funding to support home visiting.

15. Help simplify ECE regulations. Sixty-six percent of [Head Start](#) agencies also have State Preschool contracts. Different funding streams often carry conflicting regulations. Align state regulations with [Head Start](#) requirements to simplify administrative challenges.

16. Apply for a waiver to current [Head Start](#) income eligibility capped at the federal poverty level. This would recognize the higher cost of living in California in comparison to the nation and be similar to the waiver granted to Alaska and Hawaii. California should also apply for a waiver request to make age eligibility 2.9 to parallel CSPP.

17. Empower families to make informed choices. Require all ECE providers to share relevant information about all program options available to interested and eligible families within a service area. Parents will be best prepared to make informed choices that best meet the needs of their children.

Integrate Services for Families with Children from Birth to Age Five

18. Coordinate development of home visiting programs statewide so they are aligned with early childhood education and other early intervention strategies. Collaboration with CDPH, California Home Visiting Program, [Head Start](#), First 5 funded programs, and other local programs should be encouraged so that families can find the help they need in a timely manner. (p. 68)

19. Ensure California utilizes all available [Early Head Start](#) and other federal funds. (p. 69)



Systems, Infrastructure, Supply and Facilities

Aligning and Streamlining

20. Align and streamline requirements and processes for children and families.

- When families are screened for any social service programs, agencies should assess their need and eligibility for child care programs including [Head Start](#), child care vouchers and Title V programs. (p. 72)

21. Align and streamline requirements and processes for child care contracting agencies and child care providers.

- Remove the unnecessary complexity of earning contracts and move to multi-year grants as an alternative method of allocating funding. State programs could mirror federal [Head Start](#) funding, where the service is a grant contract for children, and not be based on a child's daily attendance. (p. 72)

22. Review [Head Start](#) proposals to combine HS and fee-based families in programs. (p. 73)

23. Review [Head Start](#) eligibility and how to align to state eligibility. (p. 73)

Transparency, Accountability, and Integrated Data Systems

24. Make existing systems more transparent and easier for families to navigate. Work across programs to diminish provider workloads associated with different data definitions and reporting requirements from multiple funding agencies.

Align data definitions, reporting timeframes and documentation across the state agencies that oversee ECE programs, including CDE, DSS and others. Align intra-agency data at CDE between ECE programs. Establish clear reporting requirements that meet the needs of as many funders as possible, including alignment with [Head Start](#) and other funders to the extent possible. (p. 74)

Licensing

25. The Legislature and Governor should establish a process to review California's licensing standards, recommend improvements and integration with quality improvement efforts.

- Integrate licensing standards with other regulatory requirements for all programs including [Head Start](#), so programs can meet a set of integrated standards. (p. 78)

Disaster Preparedness

26. State agencies whose function is to address disaster preparedness, including CDE, DSS, its licensing division CCL and the Office of Emergency Services (OES) should convene a task force for advance disaster preparedness planning based on the 2016 Child Care Disaster Preparedness Plan as well as lesson learned from recent experience. The task force should include but not be limited to parents, child care provider associations, child care providers, local and county ECE organizations, child care center representatives, [Head Start](#), Resource and Referral agencies, representatives of state and local emergency responders, and county offices of education. (p. 80, 90)

Supply and Facilities

Facilities

27. The state should establish a targeted facilities grant program directed to communities and families with greatest need with multi-year investment priorities.

- Include [Head Start](#) in all mapping, analysis and provide opportunities to participate in state and local funded facility programs including those for one-time grants for building or renovating early childhood facilities. Some [Head Start](#) programs, in response to the decrease in enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds, are transitioning to serve 0-2 year-olds. This is very a costly change in terms of facilities. (p. 83)



Financing

28. Federal Funding: The State should maximize its receipt of federal funding and ensure California is drawing down all potential funds. (p. 94)

29. Maximize placement of child-welfare involved children in [Early Head Start](#) and [Head Start](#) and to supplement federal funds with state funds. (p. 94)

30. Maximize placement of Children entering ECE through the Families in Crisis programs in [Early Head Start](#) and [Head Start](#) supplementing federal funds with state funds. (p. 94)

The California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education Report is available at:

<https://speaker.asmdc.org/blue-ribbon-commission-early-childhood-education>

This summary was produced by Head Start California in April 2019.

