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STRONG START

IN THIS ISSUE



Strong Start already has a website, as well as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts - why a newsletter?

This quarterly round-up of activities, opportunities, and events is a resource for Strong Start members and friends who don't want to check in every day. It's also easily forwarded so if you know of anyone who might be interested in our efforts to support the county's young children and families - please send it on to them.

In our eighth issue, we'll look at a possible move towards full-day kindergarten, give an overview of the early care and education (ECE) proposals in Governor Gavin Newsom's very first January Budget Proposal, revisit California's landscape of "child care deserts", and examine Assemblymember (and Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education) Kevin McCarty's latest package of ECE legislation. With the legislative deadline just passed, and a record number of bills submitted, there's a lot going on in Sacramento and we'll do our best to keep you up to date with any legislation of interest through our Twitter feed.

If you think someone you know would, or should, be interested in this newsletter, please forward it to them. Santa Clara County's youngest children need their adults to be their advocates and the better informed we all are, the better advocates we can be. Thanks for reading and for everything you do for the children and families of Santa Clara County.

Is California Moving Towards Full-Day Kindergarten?



In 2016, the Education Commission of the States released [“K-3 Policymakers’ Guide to Action: Making The Early Years Count”](#) discussing the importance of improving quality in the early elementary grades. The report highlighted twenty-five policy steps in six key areas including “quality full-day kindergarten and mandatory attendance-age requirements”. The suggested policy steps in this area included (i) funding kindergarten through the school funding formula and assigning kindergarten students enrolled in full-day kindergarten a weight equal to a first-grade student, (ii) requiring districts to offer full-day kindergarten, (iii) setting full-day kindergarten hours to equal the length of 1st grade hours, and (iv) requiring compulsory kindergarten attendance. In contrast to these best practices, kindergarten in California is voluntary (compulsory attendance is required once children turn six years of age), a substantial minority of districts offer part-day programs, and full-day kindergarten has a significantly shorter school day than other early elementary grades. A quick search of the Leginfo database, which includes the language of every bill introduced in the state Assembly or Senate, reveals that full-day kindergarten wasn’t addressed by the California legislature in the 2015-16 or 2017-18 sessions. In contrast to the significant attention that has been paid to the state’s preschool system by advocates and legislators, kindergarten remained relatively neglected.

However, that may be changing. Governor Newsom’s January budget proposal included \$750 million dollars, on top of last year’s \$100 million, in one-time non-Proposition 98 General Fund dollars to construct new or retrofit existing facilities for full-day kindergarten programs at the 22% of school districts in the state (representing more than 1,600 school sites) that do not offer full-day programs. The explanatory text in the budget summary ([available here](#)) noted that districts “cited a lack of facilities as the main impediment to offering full-day kindergarten.” On the same day as the

Governor unveiled his budget proposal, Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Weber (D – San Diego) introduced [Assembly Bill 197](#). This bill would require school districts to offer full-day kindergarten with a minimum school day that is the same as 1st grade, beginning in the 2021-22 school year. Currently, the definition of full-day kindergarten that applies to most districts is a minimum day of 180 minutes, inclusive of recess. Part-day programs operate a minimum of 150 minutes. AB 197 would increase the minimum kindergarten day to 230 minutes, the same as grades 1-3. Because transitional kindergarten (TK) operates on the same school day as regular kindergarten, this would have the effect of increasing the school for TK as well. While both proposals have a long way to go before becoming law, this combination could result in California joining the 13 other states, plus the District of Columbia, that require districts to offer full-day kindergarten.

Governor Newsom Releases the January Budget Proposal

Governor Gavin Newsom's much anticipated, and much foreshadowed, January Budget Proposal was released at 11 a.m. and early care and education (ECE) advocates didn't need to read beyond the first page of the 280 page budget summary to see child care referenced as a "building block necessity". The rest of the proposal summary includes a host of measures intended to support young children, their parents, ECE professionals, teachers, and California's complex ECE sector.

These include:

- \$10 million one-time non-Proposition 98 General Fund to plan for and develop a longitudinal data system. This system will connect student information from early education providers, K-12 schools, higher education institutions, employers, other workforce entities, and health and human services agencies. A portion of this funding will be used for initial planning purposes. The bulk of the funding will be available for the initial stages of system implementation once an implementation plan is adopted by the Administration and the Legislature.
- Doubling the existing Earned Income Tax Credit by investing \$1 billion in a new "Working Families Tax Credit" that will support low-income families with young children by providing a \$500 credit for families with children under the age of six.
- Convening a task force to consider different options to phase-in and expand Paid Family Leave to allow children to be cared for by a parent or a close relative for up to six months.
- Funding for universal preschool for all income-eligible four-year-old children in the state, phased in over a three-year period with \$125 million included in this year's proposal increasing the number of slots to 180,000, with the goal of serving 200,000 children by 2020-21. The proposal suggests that these additional slots be operated by non-profit providers due to constraints on local education agencies.
- Eliminating the requirement that families with four-year-olds provide proof of parent employment or enrollment in higher education to access the full-day California State Preschool Program.
- Simplifying program administration for non-profit providers by moving funding for part-day State Preschool programs at non-local educational agencies to the non-Proposition 98 General Fund.
- \$10 million in funding for a one year planning process to outline necessary steps to provide universal preschool in California (led by the State Board of Education, Department of Finance and Department of Social Services in consultation with stakeholders and experts), including strategies to address facility capacity, to ensure a trained workforce is available, and to identify revenue options to support universal access. This item notes that the plan may propose changes to the transitional kindergarten program.

- \$500 million in one-time General Fund expenditures to both (1) expand subsidized child care facilities in the state and (2) make a significant investment in the education of the child care workforce to improve the quality of care and move child care professionals along the early education/child care professional continuum.
- \$45 million in additional funding for ACEs screenings for children and adults enrolled in Medi-Cal and \$60 million to increase developmental screenings provided to children in Medi-Cal.
- An additional \$78.9 million in a mix of federal funds and General Fund to provide home visiting services to eligible CalWORKs families (pregnant women and families with a child under the age of two for up to 24 months with priority given to first-time parents) in 2019-20, \$23 million to expand Department of Public Health home visiting services with a focus on low-income, young mothers and \$7.5 million is to increase participation in the Black Infant Health Program.
- A \$357 million increase in funding to raise grants for the lowest income families served by the CalWORKs program to 50 percent of the Federal Poverty level (an increase of 13.1%).
- \$122 million in increased funding of Cal Grant awards for student-parents with dependent children attending California's public colleges
- \$750 million one-time General Fund to address barriers to full-day kindergarten for the 22% of districts that do not provide it. Districts most commonly cite facilities needs as the major barrier so these funds are likely to fund construction of new, and retrofitting existing, facilities for full-day kindergarten programs, although they can be spent to address other barriers.
- \$247 million in one-time General Fund for the expansion of on-campus child care facilities at CSUs.
- \$50 million in one-time General Fund to support Child Savings Account pilot projects and partnerships with First 5 California, local First 5 Commissions, local government, and philanthropy.
- An increase of \$187 million in Proposition 98 General Fund spending to support a 3.46 percent cost-of-living adjustment for categorical programs that remain outside of the LCFF, including State Preschool.
- A net increase of \$119.4 million non-Proposition 98 General Fund in 2019-20 to reflect increases in the number of CalWORKs child care cases. Total costs for Stage 2 and 3 are \$597 million and \$482.2 million, respectively.
- An increase of \$26.8 million Proposition 98 General Fund to reflect full-year costs of 2,959 full-day State Preschool slots implemented part-way through the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The long list of proposed expansions, increases, changes and edits will form the basis of the budget discussions between the Governor and Legislature until the revised proposal, due in May. There will also be a complicated series of negotiations as proposed legislation, which may overlap with these proposals, makes its way through the State Assembly and Senate. Advocacy groups from across the State will also ensure that their voices are heard before the final budget is due in June.



California's Child Care Deserts Are Still Dry

Earlier this month the Center for American Progress released an update of its reporting into America's child care deserts. In 2016, CAP introduced a working definition of child care deserts, areas with an insufficient supply of licensed child care, defining them as census tracts where there were more than three times as many children under the age of five as licensed child care slots. In 2017, CAP analyzed data from 22 states, covering two-thirds of the U.S. population and including California, demonstrating that a majority of Americans live in child care deserts. This year's analysis includes data from all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and reinforces the finding that more than half of Americans—51 percent—live in neighborhoods classified as child care deserts.

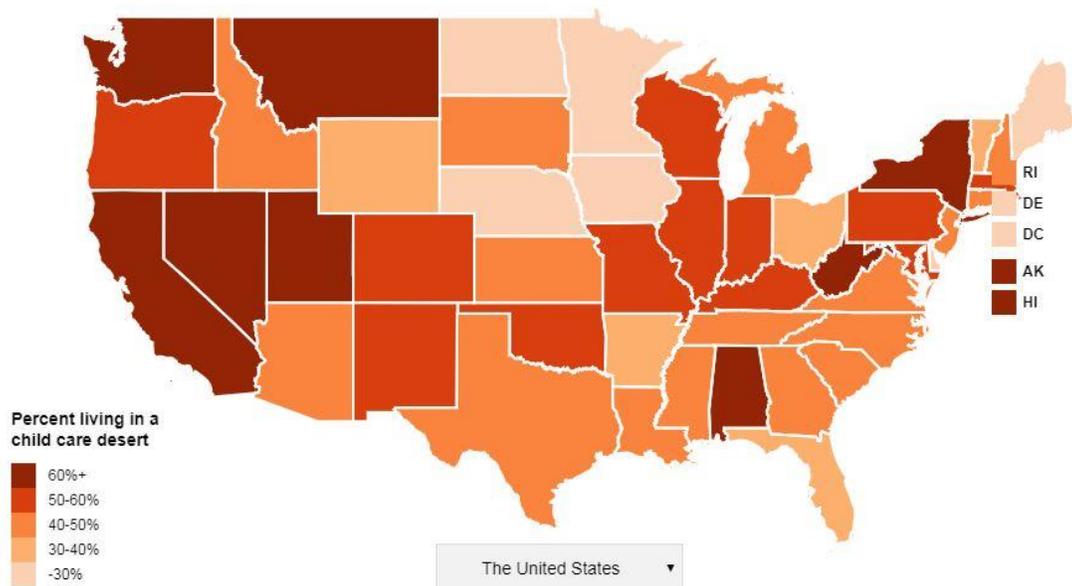
The report also disaggregates the data to find that 59% of rural, 56% of urban and 44% of suburban census tracts qualify as child care deserts under their definition. In each case, lower income census tracts are more likely than higher income to meet the criterion – demonstrating a pattern of inequitable access where those children who would benefit the most from access to quality early care and education (ECE) are least likely to live close to it. One caveat to this finding is that families may access ECE outside their census tract of residence (this is especially likely in urban settings). When disaggregated by race/ethnicity the data show that Hispanic/Latino populations have the least access to licensed child care (57%) – with immigrant Hispanic/Latino having lower access than native born Hispanic/Latino families – while African American have the highest (44%). Non-Hispanic white and Asian populations are close to the 51% population-wide average.

All of these numbers are worse in California. Overall, 60% of the state's population lives in a child care desert – which ranks 42nd out of the 51 states and Washington DC. When examined by race, 55% of non-Hispanic whites, 64% of African American and 67% of Hispanic/Latino people in California live in child care deserts. While 43% of high income neighborhoods nation-wide are child care deserts, that number increases to 47% in California. For low-income communities, the

opportunity gap is even wider: 72% of the lowest quintile census tracts in California are child care deserts, compared with 54% across the whole of the country.

The barriers to access are higher for families with additional challenges. Child care slots for children ages zero to three are far less common than for preschoolers. Providers are generally less able to provide care for children with disabilities – despite the Americans with Disabilities Act requirement that programs cannot exclude children with disabilities unless including them requires a “fundamental alteration of the program”. Children whose home language is not English require staff trained to support dual language learners and their families may need different kinds of outreach and support with enrollment. Finally, many families may need care outside the traditional 9 to 5 work day or the school year. All these challenges lead to lower-than-expected enrollment for these families.

The report concludes with a variety of policy recommendations that will be familiar to those in the ECE field: improved data collection, increased public investment including higher reimbursement rates, facilities funding and systems building. The full report can be found at <https://ampr.gs/2QAAJip>.



Assemblymember Kevin McCarty Introduces a Pre-K for All Legislative Package



Democratic state Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, a steadfast champion of early learning, has introduced a package of bills intended to greatly increase access to preschool for low-income children across California. One bill (AB 123) would spend \$1.3 billion over three years to increase the number of slots in California's State Preschool Program (CSPP) from approximately 175,000 to 250,000 and change the eligibility rules so that children living in a school attendance area where more than 70% of children enroll in free and reduced-priced lunch programs can be enrolled – regardless of their families' income. A second bill (AB 124) would create a \$500 million bond for acquisition, construction, or retrofit of surplus classrooms to use as preschool classrooms. The final bill (AB 125) would create a single, regionalized rate system for all early learning services – instead of the current system of one statewide rate for CSPP providers and different regionalized rates for other early care and education programs. Santa Clara County Senator Jerry Hill and Assemblymember Marc Berman are listed as authors on the bills, and Strong Start coalition members Early Edge California and Kidango are listed as sponsors. You can read more about the bills at the Assemblymember's [web site](#) or in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#)

<http://www.strongstartsantaclara.org>

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