



Policy Roundtable for Child Care
Wednesday, June 13, 2012
10:00 a.m. – Noon
Conference Room 743
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles



Meeting Agenda

- | | | | |
|-------|------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 10:00 | I. | Welcome and Introductions | Jacquelyn McCroskey
Chair |
| | A. | Review of Minutes for May 9, 2012 | <i>Action Item</i> |
| | B. | Nominating Committee Report | |
| | C. | Annual Retreat Plans – July 11, 2012 | |
| 10:20 | II. | Joint Committee on Legislation
<i>Child Care Policy Framework Goal 2</i> | Adam Sonenshein
Michele Sartell |
| | A. | Motion to Oppose Governor's Recommendation to Move Subsidized Child Development Services Out of the California Department of Education | |
| | B. | Update on Legislative Budget Committee Hearings | |
| | C. | Update on Proposed Legislation and Ballot Initiatives | |
| | | ▪ AB 1673 (Mitchell) | |
| | | ▪ AB 1872 (Alejo) | |
| | | ▪ AB 2286 (Bonilla) | |
| 10:50 | III. | Report on Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness
<i>Child Care Policy Framework Goal 3</i> | |
| | A. | Serving Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness | Dora Jacildo |
| | B. | Feedback on Report Recommendations | Kathy Malaske-Samu |
| 11:30 | IV. | Geographic distribution of the Child Care and Development Fund in California | Kathleen Manis
Advancement Project |
| 11:55 | V. | Announcements and Public Comment | |
| 12:00 | VI. | Call to Adjourn | Jacquelyn McCroskey |

Mission Statement

The Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care builds and strengthens early care and education by providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on policy, systems, and infrastructure improvement.

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Policy Roundtable for Child Care

222 South Hill Street, Fifth Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: (213) 974-4103 • Fax: (213) 217-5106 • www.childcare.lacounty.gov

MEETING MINUTES

May 9, 2012

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Conference Room 743

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

500 West Temple Street

Los Angeles, California

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey, Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable), opened the meeting at 10:12 a.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

A. Review of Meeting Minutes – April 11, 2012

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

- Under “Ad Hoc Committee Report on Governor’s Proposal to Reorganize the Subsidized Child Care and Development System”, add that the Department of Public Social Services was also represented on the committee. (Page 3)
- Under “AB 1872 (Alejo)”, note that the study referred to in paragraph two was conducted by the California Food Policy Advocates (as well as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). (Page 2)

Dr. Sharoni Little moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Mr. Robert Gilchick seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

** Note – Upon further review of a proposed correction to the motion relating to putting forth alternative proposals to the Governor’s budget cuts (item 1), the motion did pass unanimously.

B. Annual Retreat Plans – July 11, 2012

Dr. McCroskey thanked Ms. Mika Yamamoto for securing Eaton Canyon located in Pasadena for the Roundtable’s annual retreat scheduled for July 11, 2012. The retreat is a full day meeting, scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The retreat agenda will be presented at the June meeting.

- Call for Nominating Committee

Dr. McCroskey reminded members that the Chair and Vice Chair serve one year terms. As such, she asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee. The nominated slate for officers is presented at the June meeting and voted on at the July retreat. The nominating committee conducts its work by telephone and the task is short term. The following members volunteered to serve on the nominating committee: Ms. Connie Russell, Ms. Dora Jacildo,

Dr. Sharoni Little, and Ms. Maria Calix. Ms. Terri Nishimura volunteered to serve as an alternate as needed.

Dr. McCroskey thanked the volunteers and then asked members to let a committee member or staff know of their interest to serve as Chair or Vice Chair.

C. Other Items of Interest

Dr. McCroskey raised three items of interest:

- The update on the Steps to Excellence Program (STEP) will be postponed to the June meeting.
- Using the working paper on the Roundtable's response to the Governor's budget proposals for child care and development services, Dr. Little is working with Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas' office on crafting a motion. Ms. Sylvia Drew Ivie expects that the earliest it may go on the Board of Supervisors agenda is May 22, 2012. Dr. McCroskey acknowledged the effort as a huge step forward and thanked both Dr. Little and Ms. Drew Ivie.
- It recently was brought to Dr. McCroskey's attention that the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) plans to eliminate its share of funding for its Head Start programs effective the 2013-14 school year. Ms. Jacildo added that the cuts would impact 24 sites serving 2,000 children at a time when LBUSD's Head Start is serving as a model for connecting children in child welfare system with their services. To date, 70 children in the child welfare system have benefited from collaborative between LBUSD Head Start and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

There is a possibility for another agency to absorb contract, however no decisions have been made. LBUSD currently subsidizes the Head Start sites, which will impact the ability of another program to take it on independent of the district's support. A meeting in a couple of weeks with Head Start will determine what level of support is needed and available. The transition to another operator is likely to take place over a year.

Ms. Jacildo suggested that it is the perfect storm as Head Start programs are striving to meet the requirements for having an educated workforce at the Bachelor level when fewer college courses are offered. Times are tough for the child care and development industry – for program operators, their staff, and the families they serve. Ms. Cervantes chimed in noting that the Child Care Resource Center is struggling with demoting teachers who are unable to earn their college credits due to limited access to needed classes.

- Ms. Nora Armenta announced that the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is expanding transitional kindergarten to all of its elementary schools. Approximately 4,200 children may be eligible.

II. Joint Committee on Legislation
Child Care Policy Framework Goal 2

A. Update on Legislative Budget Committee Hearings

Ms. Michele Sartell relayed that the hearings on the Governor's 2012-13 budget proposals for child care and development services concluded with Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #1 on Education. The subcommittee deferred action on the Governor's proposed cuts pending the May Revise while voting on a motion to reject the Governor's proposal to eliminate transitional preschool. The subcommittee did not take up the Governor's administrative restructuring proposal. To some extent, hearing outcomes have been similar across most of the budget subcommittees. Subcommittees on the Assembly side were more likely to reject the Governor's structural changes, yet again most deferred decisions regarding budget cuts to programs until they had time to review the Governor's May Revise.

The Governor is expected to issue his May Revise on Monday, May 14, 2012; he is reported to suggest that the May Revise will contain additional cuts. In the meantime, the LAO is projecting a significant shortfall in revenues - \$2 billion below the Administration's budget forecast.

B. Update on Proposed Legislation and Ballot Initiatives

▪ **AB 1673 (Mitchell) and AB 1872 (Alejo)**

As background, AB 1673 (Mitchell) would establish 12 months of continuous eligibility for a California Department of Education (CDE)-contracted program regardless of program type once a child of an income eligible family is certified as eligible unless the child no longer resides in the state or is deceased. With respect to children enrolled in programs operated by a higher educational institution, the certification would be good for the academic year. AB 1872 (Alejo) would require family child care homes provide to their enrolled children meals and snacks that meet recommended servings under the four basic food groups – dairy, fruits and vegetables, grains/breads, and meat/meat alternatives – as specified by the United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP).

Ms. Sartell reported that the bill analyses with the Roundtable's recommended positions to support each bill have been forwarded to the Chief Executive Office's Intergovernmental and External Affairs branch to be prepared for presentation to the Board of Supervisors as pursuits of position. AB 1673 is in the Committee on Appropriations Suspense File; AB 1872 is scheduled to be heard in the Committee on Appropriations today. A copy of the bill analysis for AB 1872 was provided in the meeting packets. Members and guests received a copy of the bill analysis for AB 1673 in their April meeting packets.

▪ **AB 2286 (Bonilla)**

Ms. Sartell referred to the draft bill analysis and cover memo contained in the meeting packets. The Joint Committee on Legislation is proposing that the Roundtable recommend to the Board of Supervisors a position of support on AB 2286 authored by Assembly Member Bonilla and sponsored by the California Child Development Directors Association (CCDAA). This bill would amend the Child Care and Development Services Act relating to the reimbursement rate paid by the State to agencies contracted to provide subsidized child care and development services as follows:

- Increase the adjustment factor for infants who are 0 to 18 months of age enrolled in center-based programs from 1.7 to 2.3.
- Increase the adjustment factor for toddlers who are 18 to 36 months of age enrolled in center-based programs from 1.4 to 1.8.

The bill analysis notes that current reimbursement rates for infant and toddler care falls significantly short of the cost of care that requires higher staff to child ratios. Furthermore, the challenges of meeting the costs for serving the youngest children have grown and budgets for child care and development services have been reduced over recent years. As a result, centers have closed or are considering closing their infant and toddler classrooms.

The bill's author was careful to craft the bill to raise the adjustment factor without requiring a budget augmentation. As such, it will result in centers serving fewer infants and toddlers, however weighed against the further loss of center-based infant and toddler classrooms. The bill is consistent with County policy to "support efforts to adequately fund high quality early care and education services for all children from low and moderate income families."

Ms. Lisa Wilkin, representing the CCDA, added that child care and development programs have not received a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) since 2007-08. Currently, programs are doing a number of things to help their operating budgets stretch, which includes shifting money from their more expensive infant and toddler program to their preschool programs to make it more viable. One of the rationales for the bill is to adjust the rate for infants and toddlers as a means to halt the shifting of funds from this population of children. She added that while the rate for family child care homes participating in Family Child Care Home Education Networks is slightly different, it would increase for infants and toddlers. Lastly, Ms. Wilkin noted the requirements are one adult for every three infants, whereas the preschool classroom has a one to eight teacher-children ratio. The proposed adjustment factor is a move closer to the real costs of staffing infant and toddlers classrooms, based on calculations (that also took into consideration other regulatory requirements) run by CCDA. Ms. Malaske-Samu contributed that in addition to staff, infant and toddler classrooms require more space, for example to accommodate cribs.

Ms. Wilkin was asked whether the sponsors can expect success in this climate. Ms. Wilkin answered that the bill is not suggesting an augmentation of funding. On the other hand, it will reduce spaces. In the end, the goal is to preserve the existing spaces and the infrastructure. Ms. Laura Escobedo added that fully 57 percent of licensed capacity for infants and toddlers are from public investments. The infant and toddler infrastructure is at threat of disappearing. Ms. Kate Sachnoff announced that First 5 LA voted to support the bill.

Mr. Duane Dennis raised the perennial conundrum of the number of spaces in the system versus the quality of the programs. He admitted that the bill raises complicated issues and by recommending a position of support, the Roundtable is developing a policy of reducing the number spaces in system in exchange for higher quality. He also understands the argument of not acting given the costs for serving infants and toddlers. The field coming out with a position of reducing spaces may create a ripple effect. Dr. McCroskey noted the arcane language due to the complexity of a regulatory environment. She offered, rhetorically, "We need legislation around this? CDE should have the latitude to make adjustments."

A question was raised whether the increased adjustment would be enough. CCDA ran calculations based on staffing and other regulatory requirements and concluded that the

proposed adjustment rate would be sufficient for what is needed now. She added, however, that implementation of a quality rating and improvement system may require further changes.

Mr. Dennis continued with respect to the larger policy issue. The subsidy system currently drives infant and toddler care in this state. If it is reduced, it impacts the low-income mother and her ability to access high quality care. He suggested that it says something about our belief about low-income working (mostly) mothers. Perhaps more low-income families would have access to higher quality.

Ms. Escobedo was asked how much of the 57 percent goes to programs using the Regional Market Rate compared to those using the Standard Reimbursement Rate. Ms. Escobedo answered that it would require going back to the original data and looking at the number of children served in subsidy programs. Another question was raised regarding efforts underway to convince legislators to pass the bill. Ms. Wilkin reported that the bill is being heard in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations today; it had already passed out of the Committee on Education. Mr. Nurhan Pirim expressed an interest in the bill on behalf of the Department of Public Social Services, adding that infants and toddlers and some children up to six years old have been exempt from welfare to work activities, therefore not receiving child care services.

Mr. John Berndt questioned whether funds for infants and toddlers are considered a set aside. Ms. Wilkin clarified that when CDE contracts out new money, it is issued as a Request for Proposal to, for example, serve infants. A program needs to show that they can serve infants. Once the organization has the contract, there is nothing to prevent the operator from transferring funds between its contracted programs (e.g. infants and toddlers to preschool). A number of operators are committed to serving infants and toddlers. Separately, there is an infant and toddler set aside for quality. Ms. Wilkin further explained that the adjustment factor is tied to the age of the child. Mr. Dennis added a final comment on the system for zero to five – there is a dearth of care for infants and toddlers while an abundance of care for three and four year olds. Factors lend themselves to fill spaces for preschool that are not evident for infants and toddlers.

Ms. Carol Hiestand entered a motion to request that the Board of Supervisors adopt a position of support on AB 2286 (Bonilla), which would raise the adjustment factor to the reimbursement rate for infants and toddlers enrolled in center-based programs; Mr. Duane Dennis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of ten to zero with seven abstentions.

III. Los Angeles Child Care Needs Assessment

Dr. McCroskey welcomed Ms. Escobedo to the meeting to discuss the results of the collaborative work to develop the needs assessment. Members and guests were referred to their meeting packets for the PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Escobedo provided background on the membership of the collaborative including the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care/Child Care Planning Committee, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP). Each group conducts needs assessments; as a collaborative, the goal was to create an aligned needs assessment that used multiple sources, including a survey of all subsidized programs.

The components of the needs assessment include:

- all children in working families and all full-time child development options
- all children in low-income working families and full-time subsidized options

- all three- and four-year old children residing in low-income families and part-day preschool options
- priorities for subsidized care

Ms. Escobedo then presented a series of slides with data represented by Service Planning Area (SPA). She highlighted areas with gaps in services with real numbers as well as ratios of spaces available to children. With respect to school age programs, Ms. Escobedo explained that 65 percent of programs are After School Education and Safety programs and/or 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century CLCs), which are exempt from licensing. Unfortunately, counting these license-exempt spaces distorts the data given that ASES and 21st Century CLCs are not truly designed as child care and do not operate during school breaks. By default, however, parents use the programs to meet their child care needs. Preschool spaces are well represented throughout the county due to LAUP investments and the expansion of CDE-contracted preschool in 2007-08. LAUSD's School Readiness Language Development Program (SRLDP) also is represented in the data, although the survival of this program is currently an issue.

Ms. Escobedo explained the role of the Child Care Planning Committee in setting priorities for funding child care and development services based on the findings in the needs assessment. CDE uses the priorities to determine where to allocate new funds as they become available.

Ms. Laura Escobedo is eager to present the information to other groups as they embark on planning efforts. She has offered to present to the Best Start communities, however has not received a response to date. Ms. Jennifer Cowan of First 5 LA offered to follow-up.

Dr. McCroskey thanked Ms. Escobedo for her presentation and spoke briefly to its usefulness as people become more familiar with it.

IV. STRENGTHENING FAMILIES LEARNING COMMUNITY

Child Care Policy Framework Goal 5

Dr. Sam Chan reported that Ms. Trish Ploehn opened the first quarterly meeting on the Strengthening Families Learning Community. He appreciated the connections with the County's Strategic Plan. Dr. Chan sees the meetings as a vehicle to talk about philosophy and applying it to actual implementation.

Stepping back, Dr. Chan reflected on the formation of the Children's Planning Council (CPC), which was responsible for the evolution of the SPAs. The initial impetus was looking at larger county budgets that serve children and families. The CPC was a concerted effort to target and bring a diverse group of people together to drive agendas and planning efforts with a strong community-based foundation. Subsequently, County department heads met under New Directions, which was formed to put projects into practice. New Directions began in the 1990s and continued up to five years ago, when it was disbanded with the reorganization of Chief Administrative Office to the Chief Executive Office and the development of the county department clusters. Both the CPC and New Directions have ceased to function and the forum for County leaders has not been replaced. Work has been conducted on the back end, focusing on service and meeting needs rather than prevention, promotion, and family strengthening.

Returning to the April meeting of the Learning Community, Ms. Judy Langford presented an overview of Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors to help ground the members. Next, members talked about specific projects, some of which are collaborative across County departments. Ms. Mika Yamamoto reflected on the perspective of Parks and Recreation as

involved in community building and networking with partners. Participation in the Learning Community helps her connect the dots and begin talking about how to link with other services as a means to strengthen their work with families and patrons. Dr. Chan commented that the large County departments are drivers of money and needs. As an example, the Department of Mental Health recently funded a program of County Library on family strengthening. Triple P - Positive Parenting Program is evidence-based and will be implemented using the format of the parent cafes. Parents and paraprofessionals are targets for training as parent educators. Dr. Randi Wolfe cautioned on who does the training to ensure that it does not underestimate the complexity of doing parent education. Dr. Chan answered that he is open to all considerations.

Dr. McCroskey commented that to date, there has been no regular convening on how to best leverage resources – across departments or clusters - to serve to children and families. Nor have there been no discussions on how to work collaboratively to serve these populations, particularly on the areas of prevention and early intervention.

On a related note, Ms. Malaske-Samu announced that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) issued a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to solicit proposals for projects to improve the socio-emotional and behavioral well-being of infants and young children, ages birth to five years old, and their families, through collaborative service delivery. The 24-month grant is intended to build infrastructure capacity between State, local or tribal child welfare agencies and early childhood systems to ensure that infants and young children who are in or at-risk of entering into foster care have access to comprehensive, high-quality early care and education services. The ACYF will make 10 awards of \$250,000 per grantee per year across the county. The question regarding submitting an application started with Mr. Alex Morales of Children's Bureau. A meeting was held earlier in the week to explore feasibility and possible ideas and included representatives from four County departments and six to seven major agencies including child care resource and referral and child welfare. Because the first round of grants resulted in funding for the UCLA/Long Beach collaborative, a query has been submitted to explore the likelihood of another award in Los Angeles County. Regardless, there is a shared enthusiasm among the group on what kind of system could be created countywide that would make connections between child welfare and early care and education more systematic. The application is due June 11, 2012.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

- Families In Schools, in partnership with First 5 LA, has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) under its Social Enterprise Grants Program. Non-profit organizations serving children from zero to five years old and their families are eligible to apply for seed money of up to \$50,000 to launch or expand a social enterprise. The one year grant comes with individualized coaching and technical assistance. Information sessions have been scheduled for mid- to late May. For more information, visit www.familiesinschools.org/social-enterprise-grants-program.
- First 5 LA and the LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investments are hosting a brown bag lunch, convening panelists to discuss the critical impacts of the Governor's revise state budget plan and proposed ballot initiatives on systems and services that support young children and their families. Panelists include: Sydney Kamlager of Assembly Member Holly Mitchell's office, Mr. Duane Dennis representing Pathways and the First 5 LA Commission, Mr. Lucien Wulson of Insure the Uninsured Project, and Phil Ansell of the Department of Public Social Services. The brown bag is scheduled for May 24, 2012 from

12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at First 5 LA and will be able to accommodate 30-35 people. Lunch will be provided.

- Dr. McCroskey thanked Ms. Connie Russell for providing snacks.

VI. CALL TO ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Ms. Nora Armenta	Ms. Dawn Kurtz for Mr. Adam Sonenshein
Mr. John Berndt for Ms. Keesha Woods	Dr. Sharoni Little
Ms. Maria Calix	Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu
Dr. Sam Chan	Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey
Mr. Duane Dennis	Ms. Terri Nishimura
Dr. Robert Gilchick	Ms. Connie Russell
Mr. Michael Gray	Ms. Mika Yamamoto
Ms. Carol Hiestand for Ms. Fran Chasen	Ms. Ruth Yoon
Ms. Dora Jacildo	

71 percent of members were in attendance.

Guests:

Ms. Cristina Alvarado, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
Ms. Kate Anderson, Children Now
Ms. Ellen Cervantes, Child Care Resource Center
Ms. Nancy Chang, UCLA School of Nursing
Ms. Jennifer Cowan, First 5 LA
Ms. Lucia De La Ria, Department of Public Social Services
Ms. Sylvia Drew Ivie, Second Supervisorial District
Ms. Lorena Gallardo-Gomez, Department of Public Social Services
Ms. Mary Hammer, South Bay Center for Community Development
Dr. Jennifer Hottenroth, Department of Children and Family Services
Ms. Grace Lu, Second Supervisorial District
Ms. Jennifer Marcella, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Center for the Study of Social Policy
Mr. Nurhan Pirim, Department of Public Social Services
Ms. Kate Sachnoff, First 5 LA
Ms. Nina Sorkin, Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families
Ms. Angela Vasquez, Advancement Project
Ms. Lisa Wilkin, California Child Development Administrators Association
Dr. Randi Wolfe, Tikkun Consulting

Staff:

Ms. Laura Escobedo
Ms. Michele Sartell



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES HELD IN ROOM 381B
OF THE KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

9:30 AM

- 32-A.** Recommendation as submitted by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas: Instruct the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and send a letter to Governor Brown and the County's Legislative Delegation, recommending the following alternatives to the Governor's proposed budget:

Rather than moving subsidized child development services out of the California Department of Education (CDE) to county welfare agencies, charge CDE to streamline the subsidized child development system, including but not limited to: consolidating similar contracts; amending contracts to include more focus on performance; structuring contracts to maximize the use of State, Federal and local resources; simplifying eligibility and reimbursement determinations; and facilitating the articulation between child development and the K-12 systems. The effect of these changes should substantially minimize the need to cut dollars from the programs; and

Any statutory changes needed to streamline the administration of subsidized child development services should be enacted in a timely manner to minimize disruption in care. (12-2255)

Arnold Sachs, Cristina Alvarado, Levi Kingston, Kate Anderson, Gloria Davis and Jacquelyn McCroskey addressed the Board.

On motion of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, this item was approved.

Ayes: 5 - Supervisor Molina, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, Supervisor Knabe, Supervisor Antonovich and Supervisor Yaroslavsky

The foregoing is a fair statement of the proceedings of the regular meeting held May 22, 2012, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles and ex officio the governing body of all other special assessment and taxing districts, agencies and authorities for which said Board so acts.



Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer
Executive Officer-Clerk
of the Board of Supervisors

By Sachi A. Hamai

Advocating to Minimize Harm in the State Changes Which Affect Child Development Services

As California continues to struggle with a crushing budget deficit, Governor Brown has put forth a budget which includes a series of substantial cuts to social services.

In addition to dramatically reducing the budget for subsidized child development services, the Governor is proposing to move the administration of most subsidized child development programs from the California Department of Education (CDE) to county welfare departments, effective Fiscal Year 2013-14.

If enacted, the impact of these proposals will be felt throughout Los Angeles County (County):

- Subsidized child development services in the County will be reduced by 30 percent;
- 10,000 fewer children of low income families will receive subsidized child development services;
- \$150 million in child care subsidies will be lost to the County as will hundreds of child care related jobs; and

- MORE -

MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KNABE _____

ANTONOVICH _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
May 22, 2012
Page 2

- A number of school districts and non-profit organizations will close their State-funded early education programs or transition these programs to fee-based operations. This will result in a loss of programs which comply with substantially higher standards than those required by Community Care Licensing.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Send a letter to Governor Brown and the Los Angeles County's state legislative delegation, recommending the following alternatives to the Governor's proposed budget:

- Rather than moving subsidized child development services out of the California Department of Education (CDE) to county welfare agencies, CDE be charged to streamline the subsidized child development system, including but not limited to: consolidating similar contracts; amending contracts to include more focus on performance; structuring contracts to maximize the use of State, Federal and local resources; simplifying eligibility and reimbursement determinations; and facilitating the articulation between child development and the K-12 systems. The effect of these changes should substantially minimize the need to cut dollars from the programs; and
- Any statutory changes needed to streamline the administration of subsidized child development services should be enacted in a timely manner to minimize disruption in care.

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 383
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-1411 • FAX (213) 620-0636

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

GLORIA MOLINA

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

DON KNABE

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

May 24, 2012

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

We are writing to respectfully urge you to consider alternatives to your FY 2012-13 State Budget proposal to move the administration of certain subsidized child care programs from the California Department of Education (CDE) to county welfare departments effective July 1, 2013.

We understand the difficult challenges you and the Legislature face to address the State's current fiscal situation. However, we believe that the following recommendations would substantially minimize the need to reduce funding for subsidized child development programs.

Rather than moving subsidized child development services out of CDE to county welfare agencies, we recommend that CDE be charged to streamline the current subsidized child development system, including but not limited to:

- Consolidating similar contracts;
- Amending contracts to include more focus on performance;
- Structuring contracts to maximize the use of State, Federal, and local resources;
- Simplifying eligibility and reimbursement determinations; and
- Facilitating the articulation between child development and the K-12 system.

We also propose that any statutory changes needed to streamline the administration of subsidized child development services be enacted in a timely manner to minimize disruption in care for families and children receiving child development services.

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
May 24, 2012
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We look forward to working with you to craft these alternative solutions to avoid funding reductions in child development programs and to maintain the administration of these programs with the CDE.

Sincerely,



ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Chairman, Board of Supervisors



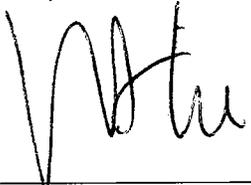
GLORIA MOLINA
Supervisor, First District



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Supervisor, Second District



DON KNABE
Supervisor, Fourth District



MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Supervisor, Fifth District

Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles County

Abstract

The number of families with children experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County calls for innovative strategies to meet the unique needs of these vulnerable young children and their parents. Access to high quality and affordable child development services can mitigate the trauma of homelessness for children and serve as a critical lynch pin that helps parents secure and sustain both employment and housing. However, the majority of services for families experiencing homelessness focuses on adult needs and do not address the effects of toxic stress on young children. Prolonged exposure to toxic stress responses can seriously impede the healthy development of young children and undermine both physical and mental health well into adulthood. This report from the Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care highlights local examples where high quality child development programs have been integrated into services for families experiencing homelessness and offers recommendations for integrating child development services into comprehensive systems targeting families experiencing homelessness.

1. Introduction

Over the last thirty years, neuroscience, molecular biology, genetics and child development have revealed the awe inspiring intricacies and phenomenal pace of brain development in young children. We now understand that, while the brain continues to develop throughout our lives, critical aspects of brain development take place during the *first three years of life*. It is during these earliest years that the foundations for life-long learning, behavior and health are developed. As parents, relatives and friends – we want to ensure that families have the wherewithal to provide their children with experiences that support robust brain development. We also understand that children of all ages thrive when they have positive relationships with parents and caregivers, and have access to environments that are safe, predictable, and stimulating.

Unfortunately, many families in Los Angeles County are struggling to provide their children basic shelter. The *2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report*, reported that 3,035 families with 6,066 children were experiencing homelessness in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care.¹ This Continuum of Care includes all of Los Angeles County with the exception of Glendale, Pasadena and Long Beach.

While we know that young children thrive when supported by positive relationships, we also know that chronic, unrelenting stress in early childhood caused by extreme poverty or severe maternal depression can interfere with early brain development and lead to life-long problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.²

Whether motivated by moral obligation or fiscal prudence – helping families with children secure permanent housing, the services needed to sustain housing and to mitigate the trauma of homelessness is a wise investment. Children have the potential to contribute to our society or drain resources over a lifetime from multiple sectors.

Children and families can be remarkably resilient. If concrete support is available when it is needed, the impact of trauma can be minimized and a positive trajectory for development can be maintained. There are extraordinary programs in Los Angeles County that are working closely with families experiencing homelessness. These programs address the trauma of homelessness, support parents in addressing their own challenges, and provide children with safe places to grow, play, and learn. Until we can prevent families from sliding into homelessness, we must ensure that all children and families experiencing homelessness have access to needed services and hope for a better future.

2. Who are the children and families experiencing homelessness?

a. Local data on children and families experiencing homelessness

The 2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count was conducted from January 25 to January 27, 2011 and was coordinated by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). With the assistance of 4,000 volunteers deployed across the various communities of Los Angeles County, the biennial count fulfilled the mandate by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to count the homeless population. Additional demographic information was collected between February 2 and April 8, 2011 by surveying 3,658 homeless persons on the street and in shelters. A separate telephone survey to identify the “hidden homeless” was conducted between January 25 and April 10, 2011.

The 2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report identified 51,340 persons experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. This was a three percent reduction compared to 2009.³ Given the devastating impact of the current recession, this is positive testimony to the concerted efforts of local governments and community stakeholders to address the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. Further analysis of the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, which includes all of Los Angeles County with the exception of the cities of Glendale, Pasadena and Long Beach, revealed 6,066 children in families that were experiencing homeless.

Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count 2011 Los Angeles Continuum of Care - Selected Subpopulations ⁴		
	Count in 2011	Percent of Total
Family members	9,218	21%
Children (under 18 years old)	6,066	14%
Families (households)	3,035	
Survivors of Domestic Violence	4,610	10%
Hidden Homeless (included in the overall count)	10,800	

The 2011 count was the first to enumerate chronically homeless families in Los Angeles County. Six percent of the total homeless population met the definition of family members who experienced chronic homelessness. A family is defined as a household with one or more adults accompanied by at least one child under 18 years of age. A family is considered chronically homeless if at least one member has been continuously homeless for over one year, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in three years.⁵ Extended periods of homelessness put children and families at increased risk of experiencing violence, health problems and the stress associated with the loss of possessions, routines, privacy and security. The cumulative effects of persistent poverty have far more detrimental effects than transitory poverty.⁶

The annualized estimate of persons experiencing homelessness within the Los Angeles Continuum of Care during the past year was 120,070. This estimate, which is 12 percent higher than the 2009 annualized estimate of 107,157 persons, includes persons who cycle in and out of homelessness as well as those who were homeless for a period of time that did not coincide with the homeless count.⁷ Unfortunately, it is not possible to break out this data by subpopulations.

The Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center in Los Angeles has reported that an estimated 27 percent of homeless adults lived in foster care or group homes during their childhood and 25 percent were abused either physically or sexually.⁸ In fact, a number of studies have documented that childhood separation is a predictor of future homelessness in adults.⁹ This

raises real concerns for the more than 30,000 children currently under the jurisdiction of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

b. National data on the impact of homelessness on children and families

“Family homelessness is caused by the combined effects of lack of affordable housing, extreme poverty, decreasing government supports, the challenge of raising children alone, the changing demographics of the family, domestic violence, and fractured social supports. As the gap between housing costs and income continues to widen, more and more families are at risk of homelessness. For families with vulnerabilities or little safety net, even a seemingly minor event can trigger a catastrophic outcome and catapult a family onto the streets.”¹⁰

Most research on children and families experiencing homelessness is based on information from children and families in shelters – far less is known about the “precariously housed families” and others who do not enter shelters. Prior to the recession, family issues such as mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse were more prominent in explaining which families were homeless.

Both local and national data regarding families in shelters have documented that the typical family is headed by a single mother. The National Center on Family Homelessness reports that the mothers are generally in their late twenties with two children and that nearly half (42 percent) of the children are less than six years of age.¹¹

Research conducted prior to 2007 revealed that the lives of these mothers were filled with serious challenges:

- Over 92 percent of the mothers experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime,
- 63 percent experienced severe physical assault by an intimate male partner,
- 44 percent of mothers lived outside their home at sometime during childhood and 20 percent of the mothers were placed in foster care,
- 41 percent were dependent on drugs or alcohol, and
- Approximately 50 percent experienced a major depressive episode since becoming homeless.¹²

Early research on children experiencing homelessness found that the children:

- Went hungry at twice the rate of other children,¹³
- Were sick four times more often than other children,¹⁴
- Were four times more likely to show delayed development and have twice the rate of learning disabilities as non-homeless children,¹⁵
- By age twelve, 83 percent had been exposed to at least one serious, violent event and 25 percent had witnessed acts of violence within their families,¹⁶

- Experienced significant mobility, with 41 percent attending two different schools in one year, and 28 percent attending three or more schools,¹⁷
- More than one fifth of homeless preschoolers have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care, but less than one-third receive any treatment,¹⁸ and
- By the time they are eight years old, one in three has a major mental disorder.¹⁹

As the current recession has progressed, the differences between homeless and low-income housed families have become less pronounced, and to some degree, the children experiencing homelessness have become more diverse. However, when parents are struggling with addiction, depression and/or domestic violence, they are less able to provide their children with predictable environments, or shield them from the impacts of poverty and the risks of violence. Given frequent and prolonged exposure to severe adversity, children experiencing homelessness are likely to experience toxic stress response. When the stress response is extreme and long-lasting, and adults are not available to serve as a buffer, the result can be damaged, weakened systems and brain architecture with lifelong repercussions.²⁰

3. What should services for children and families experiencing homelessness include?

Between 2009 and 2011, children were one of the few homeless subpopulations in Los Angeles County to increase both in number and percent. It is time for a significant investment aimed at children and families experiencing homelessness. The National Center on Family Homelessness has identified ten *Basic Principles of Care for Families and Children Experiencing Homelessness*.²¹ In addition to stressing the importance of keeping families together, ensuring physical and emotional safety, and connecting families to services, these principles specifically speak to the needs of children:

Address the Unique Needs of Children: The needs of homeless children are often overlooked, particularly in settings with limited resources. Children are particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of homelessness; it is essential that their needs are addressed while living in shelters and after. At a minimum:

- Child specific services and child friendly settings must be provided.
- Services must be developmentally appropriate.
- Programs must help children access and succeed in school through partnering with schools and homeless education liaisons, informing parents of the educational rights of homeless children and providing direct educational supports.
- Medical and early mental health services must be available for children.

4. Model Programs Underway In Los Angeles County

The principles outlined by the National Center on Family Homelessness call for comprehensive, integrated services that meet high standards of quality and professionalism. The good news is that there are programs underway and in development that meet these standards.

Children Today is a non-profit organization operating in Long Beach. Their mission is to provide community-based services to children and families facing homelessness, fostering long-term stability and success. The agency's guiding vision is that all children under six years of age will have a safe, nurturing environment where they can spend their days playing, learning and growing while their parents take steps toward stability.

To realize their mission and to move closer to their vision, Children Today operates two child development centers:

- Play House West was opened in 2000, providing free, full-day child development services to children and families who are homeless and for up to six months after families have secured permanent housing. The Play House West is licensed to serve up to 32 children from six weeks to six years of age. This program is one of only three emergency service programs in the United States that has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children – a testament to the quality of the services delivered to both the children and their families.
- Play House North was opened in 2008 with a licensed capacity of 32 children ranging in age from 18 months to six years of age. This program targets its services to children and families who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness. Services are provided at no cost to families and families can remain in this program long term.

Play House clients tend to be single parent families headed by mothers, ranging in age from 18 to 30 years old, with two or more children. In 2009, 39 percent of the families identified themselves as Latino, 34 percent as African American, 12 percent as multiracial, ten percent as Caucasian, three percent as Asian/Pacific Islander and two percent as American Indian. The families reported average annual incomes of \$9,000.

The services provided by both Play Houses involve:

- Specially trained teaching staff. Play House teachers hold degrees in early childhood education, have been trained to address trauma issues in both parents and children, and are able to consult with a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) as issues emerge.
- Low child to teacher ratios. This staffing pattern makes it possible for staff to address the behavioral, emotional and social needs of the children and provide ongoing support, education and counseling to family members.
- A curriculum that is informed by developmentally appropriate practice and each child's development. The Desired Results Developmental Profile is used to assess each child's development. If concerns are identified, the family is connected to the appropriate services for treatment.
- An attractive and well organized child-centered environment. The centers are welcoming, color schemes are muted, and equipment and activities are presented to offer children the opportunity to make choices, yet care is taken to not overwhelm them.
- A LCSW is on staff. The LCSW is available to work with parents, observe children, navigate service systems and support teaching staff.

- Access to medical and related services. Children Today is a founding member of the Long Beach Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program. Within this network of service providers, Children Today has established relationships with health care, mental health, housing assistance, substance abuse support, job training and other crucial supports. The agency also is a member of the Long Beach Multi-Service Center.
- Nutritious breakfasts, lunches and snacks are prepared on-site and served daily.
- Basic items such as food, clothing, diaper, and hygiene products are shared with families.

Children Today has been working with children and families experiencing homelessness for over a decade. Lessons have been learned over the years and include the following:

- Traditional child development funding streams and their eligibility criteria may not be a good match for this population.
 - While children experiencing homelessness can certainly benefit from regular participation in high quality child development programs, getting children to these programs may not be a first priority for parents who are struggling with basic housing and food issues.
 - Expectations for families experiencing homelessness need to be adjusted, taking into account the challenges the families encounter on a daily basis.
 - Families experiencing homelessness may not be able to produce documents such as birth certificates and immunization records.
- Homelessness puts children and families at increased risk of experiencing violence, health problems and the stresses associated with the loss of possessions, routines, privacy, security and sense of personal dignity. In order to support the healing process, it is imperative that all staff have the knowledge and understanding to respond with skill and compassion to the children and parents who have experienced traumatic stress.
- Many children and families experiencing homelessness have a range of physical and mental health needs. Adopting a “no wrong door policy” and actively connecting (not just referring) families to needed services is critically important. To fulfill this challenge, service providers must understand and be connected to a wide range of service sectors.
- In addition to well-trained and trauma-informed staff, child development programs serving children who have experienced homelessness need to pay particular attention to the physical environment, classroom routines, physical and emotional needs of the children.

The Whole Child
www.thewholechild.info

The Whole Child (TWC) has been providing professional and comprehensive mental health services to children and families for over 50 years. While most of the programs are offered out of their Whittier office, TWC also operates programs where therapists and case managers are in the community, schools, and homes. The agency’s efforts to improve the quality of life and ensure that children are living in nurturing environments led to their assuming administrative responsibility of the Rio Hondo Temporary Home in July 2010. This facility had served as a shelter designed to serve and preserve

families. Recognizing that best practice in the arena of services to persons experiencing homelessness had shifted from an emphasis on shelters to a “housing first” approach, TWC adopted a scattered site housing model with Master-Sub Leases. Currently TWC’s Family Housing can assist families with housing in the Rio Hondo cities, including:

- Cerritos
- Downey
- El Monte (some sections)
- La Mirada
- Norwalk
- Pico Rivera
- Rosemead
- Santa Fe Springs
- Whittier

Under the Master-Sub Lease approach, Family Housing works with participating families and facilitates their accessing rental housing. Landlords anticipate far less risk entering into a lease with Family Housing than with a single mother with a minimal work history. Once housing is secured, Family Housing can also assist families with move-in costs, first and last month’s rent, damage deposits, utility hook-ups, and up to 18 months of rental subsidy. The services are designed to help families stabilize financially, and the scattered site housing model makes it possible for families stay in the community where they have a support network, or in the case of domestic violence, to relocate and establish a new support network.

In March 2012, Family Housing reported serving 23 families, including 86 children ranging in age from infancy to 18 years of age. Over 50 percent of the children were under five years of age. In order to qualify for participation in this program, the families had to meet the federal Housing and Urban Development definition of homeless. Briefly, the families and their children were facing the myriad of problems and threats associated with severe poverty.

In fact, the majority of children in this program have open cases with DCFS. Consistent with national and local research, most of the mothers experienced abuse as children and spent time in the foster care system. While all participants are to be drug and alcohol free and not involved in an active domestic violence situations, these challenges are consistently represented in the histories of participating families.

During the period when Family Housing is subsidizing housing costs, a cadre of professionals is available to work with participating children and parents for the purpose of achieving long-term success and permanency. Families are able to tap into the skills of two case managers, a job coach, a nutritionist, and a mental health consultant. In addition, an occupational therapist assesses all of the preschool age children to learn if there are developmental delays. If delays are identified, TWC seeks to provide or connect the family to services. The intent is to intervene early and, where possible, remedy the delay before the child enters school.

While the TWC Family Housing Program is less than two years old, they report that 80 percent of their families remain successfully housed. This level of stability is directly benefiting the children, increasing school participation and school success.

Child care remains a significant challenge. Access to subsidized child care can make or break a family’s ability to sustain their housing. Many families experience frustration waiting to access subsidized care, feeling stymied in their job search and efforts to achieve economic stability. Other participants have succeeded in securing subsidized child care, but lose this critical assistance upon experiencing even mild success in the job market.

TWC reports the following lessons learned in helping transition families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing and emotionally stable life styles:

- The children and families participating in the Family Housing have multiple and complex issues. TWC brings a range of highly professional and specialized mental health services to both the children and adults. The services are critical to achieving stability and maintaining permanent housing.
- The recent recession has forced increased numbers of families into homelessness. Families with more recent job histories and less debt are better able to secure housing than are those with more turbulent backgrounds.
- Family Housing has been successful in assisting participants to secure employment. Unfortunately, many of the positions are entry level, so full-cost child development services are unaffordable. Single parents with young children cannot pursue employment unless they have access to full-day subsidized child development services.
- The history of childhood abuse and foster care is a disturbingly common experience among adults experiencing homelessness.

Los Angeles County Office of Education Head Start and Early Head Start Services
www.lacoe.edu/orgs/201/index.cfm

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) provides classroom instruction for specialized student populations, as well as a variety of services to the 80 K-12 school districts and 13 community college districts within Los Angeles County.

In 1979, LACOE became a Head Start grantee and is currently the largest Head Start Grantee in Los Angeles County²² and the United States. Head Start is unique in that it is a national program that promotes school readiness by providing early education services as well as access to health, nutritional, social and other family support services. Head Start services are aimed at young children between three and five years of age in low income families. Recognizing the importance of the earliest years, Early Head Start was launched in 1995, targeting services to pregnant women and young children from birth to three years of age. LACOE Head Start serves over 22,000 children in Head Start programs and over 1,000 infants and toddlers in Early Head Start. Services are delivered to the children and their families through nine community-based organizations and 16 school districts. The mission of the LACOE Head Start program is to “achieve excellence in child and family development services.”

In 2007-2008, the national Head Start office determined that children and families experiencing homelessness would be a priority population for both Head Start and Early Head Start services. The LACOE Head Start reports that since 2008, the number of children in Head Start programs that were experiencing homelessness has remained fairly consistent at approximately 1,200 with a one year dip during the 2009-2010 program year. During the 2011-2012 program year, there were 1,053 children experiencing homelessness enrolled in Head Start and another 175 very young children in the Early Head Start program. The majority of the families were enrolled in Head Start and their housing situations came to light through conversations with Head Start staff. While all Head Start programs are required to make contact with local shelters serving homeless families, some have stronger ties to this population based on the mission and services of the sponsoring agency. As an example, Volunteers of America administers Head Start, housing, and substance abuse programs.

The Federal Poverty Guidelines determine eligibility for participation in Head Start. As an example, a family of three cannot have annual earnings of more than \$19,090 per year.²³ Head Start services are targeted to children in very poor families, children in families experiencing homelessness, and children

in foster care. Given these populations, LACOE staff reported a high demand for mental health services and other services across all three populations.

In order to provide a consistently high level of services, LACOE encourages Family Services Workers associated with LACOE delegate agencies to complete the Family Development Credential program. This credential was developed as a research-policy collaborative between Cornell University College of Human Ecology, the New York State Council on Children and Families, and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. In 2010, the Family Development Credential Program moved to the University of Connecticut's Center for Culture, Health and Human Development.

LACOE-Head Start and DCFS have partnered to expedite the enrollment of foster children between three and five years of age into Head Start services. It may be possible to extend that system to service providers working with families experiencing homelessness.

In Development: Regional Homeless Family Centers – A Joint Effort of the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority

Recognizing that a different strategy is needed to effectively serve children and families experiencing homelessness, Los Angeles County and the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority are working to establish five Regional Homeless Family Centers (Centers) throughout the County. The Centers are intended to address the housing needs of families experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness through prevention activities, rapid re-housing, and/or permanent supportive housing. By locating the Centers throughout Los Angeles County, families can remain in their home communities, maintain their support networks, and not have to seek services on Skid Row. The Centers have the potential to incorporate services for young children into their core and to function as model programs.

5. Federal Policies Impacting Children Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney–Vento) provides federal funding to states to facilitate the enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth in public schools. This legislation mandates that state and local education agencies (LEAs) implement certain policies and procedures related to children and youth experiencing homelessness and includes specific references to early education as follows:

Each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, *including a public preschool education*, as provided to other children and youths.²⁴

Unfortunately, this mandate is less powerful for “public preschool” than for K-12 because the supply of preschool education is not adequate to meet the needs of all young children. Affording children experiencing homelessness “equal access to public preschool education” frequently results in access to a waiting list rather than actual services. While this mandate applies only to state and local education agencies, it does encompass all early education services offered by a local education agency – regardless of the funding source supporting any particular program.

In Los Angeles County, school districts have been major operators of full and part-day child development programs. Unfortunately, these programs have suffered major funding cuts over the past four years and further reductions are on the horizon for the 2012-13 Fiscal Year. Access to

subsidized child development services for all children is shrinking dramatically as California struggles to close its ongoing deficit. Programs administered by school districts are at particular risk.

In addition to the issue of “access,” McKinney-Vento addresses two other key issues for children experiencing homelessness – transportation and medical records. LEAs are required to provide transportation to students in K-12 who become homeless and relocate outside of the district. If transportation is requested by the parents or guardians of the students, it must be provided. However, if a preschool student becomes homeless and is relocated outside the district, LEAs are only required to provide “comparable services” to the child’s school of origin.

McKinney-Vento also states that the lack of health records including immunizations should not prevent the immediate enrollment of a child in a LEA administered preschool program. Unfortunately, this directive is counter to Community Care Licensing regulations which require documentation of up-to-date immunizations and related health records prior to enrolling a child in a licensed preschool program. Given that Community Care Licensing is the more likely source of a monitoring visit, programs are reluctant to enroll a child without the required medical record documentation.

McKinney-Vento has instituted important protections for children experiencing homelessness who are enrolled in K-12 public education. Unfortunately these protections do not transfer effectively to the preschool population.

6. Recommendations and Actions Steps

The number of families experiencing homelessness is increasing and a significant proportion of the children in these families are very young. Homelessness is fraught with trauma – the trauma of losing one’s residence, possessions, routines and security. Homelessness exposes children and families to the trauma of violence – as witnesses and/or victims. As services are developed to assist families experiencing homelessness, it is critical that the needs of children, even very young children, be recognized and addressed appropriately.

The experiences associated with homelessness can create toxic stress response in young children and disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems. This response can also increase the risk for stress-related diseases and cognitive impairments well into the adult years.

High quality child development services can afford children who are experiencing homelessness a safe and predictable place to play, learn and develop relationships with children and adults. In addition to supporting the healthy development of young children, access to high quality, affordable child development services can make it possible for parents to search for housing, seek and maintain employment, and/or address their physical and mental health needs. Affordable child development services can be a lynch pin to a family’s ability to sustain employment and housing. Therefore, child development services should be viewed not as an ancillary, but as integral in meeting the needs of children and families experiencing homelessness.

The following recommendations incorporate what is known about children and families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County and what we know about how young children develop.

A) Advocate for the inclusion of specialized services for young children in programs serving families experiencing homelessness. Services should include:

- 1) Specialized health and mental services for children, including young children.

- 2) Both the services provided and the environment is developmentally appropriate for children.
 - 3) Assistance in accessing quality child development and K-12 education, connecting with homeless education liaisons, and informing parents of the educational rights of homeless children.
- B) **Assist the Regional Homeless Family Centers in developing services which reflect best practices for children and families experiencing homelessness.** The Long Beach Multi-service Center and Magnolia Place could inform models for service networks that address the needs of all family members and strategies to connect families to needed services.
- 1) Ensure that the services outlined above are available in each Regional Homeless Family Center.
 - 2) Explore innovative and cost effective models to connect the Regional Homeless Family Centers to child development. The purpose of which is to facilitate and sustain the enrollment of young children in high quality child development services. Options include, but are not limited to:
 - i) Expanding the DCFS “two-click” process to connect eligible children to Head Start services, or
 - ii) Connecting the Regional Family Resource Centers to their local child care resource and referral agency
 - iii) Identifying the Homeless Coordinators in each school district that operates child development programs so as to facilitate access to these programs as required by McKinney-Vento
- C) **Recommend that DCFS ensure that as each youth emancipates from the child welfare system, they have the information and skills needed to secure and sustain housing.** Approximately 25 percent of adults experiencing homelessness report having been in the foster care system.
- 1) Special attention must be paid to the housing needs of young people who emancipate from the child welfare system as parents of young children.
 - 2) Implementation of AB 12: Fostering Connections to Success Act can stress the importance of stable housing and help young people develop the skill needed to access and sustain appropriate housing.
- D) **Promote trauma informed practice across disciplines working with families experiencing homelessness.** Service providers who have been trained in trauma-informed practice are better equipped to assist children and families who are experiencing homelessness. Child development providers should be offered training opportunities in trauma informed practice. This common approach to serving children and families can provide much needed consistency across service sectors.
- E) **Continue advocacy efforts to expand high quality, affordable child development services** for all children and particularly for children experiencing homelessness.

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- ¹ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, (August 2011), 2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report, pp 12 and 13.
- ² Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, (2007) In Brief: The Science of Early Childhood Development, p. 2, www.developingchild.harvard.edu.
- ³ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, (August 2011), 2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report, p. 11.
- ⁴ Ibid. pp. 40, 16.
- ⁵ Ibid. pp.13, 14, and 40.
- ⁶ Samuels, J., Shinn, M., Buckner, J., (2010) *"Homeless Children: Update on Research, Policy Programs and Opportunities,"* p.20.
- ⁷ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, (August 2011) *2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report*, p. 21.
- ⁸ Los Angeles Almanac, *"Homelessness in Los Angeles County"* presents data from the Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center, www.laalmanac.com/social/so14.htm.
- ⁹ Samuels, J., Shinn, M., Buckner, J., (2010) *"Homeless Children: Update on Research, Policy Programs and Opportunities,"* p.17. and Hutson, R., Perrin, T., "Testimony for the Record, Hearing on Child Deaths Due to Maltreatment," (July 12, 2011) CLASP, www.clasp.org.
- ¹⁰ The National Center on Family Homelessness, (Updated December 2011) *"The Characteristics and Needs of Families Experiencing Homelessness,"* p.2, www.familyhomelessness.com.
- ¹¹ Ibid. pp. 3, 4 www.familyhomelessness.com and Los Angeles Almanac, *"Homelessness in Los Angeles County"* presents data from the Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center, www.laalmanac.com/social/so14.htm.
- ¹² Ibid., p.4.
- ¹³ Bassuk, Ellen, Friedman, Steven, *Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children,*" p. 2, (2005) for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, www.NCTSNet.org.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 2.
- ¹⁵ The National Center on Family Homelessness. (Updated December 2011) *"The Characteristics and Needs of Families Experiencing Homelessness,"* p.2, www.familyhomelessness.com.
- ¹⁶ The National Center on Family Homelessness, (Updated December 2011) *"The Characteristics and Needs of Families Experiencing Homelessness,"* p.3, www.familyhomelessness.com.
- ¹⁷ Hart-Shegos, Ellen, *"Homelessness and its Effects on Children,"* (1999), distributed by the Family Housing Fund, www.fhfund.org.
- ¹⁸ Bassuk, Ellen, Friedman, Steven, *Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children,*" (2005) for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, www.NCTSNet.org.
- ¹⁹ Ibid, p. 2.
- ²⁰ *Toxic Stress: The Facts*, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu>.

²¹ The National Center on Family Homelessness. “*Basic Principles of Care for Families and Children Experiencing Homelessness.*” www.familyhomelessness.org. These principles include:

- Family Unity
- Physical and Emotional Safety
- Effective, High Quality Service Delivery
- Training to Ensure a Basic Standard of Care
- Assessment and Individualized Housing/Service Planning
- Linkages among Housing, Services, and Supports
- Immediate Needs
- Address the Unique Needs of Children.
- Monitor Progress
- Rapid Re-housing

²² In addition to LACOE, there are school districts and non-profit organizations that are Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in Los Angeles County.

²³ Head Start eligibility is based on the Federal Poverty guidelines. For 2012, the maximum income for various family sizes is as follows.

Size of family unit	Poverty guideline
1	\$11,170
2	\$15,130
3	\$19,090
4	\$23,050
5	\$27,010
6	\$30,970
7	\$34,930
8	\$38,890
For family units with more than 8 members add \$3,960 for each additional member.	

In addition, children from families receiving public assistance (TANF or SSI) are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start and children in foster care are Head Start eligible regardless of family income. Ten percent of enrollments are offered to children with disabilities. Children who come from families with slightly higher income may be able to participate in Head Start when space is available.

²⁴ Boylan, E., Splansky, D. “*Access to Pre-K Education Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,*”(February 2010), Education Law Center Pre-K Policy Brief Series, www.edlawcenter.org.