



CHILDREN NOW



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Early Childhood Education Partnership Applauds Significant State Budget Gains for California’s Children in Joint Statement

Budget package increases investments by over \$350 million - Improves access, affordability and quality in Early Childhood Education

SACRAMENTO, CA – Organizations representing a partnership of key statewide and regional early childhood education advocacy organizations (ECE Partnership), joined together today to thank the Governor, Assembly Speaker Toni G. Atkins, Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de León and the Legislative Women’s Caucus for their efforts and bold vision in delivering a signed state budget that includes important investments and policy developments for our state’s early care and education system. While pleased with the significant down payment to put young children and their families’ front and center, the ECE Partnership will continue to work with the Governor, Legislative champions and our allies to build upon those gains in future budget cycles.

The ECE Partnership was heartened to see over \$350 million in new investments in the early care and education system, including over \$300 million in investments across three fundamentally linked priority areas: access, affordability and quality. Increasing preschool and child care spaces, raising reimbursement rates for providers, expanding quality improvement efforts to programs serving babies and toddlers, and increasing early intervention services for young children with exceptional needs. These investments position California closer to a robust, quality early learning system that supports the needs of children, families and providers across the state.

Of particular note, our partnership was pleased that Governor Brown acknowledged in his Budget Summary the importance of early learning programs as an effective tool for combating poverty.

The research is crystal clear – early childhood education is one of the best investments we can make to not only provide our youngest and most vulnerable children with quality early learning experiences they need to thrive in school and in life, but to give their working families the opportunity to participate and succeed in our recovering economy. The ongoing efforts of the ECE Partnership will continue to eradicate the K-12 achievement gap for low income families.

In a joint statement, members of the ECE Partnership noted, “We believe California is on the path to rebuilding the early care and education infrastructure needed to move families out of poverty, to make working families self-sufficient, and to

provide our earliest learners with opportunities that will support greater academic achievement and lifelong well-being. We are also profoundly thankful for the many allies that have stood with us throughout this entire process. They have shared our vision and hard work in providing our youngest learners and their families the means to achieve higher educational aspirations. We are unified in our belief that this is one of the best investments to ensure the future success of our state. We will continue to work with the Governor and Legislature to ensure California achieves the quality early learning system that we know our children deserve.”

We agree with what Legislative Women’s Caucus leaders Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson and Assemblymember Christina Garcia wrote in yesterday’s Sacramento Bee that it’s time to put California at the forefront of early care and learning. We are pleased that lawmakers recognize that there is still more work to be done to ensure California’s children get sufficient resources to thrive in our classrooms, our communities and our workforce. Our partnership will focus on the following key components in future budget cycles toward those goals:

1. **An increase in Rates.** Our partners applaud the efforts by the Legislature and Governor to raise rates— but more must be done. Our front line, those that provide the invaluable child care and education to our youngest, must be rightfully compensated for their skills and competence. And low-income families who benefit from these programs must be able to afford them. We are dedicated to directing future budget allocations to raise the rates for those on the front line of education while maintaining affordability for all—particularly in light of much needed but costly minimum wage increases.
2. **An increase in Access.** We were pleased to see an increase in slots, providing more low income families access to resources like quality preschool and child care that didn’t previously exist – but more must be done. We will continue to work with our stakeholders so that every child in California but particularly low-income children have access to the quality education and care they deserve.
3. **An increase in Quality.** The success of today’s youth in our schools will also be attributed to the substantial budget investments made to increase the quality of our programs *The state still needs a consistent, system-wide focus on quality.* Our partners will continue to work with the Governor, legislative leaders, and various stakeholders to verify California’s children are receiving the highest quality of education and care on a continuous basis.

About the ECE Partnership

The ECE Partnership is comprised of various organizations with a shared goal of providing early education resources for the well-being of all of California’s children. Our partnership includes: Advancement Project, Bay Area Council, Children Now, Early Edge California, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, First 5 Association of California, First 5 California, First 5 Los Angeles, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Universal Preschool, MamásConPoder, MomsRising, United Ways of California, and ZERO TO THREE Western Office

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