



## Child Care and Development Transition Plan Guide

February 4, 2021

The summary below highlights key information provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in response to the requirements for a Transition Plan related to the transfer of child care and development programs from the California Department of Education (CDE) to CDSS. These requirements are outlined in [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 10205 \(j\)\(1\)-\(11\)](#) and provided below.

### **(1) How the department intends to make child care programs more integrated.**

The focus of the Early Childhood and Development Act of 2020 is to align child care and development programs to be more integrated and coordinated in order to achieve the vision of a high-quality, affordable, early childhood system that comprehensively and effectively serves children and families. CDSS will engage and actively collaborate with parents, caregivers, the child development workforce, contractors, CDE, the Legislature, counties, and other government and local entities, to achieve this vision.

As recommended by the [Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for All Kids](#) and the [California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission's report on Early Childhood Education](#), CDSS will make short and long-term plans to remove administrative and other barriers to access in order to improve long-term impacts on educational and social outcomes for children. In partnership with CDE and stakeholders, CDSS will also create process improvements that support the child care and development workforce and programs so children have access to equitable and stable child care and development opportunities, as well as access to other needed services and supports. Our partnership with CDE will include collaborative review of proposals for comprehensive, unified, and equitable policies that improves the provision of services for families and support the child care and development workforce.

As an example of a process that may assist CDSS in identifying more specific short and longer-term proposals related to these goals, the department is committed to taking a close look at the effectiveness of the structure for the CalWORKs child care programs. The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and Child Care Law Center (CCLC) will support the department in our engagement with parents and caregivers, the child care and development workforce, counties, Alternative Payment Programs (APPs), and other stakeholders to conduct this deeper analysis and identify potential options for improving the system.

### **(2) How the department plans to maintain existing connections or enhance connections to California state preschool programs, transitional kindergarten, and elementary and secondary education.**

The California State Preschool Program (CSPP) will continue to be administered by CDE and is not transferring to CDSS under the Early Childhood and Development Act of 2020. CSPP is the largest state-funded preschool program in the nation, and provides both part-day and full-day services that include a developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate core class curriculum. In addition to CSPP remaining at CDE, transitional kindergarten (TK) will remain under CDE's authority. Since children may be eligible for CSPP and other programs, supports and services, and/or receiving wraparound services for care not covered by CSPP, including subsidized programs that will be transferring to CDSS, it is imperative that CDSS and CDE continue to collaborate to help with the preservation of all existing connections between child care services and pre-kindergarten through grade 12 programs. Both departments have a shared goal of ensuring that California's three- and four-year old children and their families can access quality preschool, and are committed to engagement strategies that encourage mutual decision-making processes when considering actions that may impact children served by both departments.

To maintain connections between child care and development services and pre-kindergarten through grade 12 programs, CDSS will continue to engage with CDE about program standards and practices, professional development, workforce requirements and quality supports, and data sharing for transparency and a joint effort on the continued, non-disruptive operations to child care and development programs for California's children and families.

As one method of continued and effective coordination, and opportunities for ongoing collaboration on policy and program enhancements, a quarterly cross-agency meeting will be held to include CDSS, staff from the California Head Start State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO), our partners from the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and CDE.

Engagement with parents and caregivers and the child care and development workforce and our partnerships with government entities and local agencies remain at the forefront of informing policy and process improvements on equity and whole-child,-whole-family approaches; as a result these collective engagement strategies promote the connections necessary to align with goals from the Master Plan to unify and strengthen programs and services to support children's development.

**(3) An estimate of the ongoing cost of the State Department of Social Services for administering child care programs. A description of the number of positions that will move to the State Department of Social Services from the State Department of Education and the number of additional positions the State Department of Social Services will need.**

The Governor's budget for 2021-22 reflects the transfer of \$31.7 million (\$30.7 million federal funds and \$0.9 million General Fund) from CDE to CDSS and 185.7 full time equivalent (FTE) positions to support the transition of Child Care and Development Programs, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The transferring

positions include analysts, auditors, attorneys, consultants, managers and executives in varying classifications.

Many of the transferring positions will be housed within CDSS' new Child Care and Development Division. Others will be integrated into other Divisions/Branches within CDSS, including the Family Engagement and Empowerment Division, Administration Division, Community Care Licensing Division, Information Systems Division, and Research, Automation and Data Division. Staff will be assigned to Divisions/Branches that align with their classifications and designated roles and responsibilities, as outlined in their assigned duty statements, to continue operations of the child care and development programs.

CDSS is continuing to assess the resources and staffing needed for the continuity of operations for the transferring responsibilities, as well as the envisioned system improvements.

**(4) How this shift results in better services for children and families, including how this shift will ensure families have the most comprehensive information about their choices in comprehensive supports for their families, including child care.**

Throughout the transition planning process, the needs of children and families have been at the forefront of CDSS' stakeholder engagement and planning processes, with a focus on operationalizing a whole-child, whole-family approach to services. To best meet their families' needs, parents must be meaningfully informed of the support options available for their families, empowered to make the best choice for themselves and their children, and offered easily navigable opportunities to obtain desired services and supports that will meet their child care and development needs. CDSS has partnered with CCLC, CLASP and Parent Voices (a grassroots organization that is dedicated to making high-quality child care accessible to all families) to engage and collaborate with parents and caregivers (including parents and caregivers of Dual Language Learners, children with disabilities and children in other vulnerable populations) to understand their concerns and hear their suggestions and proposed solutions for achieving these goals. Many of the recommendations shared to date align with recommendations from the Master Plan. CDSS will continue engaging with parents and caregivers throughout the transition and on an ongoing basis to identify additional resources that will aid in developing and providing parents with necessary information on options that meet their needs.

Several existing resources and requirements also support the goals of providing comprehensive information and resources to families regarding child care and other supports. CDSS will build upon the strengths of these existing efforts. For example, the following statewide child care and development information hubs and resources already exist:

- [MyChildCare.ca.gov](https://mychildcare.ca.gov): A new, interactive portal available in English and Spanish that was created in response to the pandemic, which helps families find licensed

child care providers that are currently open. Information includes the location, health and safety details, ages of children served, capacity, and hours of care.

- A standardized consumer education database required by the Child Care and Development Block Grant that includes all of the individual child care Resource and Referral Agencies in the 58 counties in California (key aspects of which will be consolidated into [MyChildCare.ca.gov](http://MyChildCare.ca.gov) in the future). All facility landing pages also have a link to the appropriate local Resource and Referral agency, and those agencies are available to assist families in navigating child care availability, enrollment and subsidies.
- [California Child Care Resource and Referral Network](#): Includes a comprehensive resource section for families.
- [Quality Counts California](#): Includes information to help parents determine what a quality program looks like, how to choose a quality Child Care and Development program, and find a listing of all state Resource and Referral agencies.
- [Desired Results for Children and Families](#): A CDE website designed in collaboration with WestEd to inform parents about child care policy changes.

Additional examples of efforts that CDSS is engaged in to assist in meeting these goals include:

- Development of the [Statewide Verification Hub \(SVH\): A California Health and Human Services Agency \(CHHS\)-wide information technology solution that will improve California](#) families' access to services by streamlining the eligibility verification process for many means-tested programs, with initial efforts focusing on CalFresh, CalWORKs, and Medi-Cal.
- Consumer Education through Child Care Licensing: CDSS' Child Care Licensing Program engages in consumer education planning efforts from a licensing perspective. This includes utilizing existing tools, such as social media outlets and tools on the CDSS website, as well as developing new user-friendly tools to share health and safety information about licensed facilities and quality care.

The Child Care Licensing Program is collaborating with philanthropy to explore the design, creation and operation of an internet site that services parents and the child care and development workforce, and offers self-service features for child care and development licensees.

As described further in response to Question 10, CDSS also anticipates identifying additional opportunities to transform data systems in service of the goals of a more collaborative, responsive and user-friendly data system to provide parents and caregivers with accessible, intuitive, and meaningful information so they can make informed child care choices that meet their needs.

Finally, CDSS will partner with Local Child Care Planning Councils to create a data-informed plan and technical assistance capacity to expand the supply of child care and development facilities with the goal of ensuring equitable access to child care and development programs.

**(5) How the department plans to prevent administrative duplication and regulatory conflict for providers that have contracts for both general child care and development programs and California state preschool programs.**

Throughout the transition process, CDSS and CDE have been very focused on ensuring the continuity of operations and uninterrupted service delivery for families, children, contractors, providers, and partners. CDSS and CDE are working closely together to transfer knowledge and complete critical steps regarding the timelines for contracts, payments, reporting, and related requirements. CDSS is also implementing a workflow process that reduces duplication and streamlines administrative functions, in such areas as contracts and auditing.

The departments are also working closely together to determine the best approaches to the use of existing information technology and systems applications to support the transition process and minimize disruptions. This will require short-term solutions for applications without interdependencies that can be transferred in the first phase, and long-term solutions to maintain continuity of payment and services while future data system designs are contemplated. CDSS will simultaneously work with CDE to identify any potential overlaps of workload and appropriate workflow updates to minimize any administrative duplication.

Similarly, both departments' audits and investigations operations are focusing on the transition of responsibilities related to transferring programs, in accordance with applicable standards and requirements, while also identifying opportunities to minimize any unnecessary duplication or regulatory conflicts.

On October 2, 2020, CDSS held a Contracts Listening Session with over 1000 participants. Feedback from participants was largely focused on alignment, simplification and streamlining to allow for better coordination, communication, transparency and consistency; see Attachment A for a summary of the feedback received during the listening sessions. Feedback has been and will continue to be used to guide the Transition Plan development.

**(6) How the department plans to maintain the existing provider flexibility to transfer funds across contracts for both general child care and development programs and California state preschool programs**

CDSS, CDE and the Department of Finance (DOF) are actively collaborating to develop processes to maintain these flexibilities. Further discussions are continuing to determine what else is needed to operationalize these flexibilities after July 1, 2021.

CDSS, in consultation with CDE, is also exploring additional options for streamlining and improving upon existing contracting processes associated with the transferring programs.

**(7) How the department plans to ensure quality projects support state-supported child care in all settings, including California state preschool programs.**

CDSS will build upon existing quality improvement investments and collaborate with CDE and other partners to create a unified child care and development system that meets licensing requirements and supports quality child care and preschool programs. These investments include quality investments through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), which provides core funding for a multi-faceted vision of quality that is designed to meet the professional development needs of providers and programs. CDSS and CDE are jointly developing a three-year plan for quality investments that meet CCDF requirements, inclusive of CSPP, and align with the Master Plan. In addition to CCDF funding, the State invests additional funding to support the needs of the child care and development workforce/field. Additionally, CDSS has recently joined leadership conversations to collaborate with CDE, First 5 California (F5CA), and diverse stakeholders through Quality Counts California (QCC).

CDSS and our partners will design and implement a shared definition and vision of quality for high-quality care across the mixed delivery system. This effort will include a focus on equity and anti-racism to strengthen programs, meet the needs of California's culturally and linguistically diverse communities across all settings in the mixed delivery system and support all children's learning, growth and development.

CDSS is also committed to additional quality-focused projects throughout the transition and on an ongoing basis, including cross-training staff and implementing joint inspections to enhance and build staff capacity overall and improve quality in child care and development settings. In addition, CDSS will work with CDE to allocate quality funding to meet the unique needs of the state preschool program and the preschool population and address culturally and linguistically responsive program components and activities around assessments and school readiness.

**(8) How the California Head Start State Collaboration Office will continue to engage with California state preschool program providers and school districts.**

Effective with the transfer on July 1, 2021, the California Head Start State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO) will report to the CDSS Deputy Director of the Child Care and Development Division, and will maintain the existing role and functions of CHSSCO to continue program operations and planning and engagement activities with existing partners. The CHSSCO serves as a critical partner in the design and implementation of a more comprehensive whole-child, whole-family approach to integrate best practices from Head Start/Early Head Start into the State's approach to supporting children and families. The CHSSCO will continue its critical work in coordinating and creating ongoing engagement among a variety of diverse child care entities, which include partnerships with CDE, CDSS and other State agencies and local entities. This critical work includes early childhood transition activities with preschool programs, including Head Start and state-funded programs, as well as TK/K; engagement with Special Education on Head Start related services for children with disabilities; provider

connections, resources and supports to children and families experiencing homelessness; and special funding initiatives such as the Preschool Development Grants. The CHSSCO Director will participate in coordination meetings with CDE, as well as Preschool Through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (P-3) activities overseen by CDE.

**(9) How parents will be provided enhanced information about making an informed child care choice that best meets their child’s and family’s needs, from the full spectrum of quality child care available.**

In addition to the information included in the response to Question 4 above, parents and caregivers will continue to have access to local child care resource and referral programs, which are community-based and located in every county in California with a statewide toll-free number available in English and Spanish. These programs were established to provide consumer education resources related to child care and development programs to all families regardless of income.

**(10) How a cradle-to-career, interagency data system will provide improved state-level reporting, support the goals of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, and support the achievement of paragraph (9).**

CDSS is currently engaged in multiple efforts at various stages of planning to facilitate the data lifecycle and data sharing in order to improve state-level reporting, support the goals of the Master Plan, that give parents the opportunity to make fully informed choices about child care that meets their families’ needs. After the transition of child care and development programs on July 1, 2021, CDSS will continue work to assess options for more comprehensively transforming the data systems supporting child care and development programs.

To support work toward these broader system changes, CDE and CDSS will work to develop a data-sharing agreement to address the exchange of public child care program data, including state preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, Head Start, and special education program data. CDSS will revise data-sharing practices across the department and work to create a single, unified identification system for families and children that improves data security. Data-sharing agreements will also be established to outline the process and conditions under which data will be shared and used by stakeholders. These efforts, along with the efforts described more fully in the Transition Plan, will address data collection, processing, reporting and communication, research, and continuous quality improvement. When coalesced, they will result in an integrated departmental data system that will allow CDSS to improve service delivery, administration of programs, reporting, and consumer education.

CDSS will also play an active leadership role in CHHS and statewide efforts to achieve interagency data system collaboration and improved state-level reporting that will support the goals of the Master Plan. CDSS will continue participation in the larger cradle-to-career workgroup to conduct foundational work and assessment to facilitate

unique identifier concepts, that will lead California in the direction of a cradle-to-career longitudinal viewpoint of individuals' interaction with state run programs.

### **(11) Further plans to align activities with recommendations from the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care regarding child care**

The Master Plan was released in December 2020 and provides recommendations that create a comprehensive, family-centric system driven by equity. The plan aims to:

- Bring together programs for infants and toddlers;
- Increase access and eligibility across programs, services and benefits, such as Paid Family Leave;
- Provide universal preschool;
- Build a competency-based licensure and workforce development system;
- Implement funding reform to increase access and sustain a quality workforce;
- Help address racial and ethnic inequities by prohibiting suspensions and expulsions and supporting the development of dual language learners;
- Support shared services networks to help providers thrive; and
- Implement data sharing and coordination to advance equity, efficiency and continuous improvement.

Many of the recommendations contained within the Plan align with the feedback that CDSS has received throughout the listening sessions held to date. The transition provides an opportunity to evaluate our state's subsidized child care policies through an equity lens, building on the work that has been accomplished to date, and supporting the voices of those that are served by these programs, and those that provide the services, lead in furthering system improvements. CDSS, in partnership with CLASP and the CCLC, will work with stakeholders throughout the transition process and thereafter to develop a long-term policy plan that builds off of the Master Plan. In addition to highlighting initial efforts around development of the long-term policy plan, CDSS is also including the Listening Session Brief (Attachment A) that outlines the feedback, recommendations, and considerations elevated by stakeholders in our Listening Sessions.

In alignment with the Master Plan and the recommendations from the [Roadmap for Resilience: The California Surgeon General's Report on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Toxic Stress, and Health](#), the transition of child care programs and services from CDE to CDSS aims to enhance the child care and development system, resulting in better services for children and families, including in the following ways:

- Removing barriers to data access and sharing;
- Strengthening workforce capacity to engage in quality interactions with children;
- Promoting an interdisciplinary approach in the administration of child care and development systems; and
- Streamlining family eligibility and enrollment across programs to provide a more equitable experience for families.



## **(12) The Child and Adult Food Care Program – Continuity of Operations, Services and Partnerships**

Although the Early Childhood and Development Act of 2020 does not require that information about the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) be included in the Transition Plan, CDE and CDSS are working closely to advance a seamless transition of services to support CACFP-eligible children and adults in accessing nutritious foods and a supportive environment that fosters positive mealtime experiences. The CACFP program, alongside other child care and development programs, helps support access to nutritious meals in child care which is a critical element of quality care. As nutrition is an important part of a child's development that can have long lasting impacts, it is also a key tenet of the whole-child/whole-family approach. CDE and CDSS are working closely for a seamless transition of services that include policy, payments, contract provider agreements, and technical assistance and monitoring systems.