

# Argument and Recommendations for Stronger Collaboration in California's Early Care and Education System

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A Culminating Project Presented to the Department of Public Policy and Administration  
at California State University, Sacramento in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Public Policy and Administration

December 2022

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## **Executive Summary**

Early care and education (ECE) is a multi-faceted and multi-billion dollar policy issue in California. ECE issues include program affordability and accessibility, quality standards, health and safety standards, community care facilities and licensing, and provider credentials and compensation. A wide spectrum of stakeholders participates in the ECE policymaking process, including the Governor's Office, state and county departments, state and local legislators, business advocates, early childhood advocates, ECE providers, and parents and families. However, stakeholders do not always work together to envision universally beneficial and administrable policies.

This report, submitted in fulfillment of my Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from California State University, Sacramento, focuses on the need for collaboration between state administrators, advocates, and policymakers. The recent history of legislative and budget actions indicate that these stakeholders are not working in alignment. This lack of collaboration harms families' access to affordable care that meets their needs. This deficit prevents children and families from realizing their social and economic potential. In this report, I argue that greater collaboration between these stakeholders will expand institutional capacity and create collaborative systems to improve access to ECE programs.

**Section I** provides background on early care and education programs. I describe the scope of ECE programs and present the need for ECE programs based on studies on the benefits to children, families, and society. I support this background information through cited scientific, family economics, and macroeconomic research.

**Section II** defines the problem context and justification for government intervention. ECE program affordability and accessibility are fundamental issues for families, which drives

government's motivation to intervene through subsidization. In addition, I describe the need to address collaboration, and present administrative and economic arguments for government intervention.

**Section III** describes the landscape of the ECE system and history of recent policy efforts. Within this landscape, I include an overview of state ECE administration and funding. Administration of ECE programs is bifurcated between the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services, which adds to the complexity of the system and reinforces the need for collaboration. I also describe recent developments in political interest.

**Section IV** presents missed opportunities by state administrators, advocates, and policymakers to collaborate. These failures include a quick succession of state plans from the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education to the Master Plan on Early Learning and Care; speedily enacted legislation to transfer administration of child care programs from the Department of Education to the Department of Social Services; and the passage of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, a school site-only program that limits business for community-based programs. In this section, I analyze why stakeholders did not collaborate fully or successfully, and describe the ongoing impact of each reform.

**Section V** provides 11 recommendations for state administrators, advocates, and policymakers to initiate and foster collaboration. These recommendations include guidance on how to interact as a collaborator and funding opportunities to support collaborative decision making. I ground these recommendations in collaboration models, literature, and research on ECE administration, as well as my own observations.

**Section VI** concludes with suggestions for further research and reading, and final thoughts on the need for collaboration as the country enters an economic recession.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am so grateful to all the people who have gone above and beyond to support me through my graduate school journey.

Thank you to my grandparents, who have always supported my learning and education. Thank you to my parents for giving me feedback and positive affirmations, and for inspiring me to help others by serving my community. Thank you to my sister for buying me the sound-blocking headphones that I could not have written this paper without!

Thank you to my partner, Javi, for feeding me, listening to me, giving me perspective, studying next to me, and keeping me accountable.

Thank you to Donna Sneeringer, my mentor and the person who first introduced me to early care and education and coalition work.

Thank you to the fall 2020 semester starting cohort. I am so happy to have met you all through the MPPA program. It has been such a pleasure learning with and from you and becoming friends. I could not have survived our first year of classes on Zoom without our peer editing sessions and group chat. I look forward to many more drinks, kickball games, and karaoke nights. Thank you also to my 2021-22 GASPPA board. Thank you for believing in my leadership and being an ambitious and fun group to work and collaborate with.

Finally, thank you to the MPPA faculty: Dr. Rob Wassmer, Dr. Ted Lascher, Dr. Sara McClellan, Christian Griffith, and Josh Rosa. I have learned so much from you and filled many notebooks over the past two and a half years. I deeply value each of your perspectives and expertise and hope to continue learning and collaborating with you beyond graduation.

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## **Section I: Background**

Early care and education (ECE) programs provide supervision, care, and education for children ages zero through five years old. ECE programs serve a dual purpose: to care for children while families work or attend school, and to provide an educational, nurturing, and developmentally-appropriate environment for children to promote their development. ECE programs provide fundamental support to parents, children, and society, including gains in income, learning, health, and economic output. However, a lack of collaboration in California's ECE system is producing reforms that ignore existing infrastructure and state plans, lack stakeholder buy-in, perpetuate the divide between subgroups, and do not center the needs of children and families. This section describes the need for and benefits of ECE programs.

### **Need for Early Care & Education Programs**

ECE programs allow families to attend work, school, or training by providing a stable and safe place for children during these hours. Over 2.7 million children under five years old live in California and most parents of young children choose to stay in the workforce (Population Reference Bureau, 2021; ReadyNation, 2019). Parents' decision to continue work or education is often impossible without access to ECE programs. In a survey conducted by Ready Nation, 86% of primary caregivers for infants and toddlers reported unreliable access to child care negatively impacted their time and effort at work (2020). In some cases, families missed work days due to unreliable care, resulting in less pay and less job stability (ReadyNation, 2020). The report estimated lack of reliable child care costs California families between \$6.8 to \$9.1 billion annually (ReadyNation, 2020). ECE programs can also be prohibitively expensive. Without government subsidy, some programs cost more than in-state college tuition in California, and, in some areas, care costs more than rent (Allyn, 2022; LA Times Editorial Board, 2022). In a study by Child Care

Resource Center (CCRC), families reported taking out loans, paying family or neighbors, or quitting their jobs altogether to provide care for their children (2019). On the other hand, parents receiving state-subsidized child care reported better economic, social, and child development outcomes (CCRC, 2010). This included positive impacts to parents' ability to get and keep a job, afford necessities, move to a better neighborhood, and spend time with their children (CCRC, 2010). The difference between having and not having access to ECE programs is significant on families' budgets, career trajectories, and wellbeing.

ECE programs are not only essential to enable parents to pursue career or educational advancement, they also benefit children through developmentally responsive care and learning. Brain development and plasticity is at its fastest and most adaptable in the first five years of life (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2021). During this period, children's brains create more than one million new neural connections per second (Center on the Developing Child, 2017). These connections form children's brain architecture and the foundation for their lifelong learning, health, and behavior (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2021). High quality ECE programs introduce children to three dimensions of learning: social and emotional, cognitive and language, and physical and motor skills (Feeney, Moravcik, & Nolte, 2018). Both guided lessons and unstructured playtime help children discover how to interact with peers and teachers, express themselves, learn new words and concepts, and practice physical movement (Feeney et. al, 2018). These experiences help children develop executive function and self-regulation—the basis for essential life skills such as the ability to plan, focus, remember tasks and information, and resist impulses (Center on the Developing Child, 2012).

In addition to providing immediate benefits, ECE programs also improve long-term outcomes for both parents and children. In a longitudinal study, economist James J. Heckman



found that participants in the Perry Preschool Project, an experimental high-quality preschool program in the 1960s, had better life outcomes compared to their non-participant siblings and peers (2019b). In adulthood, preschool participants were less likely to be incarcerated or unemployed, and more likely to be in better health (Heckman & Karapakula, 2019b). Further research has proven that these benefits extend to the children's children. Heckman found that children of the children in the Perry Preschool Project were more likely to graduate from high school and be employed than children of non-participant peers (2019a). Research shows that ECE programs can also significantly benefit disadvantaged children. A similar longitudinal study at the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) program in the 1980s focused on minority children from low income backgrounds, most of whom had risks to healthy development, including children in single parent households and children with an unemployed parent (Karoly & Bigelow, 2005). The study found CPC program participants had higher reading scores and were less likely to be held back in school or be placed in special education compared to children who did not attend CPC programs (Karoly & Bigelow, 2005). New findings from the CPC longitudinal study found that 62% of participants were economically better off than their parents at midlife and less likely to live in deep poverty than non-participant peers (Reynolds, Ou, Mondi, & Giovanelli, 2019). Therefore, ECE programs are a multi-generational support system that promotes educational attainment and healthy development, disrupts the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and advances racial equity.

ECE programs also provide positive externalities, meaning they provide a social benefit in addition to a private benefit. These positive externalities include children entering school kindergarten-ready and more women in the labor force (Powell, Thomason, & Jacobs, 2019). Employers also benefit when parents are present and productive at work. In addition, access to ECE programs increases economic output and may yield government savings. The UC Berkeley

Labor Center estimated that California's ECE system generated \$25.4 billion in economic activity in 2017—five times the state's investment—and other research shows that high-quality ECE programs yield up to a 13% per year return on investment (Powell et al., 2019; Heckman, 2017). Furthermore, participation in ECE programs acts as an early intervention against incarceration, unemployment, and poverty, which all present large direct and indirect costs to government and society.

ECE programs benefit parents, children's current and future wellbeing, children's children, and society. Therefore, it is crucial that families have access to ECE programs so that all children and families can improve their quality of life and socioeconomic status. However, lack of collaborative practices in governance and policymaking is resulting in reforms that ignore existing infrastructure and state plans, lack stakeholder buy-in, perpetuate the divide between subgroups, and do not center the needs of children and families. This exacerbates families' struggle to find adequate care and, in turn, prevents children and families from realizing their social and economic potential.

### **Positionality and Methodology**

I have worked in state level child care policy in California for five years. I worked in government relations for the state's largest child care resource and referral center for four and a half years, and now work as a budget analyst at the California Department of Finance. I have an intimate knowledge of child care legislation, messaging, politics, and finances due to these experiences. I am writing about the *entire* ECE system in this paper, which is comprised of both early learning and child care programs—the former of which I am admittedly less knowledgeable about. Collaboration is naturally a nuanced subject, laden with many perspectives and convoluted timelines. I have worked diligently to frame issues in an impartial and accurate manner and present

ample evidence to illustrate the history of ECE issues and collaboration. Please understand that I was unable to capture every detail due to limited time and an attempt to present information in a manner that flows logically.

In **Section II:**, I present my argument by first describing the need for ECE programs and rationale for why the program subsidization and governance are state obligations. In **Section III:**, I describe the ECE system landscape in California, including recent reforms, history of funding, and recent political attention. In **Section IV:**, I describe and analyze missed opportunities to collaborate. In **Section V:**, I provide recommendations for improving collaboration in the ECE system, supported by collaborative governance and policymaking literature. In **Section VI:**, I conclude with suggestions for further research and reading.

## **Section II: Problem Context**

Early care and education programs are unaffordable, both for families to pay for and for programs to operate. In California, families spend between 7.2% and 66.9% of their budgets on child care, depending on the number of children and working parents in a household (Kimberlin & Rose, 2017; Schumacher, 2019a). This far exceeds the federal definition of affordable care, set at 7% of family income (Office of Child Care, 2016). On average, even families receiving a partial government subsidy pay 10% of their family income toward care (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2020). Child care researcher Kristin Schumacher found that two adults in low wage jobs would each have to work 147 hours per week to earn a high enough household income to meet the 7% affordability definition for care for one infant (2019b). Despite these unaffordable prices for families, revenues are still insufficient compared to the cost of business, or the “true” cost of care. The true cost of care is the actual cost for community-based programs and business owners to provide developmentally appropriate care that meets regulatory standards such as

number of staff onsite and other business costs such as administration and staff compensation (Workman, 2021). A U.S. Treasury report found that most for-profit child care programs operate on profit margins below one percent (2021). Despite the high cost of care, ECE providers are low earners. ECE programs are labor-intensive because health and safety regulations require small staff-to-child ratios. The same report showed that provider pay comprised 50 to 60% of child care business expenses (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2021). In 2019, provider pay was at the 28<sup>th</sup> percentile of the overall wage distribution in California (Gould, Whitebook, Mokhiber, & Austin, 2019). Furthermore, research shows that pay is negatively associated with the age of children served, meaning the younger the children, the less providers make (Gould et al, 2019). Kindergarten teachers make more than State Preschool teachers, who make more than child care providers (Gould et al, 2019). State established reimbursement rates for child care providers are so low that 25% of providers live in poverty and 50% utilize public assistance programs (Thorman, Danielson, & Bohn, 2018). Low reimbursement rates also negatively impact families' access to subsidized care. ECE programs are less willing to offer subsidized care because the state-set reimbursement rates are low, and families that receive partial subsidization cannot always afford to pay their portion of costs (Child Care Law Center [CCLC], n.d.).

In addition, ECE programs are inaccessible and inequitable. Sixty percent of people in California live in a "child care desert," where children outnumber program spaces three to one (CCRC, n.d.). In addition, families with similar economic backgrounds have different levels of access to care (Taylor, 2014). While some families are guaranteed care through California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) child care, an entitlement program, other low-income families must wait on eligibility lists due to insufficient state funding for other ECE programs (Taylor, 2014). Similarly, some families receive a voucher for care, allowing them to

choose a care environment for their child, while other families can only access programs that contract directly with the state (Taylor, 2014). The reason for these inequities is because the State Legislature has developed the ECE system in an incremental fashion (Taylor, 2014). Although incrementalism can be valuable for maintaining a balanced budget and implementing carefully thought-out reforms, the ECE system has become a kludgeocracy—an “ill-assorted collection of parts assembled to fulfill a particular purpose”—where state policymakers continuously tack new programs onto existing infrastructure, rather than integrating them with it (Teles, 2012).

### **Justification for Government Intervention**

ECE issues are interrelated. The State is constantly reacting to small yet urgent issues because the field has been under crisis due to consistent underinvestment in ECE. The state views lack of access as the problem and keeps investing in new spaces, programs, and provider training initiatives. These initiatives help alleviate families' short-term problems for care, but do not solve long-term problems, such as administrative inefficiencies and thin profit margins for community-run programs. During legislative meetings, advocates sometimes describe a metaphorical stool to demonstrate the need for holistic reforms rather than uneven ones. The metaphor is as follows: The ECE system is a three-legged stool and each leg represents a policy issue that needs investment. The “legs” of the stool vary, but tend to include affordability and accessibility for families, quality of services, and compensation of the workforce. **Figure** shows an example of this “tri-lemma”. You cannot focus on supporting just one leg of the stool, else it will topple over because the other legs are underdeveloped. You must build up all of them in relative unison. Instead of passing reforms in a piecemeal manner, the State should work to improve collaboration to better manage crises in the field and provide a long-term vision and solutions. It is difficult to completely disentangle the issues from each other. Improving collaboration in governance and

policymaking will not magically repair decades-long struggles in the ECE system. However, empowering state departments and contractors to work together toward a common goal will help create stability for the field.

**Figure 2.1** *Early Care and Education Three-Legged Stool*



Early Childhood Development Association (2019)

In her dissertation, Emberling (2020) interviewed five individuals involved in ECE administration and policymaking in California. Emberling wrote that all five interview subjects highlighted “insufficient policy development and legislation” as needing the most improvement to facilitate the expansion and improvement of the state’s ECE programs. In addition, all interviewees cited “complicated and inadequate funding” as the most significant constraint to the ECE system. The interviewees cited lack of transparency in the state budget; lack of centralized funding, such as in the K-12 system; and a disconnect between policymakers and policy implementers as obstacles to successful ECE policies.

### **Administrative and Economic Arguments**

Moore (2000), a public management researcher, states that government sector organizations are accountable to voters, taxpayers, and legislators. Stakeholders expect government organizations to achieve their mission while maximizing efficiency and effectiveness

as recipients of public funds. Therefore, government should work to continuously improve performance to promote better mission achievement. Using this logic, it is the state government's responsibility to ensure efficient and effective ECE program administration. **Table 2.1** outlines Moore's basic strategic concepts of government sector organizations.

**Table 2.1** *Basic Strategic Concepts in the Government Sector*

Organizational goal	Achieve concrete and specific mandated social mission
Principal source of revenue	Appropriated tax revenues
Accountable and responsive to	Voters, taxpayers, legislators
Measure of performance	Efficiency and effectiveness in achieving mission
Key strategy	Find better ways to achieve mission

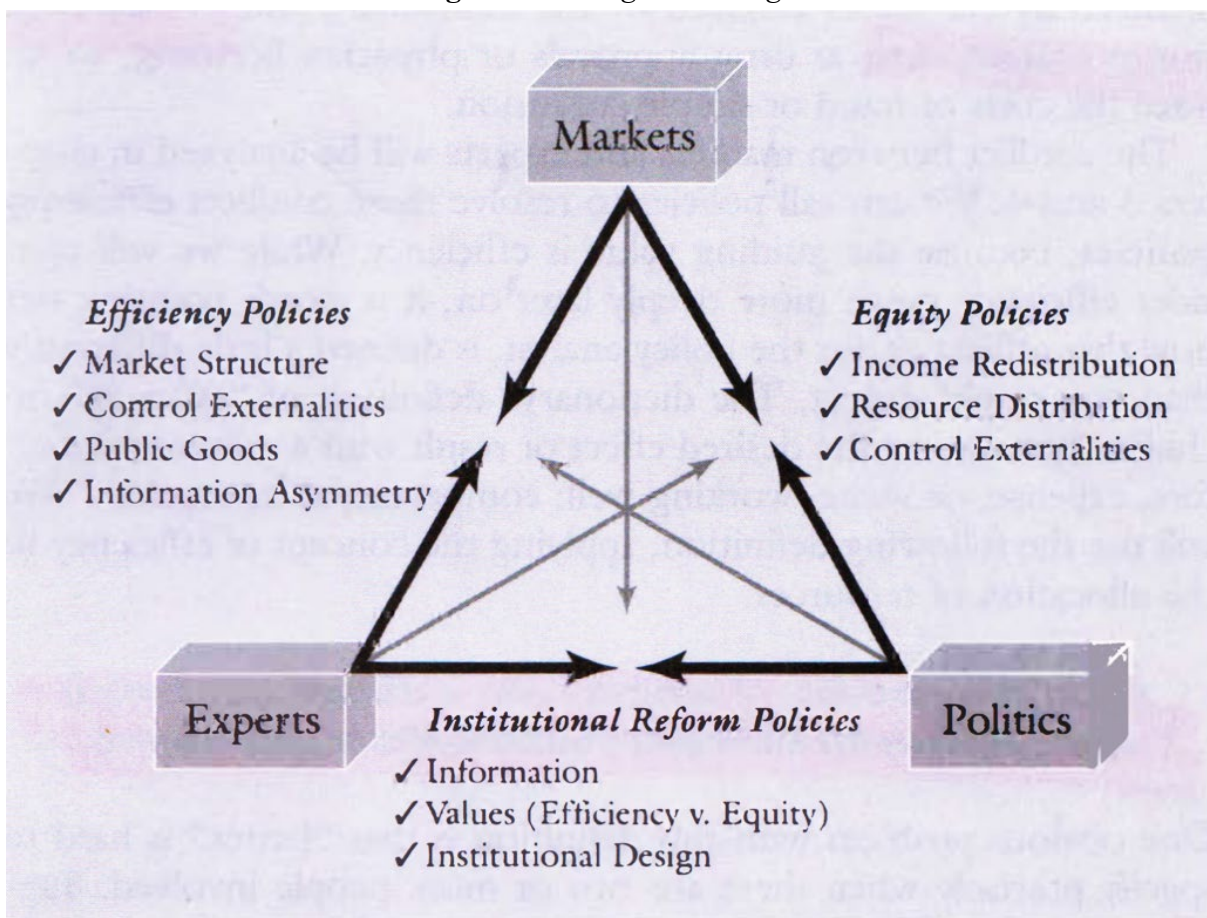
Adapted from Moore (2000)

ECE programs provide numerous positive externalities. Positive externalities exist when benefits of a private good or service not only benefit the recipients but also benefit society. Economic theory states that the free market underproduces goods and services that yield positive externalities because the benefits that accrue to indirect beneficiaries are not factored into market transactions, such as between a private ECE provider and family paying out of pocket for care (Guy & Ely, 2018). It is therefore government's role to "internalize" positive externalities by bearing a greater burden of costs through subsidization so the market produces a socially optimal supply (Guy & Ely, 2018). The California state budget provides funding to both subsidize infrastructure and business administration and operation costs for nonprofit contractors, and program costs for families. The state budget divides this funding into two buckets, separately administered by the Department of Education and Department of Social Services.

Using Munger's Triangle (2000) (**Figure 2.1**), a framework to illustrate the tensions between sources of economic "wisdom" and "accountability," the need for greater political and inter-governmental collaboration represents a lack of collaboration between Politics and Experts. Disagreement between Politics and Experts creates institutional reform issues, requiring

government intervention to resolve differences in information, values, and institutional design. There are many ECE stakeholders, but using this model I will define Politics as the Governor's Office, State Legislature, and political advisors, and Experts as the departments that administer services at the state level—the Department of Education and Department of Social Services. The tertiary component of Munger's Triangle, Markets, represents the market demand by families for ECE services based on their needs and preferences, and the market supply of providers offering care. The crux of the issue is California's current ECE infrastructure is not adequately serving either side of the market. Improving collaborative policymaking efforts would improve service delivery outcomes for children, families, and providers. This would also indirectly improve efficiency and equity—the other policy issues in Munger's Triangle.

**Figure 2.1** *Munger's Triangle*



Munger (2000)



The actual institutional problems are more multi-dimensional than a three-point model. California administers a complex system of subsidized ECE programs with the support of contractors that deliver services and associations that provide their own governance within the field. Participation by these stakeholders is essential to holistic collaboration and policymaking. The next section describes the landscape of the ECE system, including a description of state-level program administration, funding, and a recent history of ECE reforms and political interest.

### **Section III: System Landscape and History**

California has a mixed delivery system of early care and education programs, provider types, funding sources, and administrative bodies (Melnick, Ali, Gardner, Maier, & Wechsler, 2017). The strength of the mixed delivery system is that it provides families with options to select programs that best fit their needs and preferences, such as program setting, location, hours, and languages spoken. The weakness, however, is that ECE programs are subject to a variety of quality standards and oversight by multiple administrative bodies (Melnick et al., 2017).

The Department of Education (CDE) and the Department of Social Services (CDSS) both administer state subsidized ECE programs. CDE administers school-based programs that serve children ages three through five. CDSS administers center- and home-based programs, also called community-based programs, that serve children birth through age 12. Stakeholders often refer to CDE programs as “preschool” or “early learning” programs<sup>1</sup> and CDSS programs as “child care” programs to distinguish between the two subsystems. This does not mean learning does not happen in child care, nor that care does not happen in early learning; both systems provide both learning

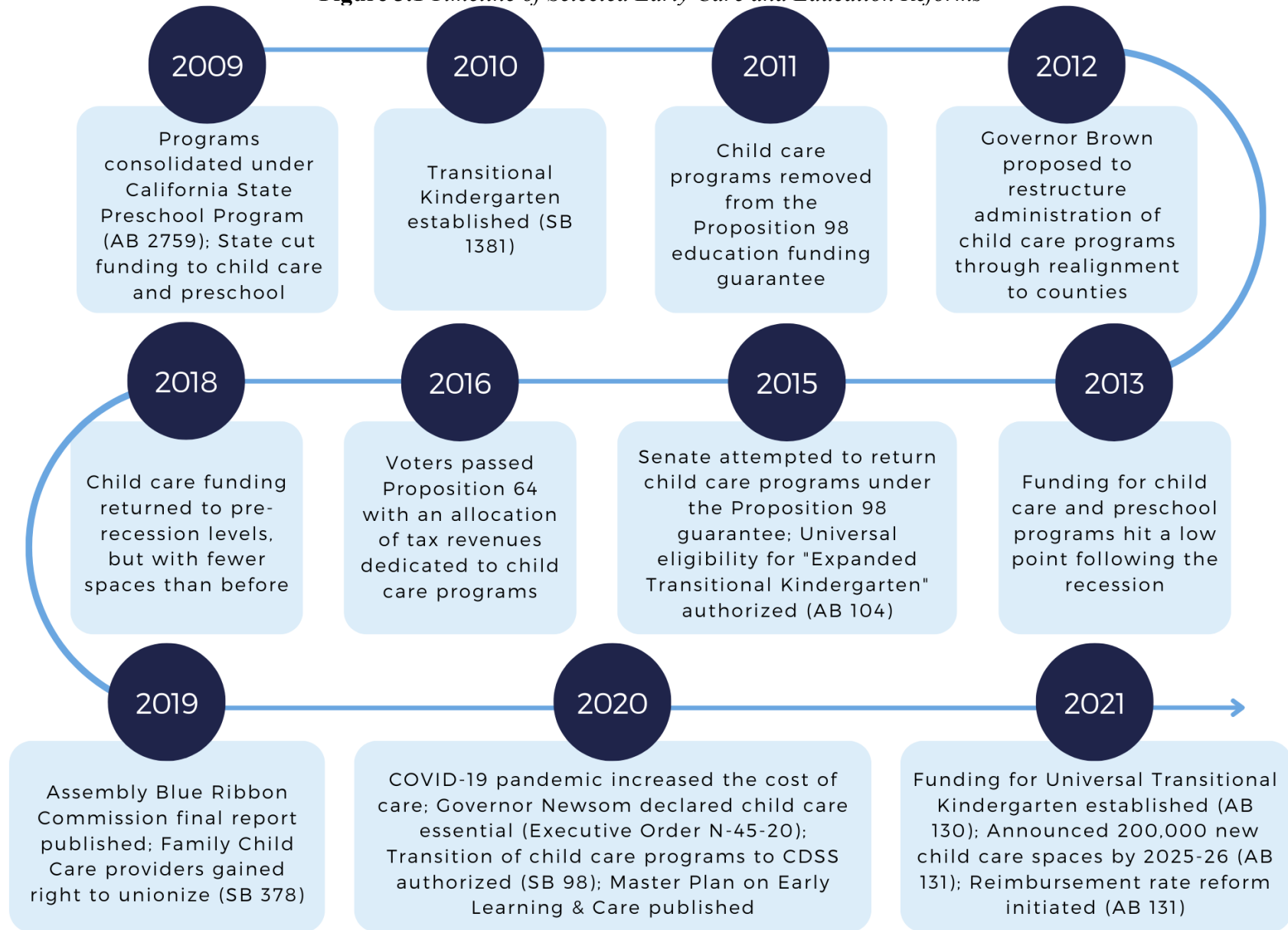
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<sup>1</sup> Preschool with a lowercase “p” refers generically to pre-kindergarten programs for three- and four-year-olds, such as California State Preschool (State Preschool). Early learning typically refers to both State Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten (TK), which are both administered by CDE. Advocates have increasingly used the term early learning to differentiate these programs as school-based, as opposed to community-based “child care” programs. See the **Glossary of Terms** in Appendix A for additional definitions.

and care to children. This differentiation is significant because the subsystems diverge in almost every way, including contractors, facility types, provider types and required credentials, health and safety standards, staff-to-child ratios, curriculum ideologies, range of ages served, family payment structures, provider compensation structures, association and union representation, political power, and constitutional code sections. The existence of two subsystems that both support child development in early childhood has created a divide of programs' perceived value to society, quality, and benefit to learning. For example, K-12 school advocates argue that traditional classroom settings are better for children, while child care advocates argue that center- and home-based settings are best for children due to differences in provider credentials, curriculum philosophy, and cultural alignment (D. Sneeringer, personal communication, December 7, 2022). This is just one example of many clashes between the subsystems.

### **Early Care & Education Funding**

The State Legislature significantly restructured its investments in ECE programs due to budget deficits during the Great Recession. This included a redistribution of ECE funding between the early learning and child care subsystems. **Figure 3.1** depicts a timeline of the reforms described in this paragraph. In 2009, the state enacted Assembly Bill 2759 (Jones) to create the California State Preschool Program (State Preschool) to serve three- and four-year-olds from families with low incomes, which consolidated existing preschool programs and reallocated funding from the General Child Care program, which serves children birth through 12 from families with low incomes (California Budget Project, 2013). In 2011, the state removed community-based programs from Proposition 98 funding, but kept part-day State Preschool under the guarantee, as local education agencies operate two-thirds of State Preschool programs (CCLC, 2015; Look, 2021). This meant child care programs were no longer eligible for set-aside education funding in the State

**Figure 3.1** *Timeline of Selected Early Care and Education Reforms*

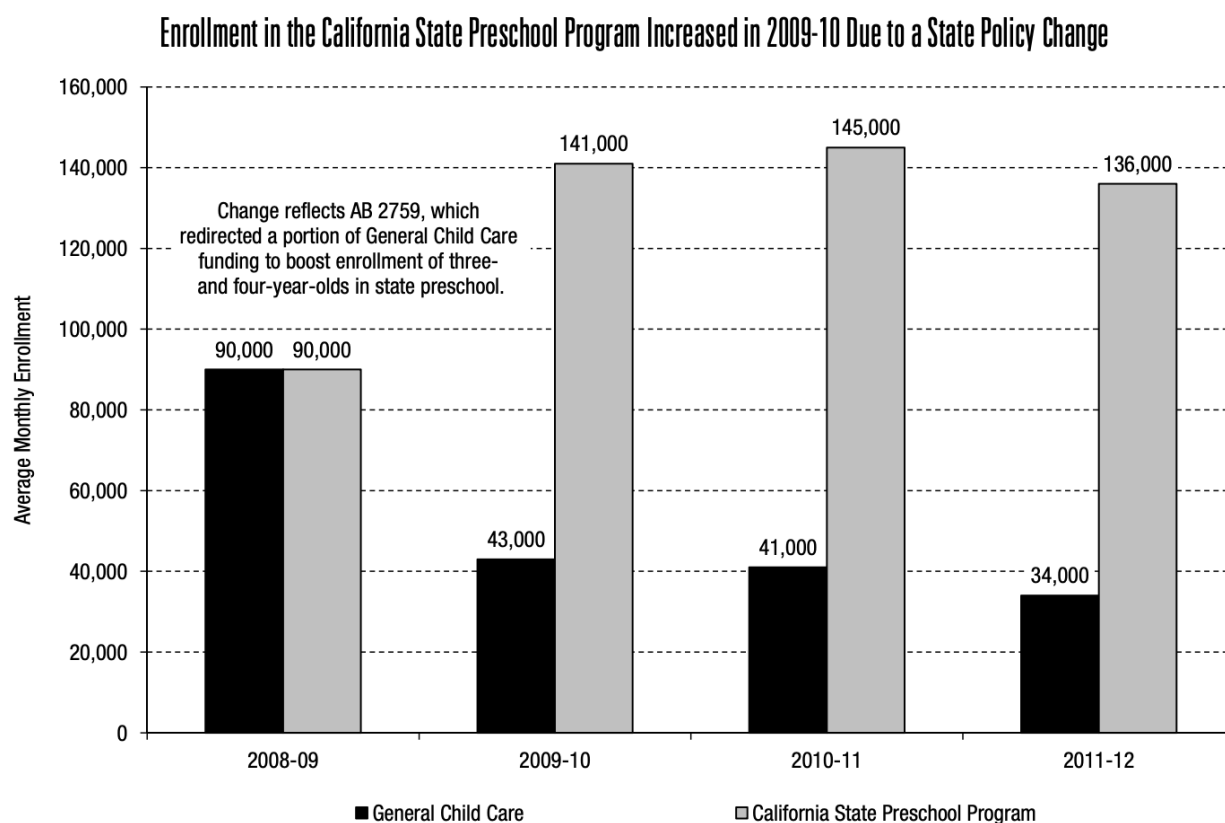
Budget. Removal of child care programs from Proposition 98, paired with decreased investments across the ECE system during and following the recession, resulted in a 35.8% decrease in funding, or about \$1.4 billion in 2018 dollars (Schumacher, 2019a). As a result, child care and State Preschool programs lost over 100,000 spaces, and the State began to fund child care programs through a composite of state and federal funds (Schumacher, 2019a; CCLC, 2015). In 2015, the State Senate voted to return child care programs under the Proposition 98 funding guarantee, but the Assembly and Governor did not support the effort during budget negotiations (Budget Conference Committee, 2015; CCLC, 2015). The Legislature made concerted efforts to rebuild lost ECE funding and reached this goal in 2018, adjusted for inflation (Schumacher, 2019a). However, the makeup of allotted funds shifted over time, with preference toward State Preschool, shown in **compensation**, will always affect programs at both departments. In addition, there are still crossover functions, such as facility licensure and oversight of programs that blend funding from both departments. CDE and CDSS both work with statewide associations to conduct essential coordination with the ECE field, including disseminating program guidance and seeking input on the development of new laws and regulations. I will elaborate on the impact of the transition in **Section IV**.

**Figure 3.2** (California Budget Project, 2013; CCRC, 2018). This increased the rift and competition between school-based preschool and community-based child care programs.

In 2021, the state moved administration of community-based programs from CDE to CDSS, commonly referred to as “the transition of child care programs” or simply “the transition” (California Legislative Information [LegInfo], 2020). The purpose of the transition was to align programs under one department to support integration with other child and family focused services while maintaining connections the early education and K-12 system (LegInfo, 2020). Prior to this

change, CDE administered all ECE programs except the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program and CalWORKs Stage One child care, which CDSS administered alongside CalWORKs cash assistance. Although the departments now separately administer their respective programs, the policy decisions about ECE standards and practices, such as teacher and provider training and compensation, will always affect programs at both departments. In addition, there are still crossover functions, such as facility licensure and oversight of programs that blend funding from both departments. CDE and CDSS both work with statewide associations to conduct essential coordination with the ECE field, including disseminating program guidance and seeking input on the development of new laws and regulations. I will elaborate on the impact of the transition in **Section IV**.

**Figure 3.2** *Enrollment in the California State Preschool Program*



California Budget Project (2013)

**Political Attention**

ECE programs and child development are a rapidly growing area of interest among state policymakers, the media, and the public. In 2017, the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University published the groundbreaking finding that children's brains create more than one million new neural connections per second; about 1,000 times more connections than previously estimated. In the last decade, several ECE advocates have joined the California State Legislature with the express intent to effect change, including former Senator Holly Mitchell (now Los Angeles County Supervisor), Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, former Assemblymember Kevin Mullin (now U.S. Representative-elect), Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, and Senator Sydney Kamlager. Senator Connie Leyva, Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes, and the Legislative Women's Caucus have also become champions for ECE issues. These legislators have held significant leadership roles, including caucus, budget committee and subcommittee, policy committee, and special commission chair positions. In 2018, the year California became the world's fifth largest economy, the Legislative Women's Caucus and Early Care and Education Coalition ran a memorable "Billion for Babies" campaign to request one billion dollars for ECE spaces in the State Budget (Hopkinson, 2018). Whereas Governor Jerry Brown appeared impartial to human services programs, Governor Gavin Newsom has demonstrated a commitment to ECE and child development, including the recruitment of several early childhood advisors to his administration (Neely, 2019). During his first year in office, Governor Newsom also championed a "Parents Agenda" budget package to improve the standard and cost of living for families as part of his larger California For All initiative (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 2019).

Most significantly in recent years, school and child care closures during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic state stay-at-home order underscored the need for and importance of

child care to provide developmentally appropriate care and education programs for children and allow families to work without distraction. Governor Newsom responded quickly by declaring child care an essential service in April 2020 and investing \$100 million for personal protective equipment and vouchers for essential workers using state of emergency funds (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 2020; Crowley, 2020). This executive order and funding, paired with considerable news coverage, changed social discourse about ECE programs, and policymakers, media, and families began to describe ECE as infrastructure—just as essential to society as roads (Center for American Progress, 2021). Providers and advocates have capitalized on this coverage by reiterating the notion that ECE programs are essential to both economic recovery and stability (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020). This momentum and united voice were vital for the advocacy response to the Governor's 2020 May Revision budget proposal to reduce provider reimbursement rates by 10%, which the Administration and Legislature ultimately withdrew from the final Budget Act (California Department of Finance [DOF], 2020a; DOF, 2020b). Parents have also been vocal about their struggles to multitask between work and providing care while working from home.

This awakening of political consciousness and pressure by contractors, providers, and parents may explain the state's rush to implement new reforms. In the next section, I describe and analyze three missed opportunities in which collaboration would have increased efficient utilization of state resources and improved communication between stakeholders. These missed opportunities represent failures to develop more intentional and comprehensive system reforms.

#### **Section IV: Missed Opportunities to Collaborate**

I have suggested that a lack of collaborative practice in California's governance and policymaking is resulting in early care and education reforms that ignore existing infrastructure

and state plans, lack stakeholder buy-in, perpetuate the divide between subgroups, and do not center the needs of children and families. In this section, I present three recent reforms, analyze missed opportunities for collaboration, and describe the ongoing impact of each failure to collaborate.

### **State Plans for ECE**

In 2017, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon formed the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education (BRC) to identify strategies to create a more sustainable ECE system and update the state's funding plan to improve outcomes for California's children and families (Liao, 2017). The commissioners consisted of Assemblymembers, executive and policy directors of ECE advocacy and service organizations, one parent advocate, and one provider (BRC, 2019). The BRC participated in eight public hearings, created four subcommittees, and conducted a site visit tour through the state (BRC, 2019). The BRC published a report at the culmination of the commission's two-year effort, informed by the BRC hearings, testimony, parent focus group interviews, and a survey of ECE organizations (BRC, 2019). Some of the key concepts captured in the final report included the whole child-whole family approach, definitions of equality (or fairness) versus equity, and targeted universalism (BRC, 2019). I included definitions for these terms in the **Glossary of Terms** in Appendix A.

Just two months after the release of the BRC's final report, Governor Gavin Newsom called for the development of a Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (Master Plan) (DOF, 2019). The purpose of the Master Plan was to build upon previous work and provide a comprehensive roadmap to strengthening California's ECE system, including workforce, facility capacity, preschool access, and funding strategies (Kurutz-Ulloa, 2021; DOF, 2019). WestEd, an education think tank, led the Action Research Team (Research Team) and research and writing process (Alcalá, et al.,



2020). The Research Team sought input from the Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC), a then new 27-member ECE policy advisory group (Kurutz-Ulloa, 2021; LegInfo, 2019b). The Master Plan focused on actionable goals, as opposed to the BRC's focus on recording system issues and commissioners' vision for progress.

The release of the Master Plan represents a missed opportunity to collaborate with BRC commissioners and employ their expertise. California already had a state plan for ECE with support and input from the Assembly and public, yet published a new state plan shortly afterward. It is unclear in press releases and the Master Plan what the need for a new plan was just one year later. The Master Plan did not provide a summary of the BRC recommendations, nor did the Research Team appear to engage commissioners. In addition, the development of the Master Plan was not as transparent as the BRC's process. The document explains that the COVID-19 health emergency prevented the Research Team from conducting parent outreach, so soliciting input from the ECPC was the best alternative at the time (Alcalá, et al., 2020). As a result, the list of Master Plan authors and contributors was comprised predominantly of researchers and a tight circle of ECE experts, the latter of whom have been more eager to support legislation to increase access to care through school-based programs than the rest of the field, as documented in bill analyses support lists (Lorber, 2020; Lorber, 2021). This diverges from the BRC final report, which includes five pages of names of individuals and organization that testified at BRC hearings or contributed survey or draft report feedback. During one ECPC meeting, councilmembers expressed concern for how the Research Team was collecting information and from whom (California Health and Human Services [CalHHS], 2020b). Councilmembers also questioned why the Master Plan development process and timeline were not publicly available (CalHHS, 2020b).

Despite these flaws in process, the Master Plan still offered some improvements upon the BRC final report. The Master Plan was more visually appealing and used more consistent grammar and writing throughout the document. More importantly, the plan included specific policy goals, steps to achieve them, and necessary partners. However, the state has made slow progress on these actionable goals. First 5 Los Angeles reported that the ECE field expressed mixed reactions to the Master Plan (Kurutz-Ulloa, 2021). This was, in part, due to the plan's emphasis on increasing State Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten, both school-based programs; lack of solutions to address the community-based child care crisis, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic health and work from home crises; and lack of a budget commitment in the Governor's 2021 January Budget (Kurutz-Ulloa, 2021). One reason for the lack of progress on Master Plan goals may be that the state lacks a leader for the ECE system due its bifurcated administration model and lack of a single, dedicated governing body.

### Transition of Child Care Programs

This overview presents several proposals. I have described the main administrative restructuring proposals and points in time in **Table 4.1** and used italics when referencing the various proposals to enhance understanding.

**Table 4.1** *Transition Proposals and Major Points in Time*

Assembly Bill 6 (Reyes, 2019)	<b>Elevate</b> the Early Care and Learning Division within CDE by turning it into a Branch
Governor's January Budget (2020)	<b>Create a new</b> state Department of Early Childhood Development
Governor's May Revision (2020)	<b>Transition</b> the administration of child care programs from CDE to CDSS
Education Budget Trailer Bill, Assembly Bill 131 (2020)	Enacted the <b>transition</b> proposal into law

The Governor's Administration, State Legislature, and stakeholders have attempted to rethink the state's ECE governance over the past few years. Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes, a BRC commissioner, authored Assembly Bill 6 to strengthen ECE governance by *elevating* the then Early Care and Learning Division at the California Department of Education (CDE) to a Branch (LegInfo, 2019a). In 2020, Governor Newsom superseded this bill with his proposal to *create a new* Department of Early Childhood Development in the January Budget (DOF, 2020c). The final Budget Act ultimately scaled the proposal back to instead *transition* the administration of child care and development programs from CDE to CDSS, now referred to informally as "the transition" (DOF, 2020b). The Administration made this change sometime between the release of the Governor's May Revision budget and the final Budget Act. The education budget trailer bill (Senate Bill 98) described the *transition* as an effort to integrate child care programs with other child- and family-focused services and support continued coordination with school-based State Preschool (LegInfo, 2020).

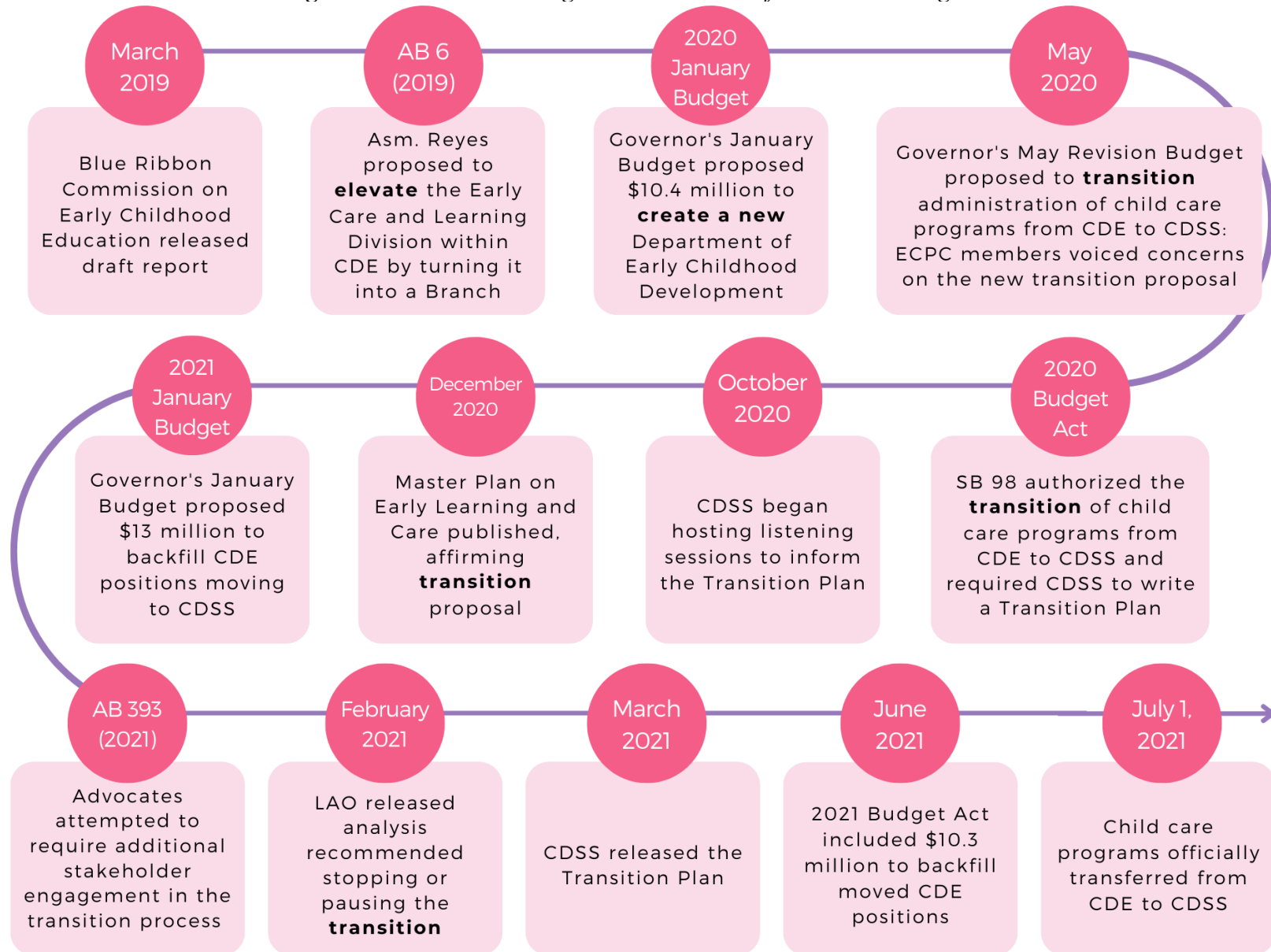
ECE and governance stakeholders did not have enough time to fully consider the final *transition* proposal included in the 2020 Budget Act. This was likely a last-minute change made during negotiations between the Administration and the Legislature. Recall, also, that the Governor introduced these proposals during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when policymakers faced competing demands for emergency action and resources. In my research, I could not find any opinions from CDE or State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond on the *transition* proposal. Although the BRC report called for more organized governance, its recommendations focused on more gradual steps to improve coordination and collaboration through the creation of the ECPC and a proposal to *elevate* the existing Early Learning and Care Division within CDE, as in Asm. Reyes' bill. In fact, the initiating statute for

the *transition* required CDSS to develop a report to justify the change and develop an implementation plan. A 2021 analysis by the LAO stated that costs associated with the *transition* were higher than the original January Budget proposal to *create a new* department (LAO, 2021a). The LAO criticized the *transition* proposal's vagueness and recommended the Administration pause the change (LAO, 2021a). Contractors and advocates also voiced concerns about the *transition* proposal during an ECPC meeting. They mentioned concerns about child care being seen as separate from education and the expedience of the *transition* proposal, and suggested the funding should instead serve to stabilize the field (CalHHS, 2020a). Providers and families interact almost exclusively with contractors and were essentially unaffected by the *transition* proposal.

**Figure 4.1** provides a visual timeline of transition-related legislation.

There are several possibilities for the abruptness of and decisions behind the enacted transition proposal. First is the burdensome emergency response workload imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including public health concerns in both schools and community care facilities. CDE and CDSS were each working to release guidance to the K-12 school system and county welfare departments, respectively, which made 2020 an inopportune time to create an entirely new department.

Why did the programs shift at all, and why to CDSS? As part of his realignment efforts, Governor Brown had proposed in 2012 to unify ECE programs under the social services administration, except this would also push the responsibility onto counties (Preschool California, 2012). Thus, there was a precedent for considering CDSS as the home for ECE programs. The final transition language included in the 2020 Budget Act stated the change would enable alignment with other social services programs in pursuit of utilizing a more whole child, whole family approach to early childhood, which also pointed to CDSS (LegInfo, 2020). In addition,

**Figure 4.1** *Timeline Leading to the Transition of Child Care Programs*

CDSS's then new Director, Kimberley Johnson, had a background in ECE administration and policy (Loudenback, 2019). Finally, moving the programs to CDSS would allow the Administration more control and oversight of programs, whereas at CDE they were under oversight of the state superintendent. So, it seems CDSS was the clear choice once creating a new department was no longer feasible. But why, then, did State Preschool not transition as well? State Preschool remained at CDE because it is mostly operated by schools and receives Proposition 98 funding, which are both administered by CDE. Perhaps neither department is the ideal home for the entire ECE system, and the creation of a new department or joint powers authority would be ideal to centralize knowledge and resources. Advocates attempted to engage in the decision-making process with Assembly Bill 393 (Reyes) before the *transition* was finalized, but the Legislature never amended the bill beyond its duplicative introductory language (Office of Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes, 2021; LegInfo 2021d).

The departments are facing challenges one year after the transition occurred. The transition further perpetuated the divide between State Preschool and child care by moving the latter to a separate department. Although ECE programs may appear neatly organized within each department, with school-based State Preschool at CDE and community-based child care programs at CDSS, the ECE system encompasses all settings and programs for children ages zero through five. There is territorialism between contractors due to the need to maintain children in their programs to cover business costs, and there is misalignment and tension between the departments themselves. The Administration framed the transition as a simple "lift and shift" of authority and code sections from one jurisdiction to the other (Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2, 2021). Ideally, CDE and CDSS would now be coordinating in lock step to amend code sections, but changes on one side of the system have required cleanup through trailer bill language due to lack

of coordination. In addition, CDE lost staff due to the transition of programs, yet CDSS still relies on CDE for access to the Child Development Provider Accounting Reporting Information System (CPARIS), which is burdensome and impairs CDE's work (LAO, 2021a; Early Education and Nutrition Fiscal Services, 2022). Furthermore, the enactment of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, discussed below, has divided the field on the appropriateness of classroom settings for four-year-olds and parent choice. This has put CDE and CDSS at odds to support their contractors' business needs and union demands while still having to coordinate with each other. Although the intention of the transition was to support ECE governance, perhaps policymakers should have delayed the transition to allow for enough planning and deliberation. Delaying implementation may have avoided intra-system competition and interagency tension.

### **Universal Transitional Kindergarten and Definitions of Universal Access**

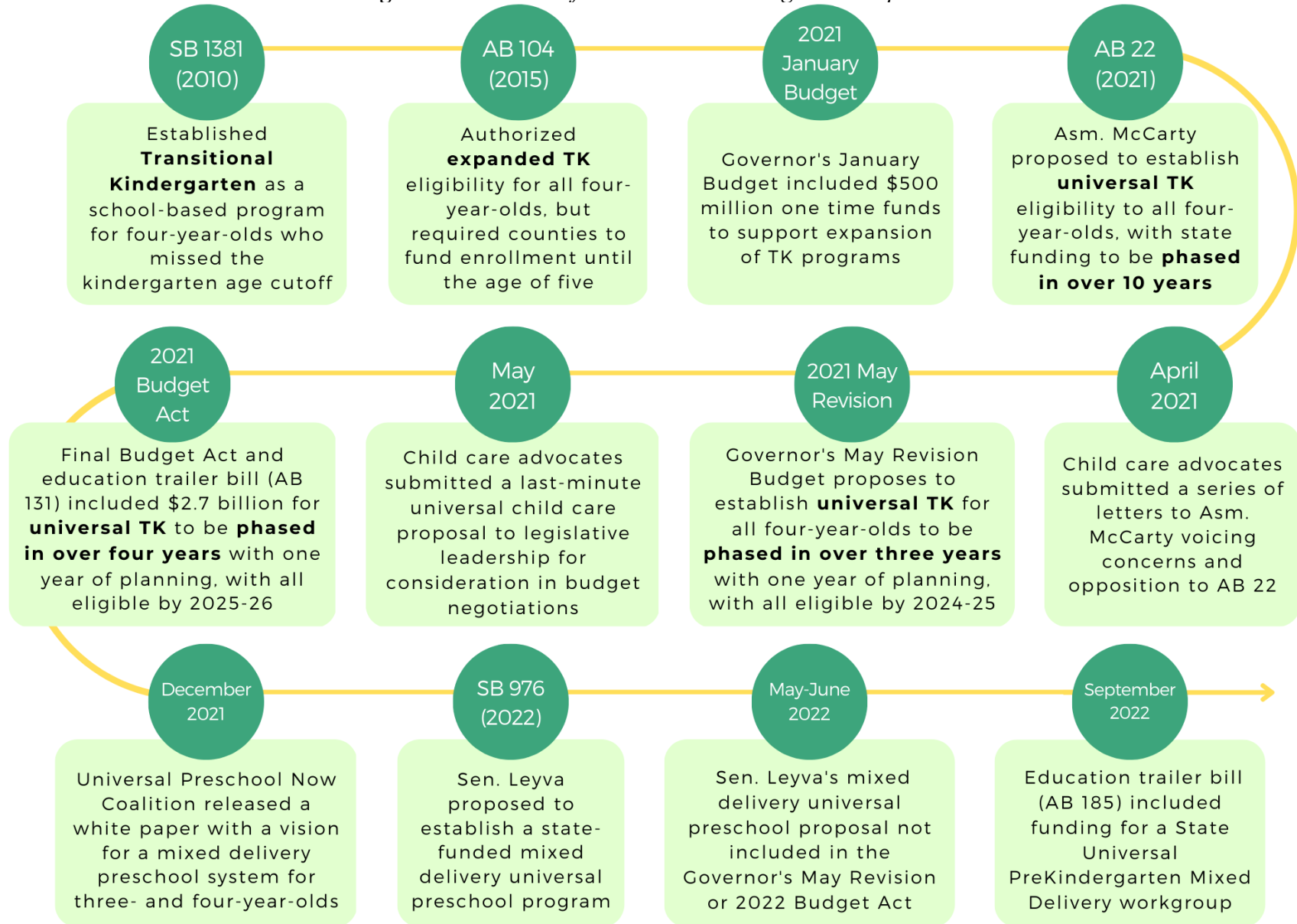
In 2010, the State Legislature passed Senate Bill 1381 (Simitian), which established Transitional Kindergarten (TK), a school-based program for older four-year-olds who missed the age cutoff to enter kindergarten (EarlyEdge California, n.d.). CDE and the K-12 (now called TK-12) school system administers TK, which is eligible to receive set aside education funding through Proposition 98 funds, also administered by CDE. TK varies from State Preschool because there are no income eligibility requirements, whereas State Preschool is only available to three- and four-year-olds from families with low incomes. In 2015, the Legislature expanded TK eligibility to all four-year-olds regardless of birth month (LegInfo, 2015). However, schools would not receive state funding until students turned five years old (LegInfo, 2015). Only a few school districts took advantage of the "expanded Transitional Kindergarten" program, including Los Angeles Unified, the largest district in the state and a main proponent of the change (Hopkinson,

2017). **Figure 4.2** provides a visual timeline of universal TK-related legislation.

In 2021, following the release of the Master Plan, Assemblymember Kevin McCarty introduced Assembly Bill 22 to establish universal Transitional Kindergarten, which would provide state funding for TK enrollment for all four-year-olds (LegInfo, 2021b). AB 22 would mandate that all school districts provide TK and included a ten-year phase in period (LegInfo, 2021b). This bill came after Asm. McCarty's previous attempts to pass other versions of universal pre-kindergarten, likely due to his affiliation as a former legislative advocate for Preschool California, now known as EarlyEdge California (KCRA, 2012).

AB 22 gained the attention of child care advocates because universal TK would result in fewer four-year-olds enrolled in child care programs. Child care programs rely on revenue from serving four-year-olds to compensate for the higher costs of serving younger children due to smaller staff-to-child ratios (Workman, 2021). The Legislature attempted to circumvent this business argument by running Senate Bill 50 (Limón) as a "companion bill" to expand State Preschool eligibility to younger children (EarlyEdge California, 2021). They expressed the bills would together allow schools to serve more four-year-olds at no cost to families, while simultaneously freeing up spaces in and expanding age eligibility for State Preschool (LegInfo, 2021e). Although both bills posed complications for child care programs, AB 22 remained the focus of opposition lobbying, as it presented a larger threat. Child care advocates sent a series of letters of concern and opposition to Asm. McCarty's office, including concerns about the developmental and cultural appropriateness of classroom and school campus environments for four-year-olds; limited hours of care offered by school-based programs; unfairly augmented funding for school-based programs through Proposition 98 without an equal augmentation to community-based programs that are not eligible for Prop 98 funds; and transitional kindergarten



**Figure 4.2** *Timeline of Transitional Kindergarten Proposals*

attracting providers away from the child care workforce to work in schools instead, which provide better pay (CCLC, 2021a; Allies for Every Child et al., 2021). Child care advocates also voiced concerns about limiting parent choice, or the choice to enroll children in the program and environment parents prefer (California Alternative Payment Program Association et al., 2021). In response, Asm. McCarty amended his bill to include language that specified that TK eligibility did not preclude families from enrolling in child care or State Preschool if they are otherwise eligible (LegInfo, 2021c).

Governor Newsom included universal TK in his May Revision budget, amending the implementation timeline to four years instead of ten (DOF, 2021a). In a backdoor, last-minute effort to prevent universal TK from adoption into the final Budget Act, child care advocates proposed a universal child care proposal to Senate leadership for consideration during budget negotiations between the Administration and Legislature (Golden State Childcare Program, 2021). By June, the list of AB 22 opponents recorded in the committee bill analysis far exceeded the list of supporters, with home- and center-based programs, child care contractor agencies, and child care advocacy organizations in opposition, and school associations, school districts, and county offices of education in support (Lorber, 2021). These efforts came too late. The Governor announced adoption of the accelerated universal TK proposal in the State Budget, which the Legislature codified in Assembly Bill 131, an ECE budget trailer bill (DOF, 2022; LegInfo, 2021a).

The Legislature and Administration enacted universal TK because it was politically attractive. Universal TK provides free care for all children, not just those from low-income families, which appeals to middle-income voters. It also provides schools with a new revenue source by counting TK enrollment toward average daily attendance (ADA), which had been falling

in California schools. Insinuating that Sen. Limón's SB 50 was a companion bill also promoted the idea that the ECE system would not lose out. Finally, due to its part-day schedule, universal TK is less costly than providing universal child care.

The adoption of universal TK is a clear failure to collaborate between the Legislature, stakeholders, and the Administration. First, the proposal ignored the state's existing mixed delivery infrastructure, including both preschool and child care, and instead created a new program that only schools could offer. The proposal disregarded community-based contractors and programs' business and workforce needs, which are essential to the stability of providing care for younger children ages zero through three. Second, universal TK lacked stakeholder buy-in. AB 22 opponents asked the Legislature to slow the bill process to create more time to discuss the proposal but their resistance was futile (Californians for Quality Early Learning, 2021). At the time, the Legislature was limiting public comment for policy committee hearings to call-in only as a public health measure due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and several committee chairs only allowed callers to state their name, affiliation, and position, with no time to provide supporting arguments (Assembly Education Committee, 2021). This restricted advocates and contractors' ability to voice their concerns with the bill. The BRC final report and Master Plan both recommended using a targeted universalism approach to serve low-income communities before extending programs to all families, but the bill did not include this equity-first strategy. There was also a lack of communication among ECE and school system stakeholders. Although advocates on both sides presumably met to discuss universal TK, I could not find any documentation of such efforts. In addition, the Early Care and Education Coalition (ECE Coalition), a group of 35 community-based child care advocates and contractors, notably did not mention the universal TK

proposal at all in its May Revision response letter (ECE Coalition, 2021). While most ECE Coalition members had voiced opposition to the universal TK proposal, the sponsors of AB 22 were also Coalition members, which likely explains the Coalition's silence on the contentious issue (ECE Coalition, 2021; Lorber, 2021). Furthermore, it is unclear whether there were intergovernmental discussions between CDE and CDSS on the impact of universal TK on the broad early childhood system. This may be because CDE and CDSS were busy preparing for the transition of child care programs to give the universal TK proposal enough consideration.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, universal TK did not meet the comprehensive needs of children and families, the program recipients. Although universal TK established a new grade, available for free to all four-year-olds, it failed to consider the diverse needs and preferences of children and families, such as the need for alternative hours of care, the need for care longer than a partial school day, or the stable personal attachment young children might have with their current provider. Asm. McCarty's amendment to sustain parent choice retained families' right to choose whether to enroll their child in TK, however, this created what child care advocates call a false choice. This false choice is the illusion that families can choose between programs. However, because enrollment in TK is free and enrollment in other ECE programs is not, even for families receiving state subsidies, they are more likely to choose TK out of financial necessity, even if it does not meet their needs or preferences for care (*RE: Support for SB 976 (Leyva)*, n.d.).

The impact of this controversial reform is still unfolding in real time. The 2021 Budget Act appropriated \$2.7 billion for universal TK (DOF, 2021b). Governor Newsom vetoed the companion bill, SB 50, stating that it was prematurely anticipated the ramifications of universal TK, but still included support for the ECE system through funding for new spaces, stabilization

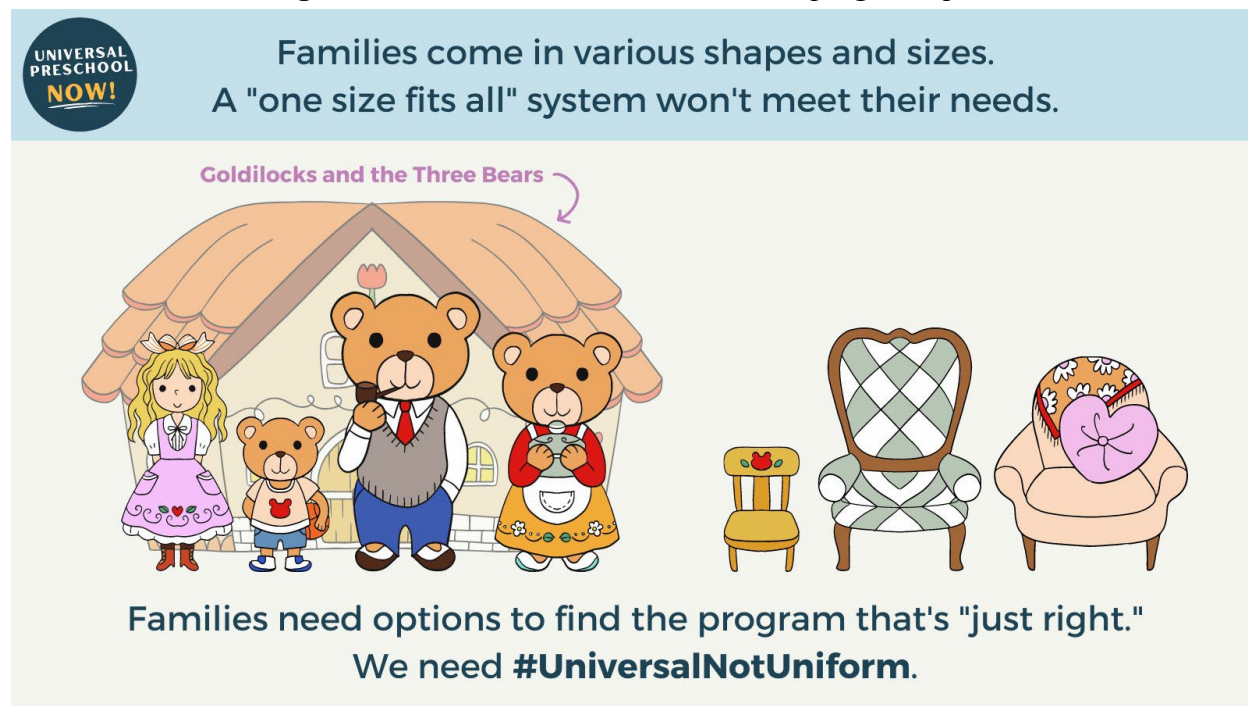
stipends for providers, and a hold harmless to provide reimbursement based on enrollment rather than attendance (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 2021).

In 2022, Senator Connie Leyva authored Senate Bill 976, which proposed a universal, mixed delivery preschool program (LegInfo, 2022b). The bill drew inspiration from the eleventh-hour universal child care proposal from May 2021 and President Biden's bold Build Back Better plan. SB 976 would allow all families the choice to enroll three- and four-year-olds in TK, State Preschool, or child care for free, and expand child care resource and referral services to help families make an informed decision regarding their children's care (LegInfo, 2022b). A new coalition called Universal Preschool Now lobbied for the bill, with a slightly different membership makeup than the ECE Coalition. Universal Preschool Now described universal TK as a uniform, one-size-fits-all remedy and posed mixed delivery as a "true" universal solution to provide options for children and families (see **Figure 4.3**) (Kids Connect, 2022). SB 976 failed to gain traction as a policy or budget priority, in part due to the waning likelihood of Congress passing Biden's Build Back Better plan (later passed as the Inflation Reduction Act), which would have provided significant funding to support the universal preschool proposal (Schimke, Smylie, & Levin, 2022; 117th Congress, 2022). In addition, Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell, chair of the Assembly Education Committee, did not allow the bill to be heard in committee, and allegedly requested "significant" revisions and refused to negotiate with the Universal Preschool Now Coalition (Californians for Quality Early Learning, 2022).

Despite not funding universal preschool, the State Budget included funding for CDE and CDSS to establish a State Universal PreKindergarten Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup by December 2022 (LegInfo, 2022a; Early Education Division, 2022). SB 976 represented an attempt by the ECE field to propose a bold solution that embraced universal TK

into the broader ECE mixed delivery system. The campaign also recharacterized “universal preschool” as inclusive of child care programs, whereas previous bills had defined universal preschool as universal access to State Preschool. Policymakers, administrators, contractors, and advocates failed to collaborate on a proposal that would benefit both the TK-12 and ECE systems, but policymaking and public budgeting are iterative processes, and there are always opportunities to revise the law. The following section provides recommendations on how these stakeholders can become more communicative, aligned, and symbiotic.

**Figure 4.3** *Universal Preschool Now Campaign Graphic*



Kids Konnect (2022)

## Section V: Recommendations

In this paper, I have described the need for early care and education programs and provided arguments for government to improve collaboration. Furthermore, I provided three examples as evidence of how the lack of collaborative practices in ECE governance and policymaking is resulting in reforms that ignore existing infrastructure and state plans, lack stakeholder buy-in,

perpetuate the divide between child care and early learning, and do not center the needs of children and families. In this section, I present 11 recommendations on how administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders can initiate and apply collaborative practices to support coordination and comprehensive reform in the ECE system. I have developed these recommendations based on the history of legislation and politics described in **Section III:** and **Section IV:** and my own understanding of best practices on collaborative governance and policymaking, including models for collaboration and communication and research on ECE governance. See **Table B-** in Appendix B for expanded summaries of collaborative governance literature.

I have grouped the recommendations by audience in **Table 5.1**. No single recommendation would solve the need for greater collaboration, as California's ECE system involves many layers of stakeholders and processes. Instead, each recommendation would support incremental progress to improve collaborative governance and policymaking. I have listed the recommendations by suggested priority order within each audience grouping based on the recommendations I believe would provide the greatest benefit and are therefore most desirable to implement first.

**Table 5.1** *Table of Recommendations*

Priority	Recommendation	Audience
1	Focus Governance Efforts on Alignment, Sustainability, and Efficiency	State Administration and Departments
2	Define the Scope of Collective Bargaining	State Administration and Departments
3	Implement Foundational Collaboration Activities	State Administration and Departments
4	Plan and Operate with the Long-Term in Mind	State Administration and Departments
5	Recruit, Cultivate, and Retain Collaborative Administrators	State Administration and Departments
1	Engage in Interest-Based Negotiation	Advocates
2	Develop Community Relationships with Policymakers	Advocates
3	Speak Up on Underwhelming Proposals	Advocates
1	Fund Collaborative Efforts	State Legislature
2	Fund Comprehensive Research Studies	State Legislature
3	Seek Guaranteed Funding for the Early Care and Education System	State Legislature

### Recommendations for State Administration and Departments

#### *Recommendation 1: Focus Governance Efforts on Alignment, Sustainability, and Efficiency*

Many states, such as California, have multiple state agencies and local entities that administer and deliver ECE programs (Atchison & Diffey, 2018). This creates challenges that make policy alignment difficult. The Education Commission of the States identified three methods for streamlining early childhood governance: creation of a dedicated early childhood agency, consolidation of existing programs and divisions into one state agency, and collaboration and coordination across different agencies (**Figure 5.1**). Furthermore, the report recommended five strategies for streamlining early childhood governance: 1) coordination, 2) alignment, 3) sustainability, 4) efficiency, and 5) accountability.



**Figure 5.1** *Methods for Organizing Early Childhood Governance*

California's "lift and shift" of child care programs under CDSS aligns with method two, *consolidation*. However, because CDE administers State Preschool, there is still a need for method three, *collaboration and coordination*. I believe the latter is where state government can improve. I recommend state departments focus on the strategies of alignment, sustainability, and efficiency to improve ECE administration. *Alignment* refers to providing coherence across the system and breaking down administrative siloes. CDE and CDSS are already making progress toward aligning quality standards and the reimbursement rate structure. The departments could also consider aligning health and safety standards and reporting requirements, and streamlining provider payment by making permanent the enrollment-based reimbursement hold harmless policy. These alignments would improve stability for both state and local program administrators. *Sustainability* refers to ensuring that plans can withstand political and administrative changes. This means state plans should be actionable and that policymakers should take immediate action to implement recommendations. Departments should voice their input in the development of state plans as both subject matter experts and program administrators who will eventually enact change, as opposed to legislators who may be less informed or leave office in a few years. Lastly, *efficiency* refers to allocating resources strategically and improving return on investment. A 2014 report from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) recommended changes to the CalWORKs child care

programs, including combining the Stage One and Stage Two programs into one, and Stage Three program with other child care programs. The LAO argued these changes would improve equitable access to care for families and improve administrability (2014). Although these recommendations are now outdated, they provide an example of how the State could reimagine program administration.

***Recommendation 2: Define the Scope of Collective Bargaining***

There has been confusion and frustration regarding what issues fall under the scope of collective bargaining between the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) and Child Care Providers United union (CCPU). CCPU represents home-based providers, which comprise roughly 25% of the field, yet has the ability to negotiate directly with the Administration on issues that affect the entire ECE field, including center-based providers and infrastructure agencies such as Alternative Payment Program agencies and Resource and Referral agencies (D. Sneeringer, personal communication, December 7, 2022). For example, CalHR and CCPU have a Joint Labor Management Committee to discuss and negotiate provider reimbursement rate reform, yet it is unlikely that the Legislature would reform rates for home-based providers and not others, making the rest of the field susceptible to CCPU's negotiations. CalHR and CCPU are still in their first contract following unionization, so they are still establishing norms around bargaining. They are due to negotiate a new contract in 2023. This would be a great opportunity for the State to define the scope of bargaining for both the ECE field and State Legislature to understand how union negotiations affect their policymaking power and influence.

***Recommendation 3: Implement Foundational Collaboration Activities***

In their book *Collaborative Governance Regimes*, Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) presented an integrative framework for establishing what they call collaborative governance regimes

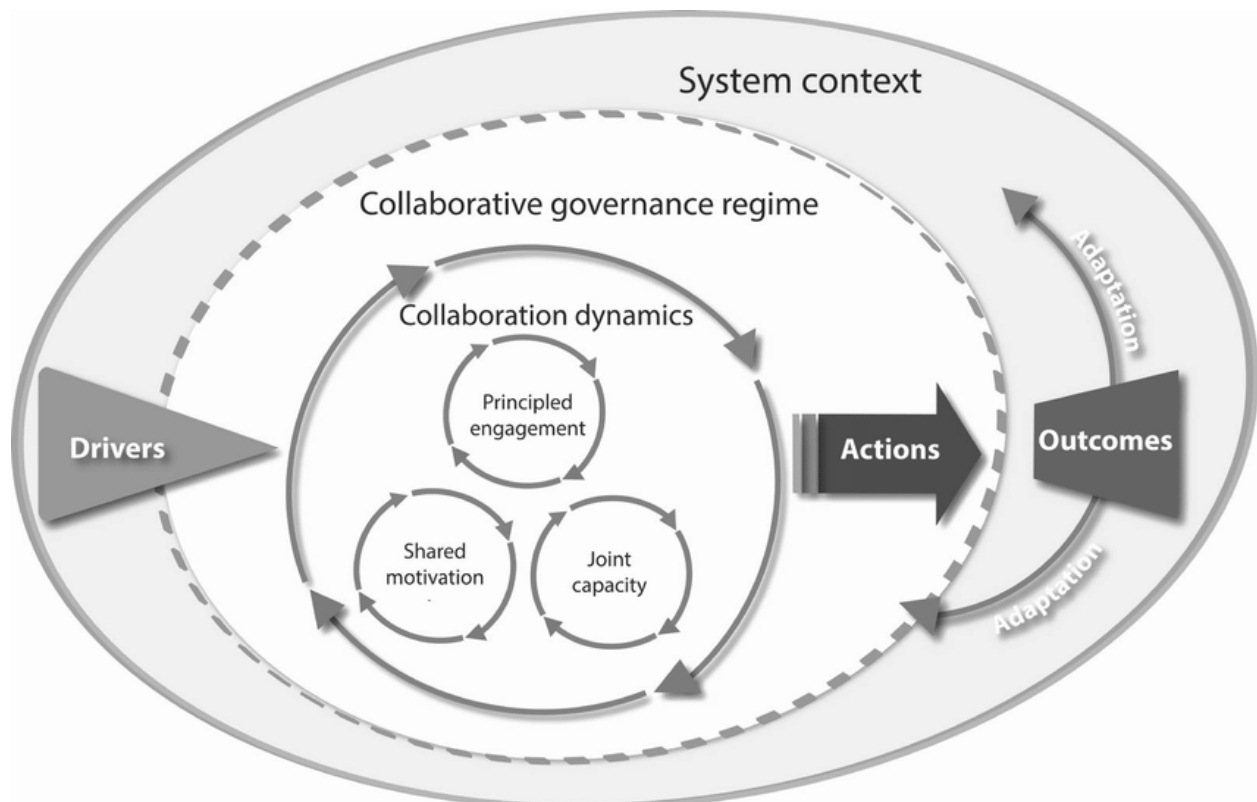
(CGRs). They defined CGRs as cross-organizational systems composed of autonomous organizations that represent different interests that have broad public policy goals, develop intentional institutional and procedural systems, and engage in repeated interactions over the long term.

Emerson and Nabatchi's integrative framework (**Figure 5.2**) explained that stakeholders are less likely to initiate collaboration without the presence of four catalyzing drivers: uncertainty, interdependence, consequential incentives, and initiating leadership. Furthermore, the authors state that stakeholders must engage in collaboration dynamics—principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint change—to operate an effective CGR. These synchronous dynamics, each comprised of four continuous sub-activities, facilitate collaboration by establishing norms for cooperation, agreeing upon goals, and taking collective action to produce collective outcomes that affect the external system.

The new State Universal PreKindergarten Mixed Delivery Workgroup, which, by law, will include participants from both early learning and child care, seems like a great opportunity to practice collaboration dynamics and activities. I recommend participants focus on the collective activities of discovery, definition, shared theory of change, trust and mutual understanding, and knowledge. Engaging in *discovery* and *definition* will allow workgroup participants to describe their concerns and values through dialogue, inquiry, and empathic listening, and build shared meaning and understanding of concepts and terms. For example, Assembly Bill 22 opponents argued that universal transitional kindergarten was only universal in that it provided free access to all families, but not universal access as in adaptable to all families' needs (California Alternative Payment Program Association, 2021). Defining the meaning and value of "universal" may help to resolve tension among universal TK supporters and opponents. Building a *shared theory of change*

will allow participants to define assumptions and develop shared goals for a mixed delivery system. Participants should create this theory of change through working meetings rather than independently to ensure they understand one another and utilize the same definitions and assumptions. Developing *trust* and *mutual understanding* are essential to collaboration. Workgroup participants should strive to be honest with and respect each other at both an interpersonal and organizational level, including acknowledging differences in goals and strategies. Participants can build trust and mutual understanding by starting with smaller issues to build confidence in each other before tackling tougher issues. Lastly, workgroup participants should share *knowledge*, such as program and financial data, discuss areas of disagreement, and seek to find new information for any missing gaps.

**Figure 5.2** *Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance*



Emerson & Nabatchi (2015)

Workgroup participants must be willing to set differences aside to create shared language and agreements and identify mutually beneficial solutions. Collaboration will be most effective if participants engage in these activities together through working meetings, rather than independently. Participants must also be bold enough to push against the status quo and ambitious enough to negotiate with parties traditionally seen as their competition.

***Recommendation 4: Plan and Operate with the Long-Term in Mind***

Collaboration and problem solving require sustained effort and iteration, as opposed to intermittent consultation at best and competition over funding at worst. Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) stated that collaborative governance regimes are meant for the long-run, and establishing and managing CGRs takes time. Similarly, ECE policy issues will continue to affect both state departments and both school-based and community-based program providers. Participants should engage and communicate with the intention of sustaining interpersonal and interorganizational relationships in the long-term. As administrators of the new Workgroup, CDE and CDSS can help to establish *procedural and institutional arrangements* that support productive information sharing, consensus building, and organizational structure. Sustained efforts between the ECE and TK-12 system may prevent future misalignments and benefit service delivery for children and families.

***Recommendation 5: Recruit, Cultivate, and Retain Collaborative Administrators***

There are higher rates of turnover for appointed and executive staff, as seen in ECE policy with the recent departure of both the Governor's and Assembly Speaker's consultants on early childhood (Giannina Perez and Gail Gronert), the Deputy Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency (Kris Perry), and the Chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council (Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris). There is a need to support mid- and "street-level" bureaucrats who stay in

public service for long periods, carry historical and institutional knowledge, and keep programs and budgets operational. Collaboration is both an abundance-oriented mindset and a decision-making process. As discussed throughout this paper, continued administration and reform of the ECE system will require significant coordination and collaboration. The Administration, CDE, and CDSS should strive to recruit, cultivate, and retain staff that understand and embrace the value of collaborative decision making and public input. This will ensure the success of ongoing interdepartmental efforts and empower staff to create shared solutions and efficiencies.

### **Recommendations for Advocates**

#### ***Recommendation 1: Engage in Interest-Based Negotiation***

Fisher and Ury's (1991) *Getting to Yes* described the benefit of practicing interest-based negotiation rather than position-based negotiation. Fisher and Ury described negotiation as the basis for collaborative decision making, where participants with both shared and opposing interests engage in back and forth communication to reach an agreement. Position-based negotiation occurs when parties state their position at the onset and are reluctant to stray from this position for fear of giving up too much. It is rooted in stubbornness, risk aversion, and apathy for other parties. Instead, Fisher and Ury argued that interest-based negotiation allows collaborative participants to come to a solution based on shared interests. This process requires openness, curiosity, and creativity, and is more likely to result in a mutually beneficial outcome.

I recommend for advocates to engage fully with other advocacy groups, contractors, providers, and families and remain open to their input. I encourage advocates to speak openly with perceived adversaries and find ways to communicate amiably toward mutually beneficial solutions. Without this open dialogue, advocates place a great responsibility on legislators and legislative staff to parse through opposing arguments and decide which position-based approach

has the most merit based on the resources easily available to them—fact sheets, position letters, and news articles. Instead, it would be more efficient for advocates to organize a discussion (or series of discussions) to brainstorm and develop mutually beneficial policies together. Perhaps universal transitional kindergarten would have become a different proposal if stakeholders had created more opportunities to speak face-to-face with one another.

***Recommendation 2: Develop Community Relationships with Policymakers***

Emberling's (2020) research used interviews and found unanimous agreement that developing relationships with and educating policymakers is vital to create sustained interest in ECE issues. Relationship-building and education strategies include inviting policymakers to classroom site visits and introducing policymakers to families and ECE providers and teachers. According to the latest unofficial election results, 10 senators and 23 assemblymembers are joining the State Legislature this December, totaling just over one fourth of the entire body (California Secretary of State, 2022b; California Secretary of State, 2022a). This presents is a great opportunity for state and local contractors and advocates to inform new members of the value of ECE programs, history of funding and reforms, and need for support in the policy and budget development processes. The new class of legislators will also set a record number of women members (Landa, 2022). Emberling wrote that both interviewees and literature supported the idea that more women in public office could increase attention and traction on women's issues, such as ECE.

***Recommendation 3: Speak Up on Underwhelming Proposals***

Collaboration literature usually advises participants to take the high road. Fisher and Ury recommended exploring the adversary's proposal through inquiry if they are unwilling to negotiate a mutually beneficial solution (1991). However, advocates cannot always practice inquiry and

curiosity when ECE access and business stability are at risk for families and providers. In the past, advocates softened their criticism of underwhelming or upsetting proposals out of fear of political retaliation from the Governor and legislators who identify as allies or champions for ECE issues. This occurred with Asm. McCarty's AB 22—although many child care advocates were in outright opposition to the bill, the letter they sent to the Governor and legislative leadership only framed their position as “concern” (Allies for Every Child et al., 2021). Perhaps the policy conversation around universal transitional kindergarten would have happened differently if child care advocates had expressed their more extreme feelings on the proposal earlier in the legislative and budget process.

One of the “drivers” for collaboration in Emerson and Nabatchi's Integrative Framework (2015) is *consequential incentives*. If policymakers do not understand the consequences of an action (or lack thereof), advocates should make them aware to incentivize policymakers to reconsider their decision or seek more information. In their ECE communications and messaging toolkit, the Child Care Law Center recommended using “problem messages” to articulate a threat and the need for action (2021b). Problem messages often use statistics and facts to make the threat more tangible. Furthermore, the toolkit recommended supporting problem messages with value, solution, and action messages. Using all four message types will establish the merit of the issue, threat of inaction or incorrect action, suggested solution, and recommended follow up action.

## **Recommendations for the State Legislature**

### ***Recommendation 1: Fund Collaborative Efforts***

Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) included resources as an essential collaboration activity for collaborative governance regimes. *Resources* refers to adequate funding and resources, such as facilitators and meeting space, to support collaborative networks. The State should consider



funding state and local level collaborative efforts that focus on ECE. For example, each county has a Local Child Care and Development Planning Council (LPC), whose objective is to identify and address local needs for ECE programs (CDE, 2021). LPCs are required to assess child care needs every five years, however they are underfunded (BRC, 2019). With increased funding, LPCs could deepen engagement with TK, State Preschool, and child care stakeholders to identify local capacity, resources, and families' needs and create a multi-year action plan to address their assessment findings. The Legislature could provide short-term funding through pilot projects to measure the effectiveness of different models before implementing a long-term, statewide strategy.

### ***Recommendation 2: Fund Comprehensive Research Studies***

One of the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education recommendations stated that policy decisions should be “informed by ongoing evaluation, robust data, and current research” (2019, p. 25). AB 22 proponents used an American Institutes for Research report to justify state funding of universal TK. However, this report only analyzed the impacts of enrollment in TK and did not directly compare the program against enrollment in other ECE programs (Manship, et al., 2017). Some progress on building data systems is already underway: The Master Plan recommended the creation of an early childhood integrated data system called the California Kids Integrated Data System (CalKIDS) (Alcalá, et al., 2020). CDSS is working on several child care data initiatives, including California Supporting Providers and Reaching Kids (CalSPARK) and Brilliant Beginnings, though I found it unclear in my research what progress has been made and how the systems connect. The State is also working to develop a Cradle-to-Career (C2C) data system to collect longitudinal information using unique identifiers (State of California, n.d.). In addition to these efforts, the State should invest in comprehensive program evaluations to build a deeper understanding of which programs best promote positive

child and family outcomes. These evaluations should include a diverse population of research subjects in recognition of the state's diversity, including race and ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, family structure, socioeconomic status, varying needs for hours of care, disability and special needs, and other needs and preferences for care, such as proximity to work or school.

***Recommendation 3: Seek Guaranteed Funding for the Early Care and Education System***

Lastly, the State should establish guaranteed funding for the ECE system. California develops the state budget through baseline budgeting, which means the Department of Finance builds upon the previous year's budget as the "base" year after year. This can have significant consequences when programs vital to the economic wellbeing of families are at jeopardy of reduced funding, as seen with child care programs during and following the Great Recession.

One alternative for increasing state funding could be to revisit the Senate's 2015 attempt to return child care programs under the Proposition 98 guarantee. However, this would likely be politically tough to execute, considering TK-12 schools and the California Teachers Association hold a lot of power. This would also likely be difficult administratively now that CDSS operates child care programs. Another alternative is raising revenue through taxes, but this would also be politically difficult to achieve on a statewide level. Instead of increasing state funding, the Administration and advocates could work together to lobby the federal government. President Biden has announced his vision for universal ECE programs, but Congress has not delivered on proposals such as the Build Back Better Act (Schimke, Smylie, & Levin, 2022). California ECE stakeholders should work together to ask Congress to seriously consider new investments in ECE, as well as seek eligibility flexibility for federal Head Start programs, which is determined by the federal poverty level and not a state poverty measure (Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, 2022).

## Section VI: Conclusion

California's early care and education programs provide essential supports to children, families, and society. In this culminating project for my Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from California State University, Sacramento, I provided evidence of how the lack of collaborative practices in governance and policymaking is resulting in reforms that ignore existing infrastructure and state plans, lack stakeholder buy-in, perpetuate the divide between subgroups, and do not center the needs of children and families. Furthermore, I provided 11 recommendations for administrators, advocates, and policymakers to improve collaboration.

### Suggestions for Further Research and Reading

This paper presents preliminary recommendations that may represent my own bias and limited resources. Several initiatives are still unfolding in real time, such as the creation of the new State Universal PreKindergarten Mixed Delivery Workgroup, reimbursement rate reform, the effects of transition of child care programs to the Department of Social Services, and the effects of unionization of home-based providers. State administrators, policymakers, and advocates should consider further research into the following areas of problem solving, governance, and ECE partnership:

**Real world impediments** to achieving the proposed recommendations. There may be social, financial, legal, and/or political obstacles that prevent stakeholders from taking meaningful action. Further research could include interviews or surveys of stakeholders to learn more about their ability and motivation to enact these recommendations and the current system context and interorganizational dynamics.

**Design thinking and human-centered design** as alternate processes for problem definition and solving. These approaches center people's habits and needs, as opposed to

rationalistic problem definition, which centers objectivity. Resources for further research include the [Harvard Design School](#) (d.school), [IDEO](#), and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) [Spectrum of Public Participation](#).

**Innovation and experimentation** in the public sector. Taking a chance on projects that do not guarantee results or return on investment requires both ingenuity and a risk neutral mindset. Resources include *We The Possibility* by Mitchell Weiss and the Obama era [Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation](#).

**Additional care and education partners** such as afterschool stakeholders. Afterschool providers and program administrators are an extended part of the care system for school-age children. These programs interact with and care for children in the TK-12 system, and have overlapping policy issues with the ECE field. Resources include the work done by Child Care Resource Center and Partnership for Children and Youth, and the [March 2<sup>nd</sup> Senate Education Committee informational hearing](#) on the intersection of these fields.

For additional background on California's ECE system, I recommend reading the Learning Policy Institute's (LPI) report titled [Understanding California's Early Care and Education System](#), which includes great graphics. I also recommend reviewing materials from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), California Budget and Policy Center, UC Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), and the [Child Care and Development Transition page](#) on the California Department of Social Services website. For further reading on California's ECE governance and administration, I recommend reading the LAO's [Restructuring California's Child Care and Development System](#) and the LPI's [Uncoordinated and Underfunded: How Do We Fix California's Early Learning System?](#). These reports provide background on the development of California's child care programs, highlight equity issues, and make recommendations (some of

which are now outdated). Finally, I recommend reading Heidi Schmidt Emberling's dissertation titled [\*Expanding and Improving High-Quality Early Care and Education in California: Is There Alignment Between Policymakers and the Public?\*](#). Emberling's mixed-methods study provides insight into how policymakers, advocates, and the public view ECE issues.

### **Final Thoughts**

Economists project that the United States will enter a recession and California is facing an estimated state budget deficit of \$24 billion (Rugaber, 2022; LAO, 2022). There is an increased need to work collaboratively when less funding is available because administrators must be creative in how they deliver programs and make decisions to reduce spending. It is important that ECE administrators, advocates, and policymakers initiate and foster trusting relationships now so that collaborative partnership can support inclusive decision-making when budgets are tight and supportive services are most essential for children and families. Failure to foster collaborative partnership will result in further kludgeocracy, competition, and fragmentation. Incorporating and implementing my recommendations will improve collaboration to build a cohesive statewide ECE system that benefits all children, families, and ECE providers.

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## Appendix A

**Table A-1** *Glossary of Terms*

Term	Definition
Affordability/Affordable care	Seven percent of household income. Established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child Care.
Access/Accessibility/Accessible care	Availability of early care and education programs and spaces/slots; absence of care deserts. Can also refer to access to affordable care.
Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)	Subsidized voucher program for families with low incomes.
Alternative Payment Program Agency (APP)	County government or nonprofit agencies that serve as a fiscal intermediary between the California Department of Social Services, child care providers, and families receiving subsidized child care.
CalWORKs Child Care	Child care for families enrolled in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.
Center-Based Programs	Child care and preschool programs provided in a commercial building. Centers are larger and can accommodate more children than family child care homes. They also have different health and quality standards.
Child Care Programs/Child Care and Development Programs	Child care and development programs provide supervision, care, and education for children ages zero through 12 years old. Child care and development programs are administered by the California Department of Social Services and provided through community-based settings (centers and family child care homes).
California State Preschool Program (State Preschool or CSPP)	A program that provides both part-day and full-day care and education for children from families with low incomes ages three through four years old. State Preschool is administered by the California Department of Education and considered an early learning program, but is unique in that it is provided through both school-based and center-based settings.
Community-Based Programs	Programs provided in the community at centers and family child care homes; programs provided outside of school settings.

Term	Definition
Early Childhood Policy Council (ECPC)	Senate Bill 75 (2019) established the 27-member Early Childhood Policy Council to advise the Governor, Legislature, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction on early care and education policy and implementation of the Master Plan on Early Learning and Care (2020) and the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education's Final Report (2019).
Early Learning	Refers to programs administered by the California Department of Education and provided by schools/in school-based settings. Advocates have increasingly used this term to differentiate these programs from child care programs.
Entitlement/Entitlement Programs	Benefit programs provided by government as a guaranteed right to eligible individuals. CalWORKs is an entitlement program.
Expanded Transitional Kindergarten	Assembly Bill 104 (2015) "expanded" transitional kindergarten eligibility to all four-year-olds regardless of birth month, but required counties to fund enrollment. Expanded transitional kindergarten was superseded by universal transitional kindergarten.
Equality/Equal Distribution	Even distribution of resources among individuals regardless of their needs or distance from/proximity to opportunity.
Equity/Equitable Distribution	Varying distribution of resources among individuals based on their differing needs or distance from/proximity to opportunity.
General Child Care (CCTR)	A program that provides care and education for children from families with low incomes ages zero through 12 years old. General Child Care is administered by the California Department of Social Services and provided through community-based settings (centers and family child care homes).
Home-Based Programs	Child care programs provided by a family child care business in a licensed private home residence.
"Lift and Shift"	A term used to describe the transfer of administration of child care and development programs from the California Department of Education to the California Department of Social Services and code sections from the Education Code (EDC) to the Welfare

Term	Definition
	and Institutions Code (WIC). The Governor's Administration coined this term to emphasize the simplicity of the May Revision transition proposal.
Local Child Care and Development Planning Council (Local Planning Council or LPC)	A council at the county level charged with assessing local child care needs, identifying available resources, seeking public input, and developing local partnerships.
Parent Choice/Parental Choice	Parents' or families' freedom to choose the type of early care and education program to enroll their child in based on the family's and/or child's needs and preferences.
Preschool with a lowercase "p"	Pre-kindergarten programs for three- and four-year-olds.
Preschool with an uppercase "P"	Refers to the California State Preschool Program, also called State Preschool.
Pre-K/Pre-Kindergarten	Early care and education programs for zero to five-year-olds before entering kindergarten (at age five).
Provider	A person who provides early care and education services; typically refers to child care programs.
Proposition 98/Proposition 98 Guarantee (Prop 98)	A 1988 referendum passed by voters to establish a guaranteed amount of funding for education. Child care programs used to be included under the Prop 98 guarantee, but have since been removed. Currently, Prop 98 funds are allocated to transitional kindergarten through community college (TK-14).
Quality/Quality Standards	Established standards for operating early care and education programs, including curriculum standards, provider credentials, staff-to-child ratios, <i>etc.</i> There are differing definitions for "quality" and "high quality." In 2020, California child care advocates described the Quality Rating and Improvement System as racist. Since then, there has been interest in changing quality standards or moving away from them completely. Read Nzewi, Ignatius, & Kruckle (2020) for more information.
(Child Care) Resource and Referral Agency (R&R)	County nonprofit agencies that provide services to families and child care providers, such as information about local child care options, provider training programs, assistance with attaining licensure, and community resource libraries.
School-Based Programs	Programs provided in school settings (at schools or on school campuses).

Term	Definition
Space/Slot	An enrollment in a program; typically refers to subsidized programs ( <i>e.g.</i> , The 2022-23 State Budget funded 161,332 Alternative Payment Program spaces.)
Stage One/Two/Three Child Care	Refers to CalWORKs child care.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent, SSPI, or SPI)	An elected official who oversees the California Department of Education and all the state's public schools. The SSPI is a nonpartisan office. The SSPI executes the policies of the California Board of Education (State Board of Education) and maintains some separation from the Governor's Administration.
Subsidy	Financial aid provided to families by state government to partially or fully pay for enrollment in early care and education. Families do not receive these funds; instead, early learning programs are directly contracted with the California Department of Education and child care programs receive payment through Alternative Payment Program agencies (APPs).
Targeted Universalism	An approach that sets a universal goal and implements phased in, targeted strategies to serve disadvantaged groups before the entire population.
Teacher	A person who provides early care and education services. Typically refers to early learning programs, but can also be used for child care programs.
Transition of Child Care and Development Programs	Senate Bill 98 (2020) authorized the transfer of administration of child care and development programs from the California Department of Education to the California Department of Social Services. This change took place on July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2021 and is commonly referred to as "the transition of child care programs" or simply "the transition."
Transitional Kindergarten (TK)	Senate Bill 1381 (2010) established transitional kindergarten as a school-based program for older four-year-olds who missed the age cutoff to enter kindergarten. TK had no income eligibility requirements, as opposed to State Preschool and child care programs.
Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK)	Assembly Bill 131 (2021) established universal transitional kindergarten as a phased-in, state-funded, school-based program for all four-year-olds, regardless of income

Term	Definition
	eligibility. This essentially created a new grade level in the K-12 school system. Enrollment in TK is not mandatory.
Universal/Universalism	An approach that sets a goal of serving an entire population. The approach may be phased in, but typically does not target disadvantaged groups.
Voucher	A form of subsidy that allows families to choose their program setting and provider.
Whole-Child, Whole-Family Approach	An approach to providing educational and social services that recognizes that children's wellbeing is connected to their family's wellbeing.

## Appendix B

**Table B-1** Summary of Collaboration, Communication, and Governance Literature

Author and Year	Title	Key Concepts	Findings/Takeaways
Ansell & Gash, 2007	<i>Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice</i>	Collaborative governance, Model of Collaborative Governance, adversarialism, managerialism, corporatism	<p>Collaborative governance is different than adversarial or managerial policy making, and different than intergovernmental coordination, corporatism, or public-private partnerships.</p> <p>Collaborative governance is a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets (p. 544).</p> <p>Collaborative governance is about collective decision making where non-state stakeholders have direct engagement rather than simply being consulted.</p> <p>The goal of collaboration is to strive for consensus or, at least, to strive to discover areas of agreement (p. 547).</p>
Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015	<i>Collaborative Governance Regimes</i>	Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR), integrative framework	<p>CGRs have four unique qualities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Broad public policy or public service orientations</li> <li>2. Cross-organizational systems composed of autonomous organizations that represent different interests or jurisdictions,</li> <li>3. Develop intentional institutional and procedural norms and rules, and</li> <li>4. Participants engage in repeated interactions over the long term.</li> </ol>

Author and Year	Title	Key Concepts	Findings/Takeaways
			<p>Integrative Framework (Figure 3.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presence of all four “drivers” increases the likelihood of collaboration: <i>uncertainty, interdependence, consequential incentives, and initiating leadership.</i></li> <li>• There are three interacting “collaboration dynamics”: <i>principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action.</i></li> <li>• Principled engagement includes: <i>discovery, definition, deliberation, determinations, and creating a shared theory of change.</i></li> <li>• Shared motivation includes: <i>trust, mutual understanding, internal legitimacy, and commitment.</i></li> <li>• Capacity for joint action includes: <i>procedural and institutional agreements, leadership, resources, and knowledge.</i></li> </ul>
Fisher & Ury, 1991	<i>Getting to Yes</i>	Position- vs. interest-based negotiation	<p>Position-based negotiation occurs when parties take or state a firm position or stance. This leads to a bargaining impasse where neither party wants to deviate from their position and lose leverage. This negotiation style is inefficient and may result in a win-lose or lose-lose situation. Position-based negotiation is best suited for strictly financial negotiations.</p> <p>Interest-based negotiation occurs when parties describe their interests or values in a shared negotiation outcome. This exchange of information about interests results in the opportunity for parties to brainstorm a mutually beneficial or win-win solution.</p>



Author and Year	Title	Key Concepts	Findings/Takeaways
Teles, 2012	<i>Kludgeocracy: The American Way of Policy</i>	Kludgeocracy	<p>A kludgeocracy is a form of government that is “clumsy but temporarily effective” (p. 1).</p> <p>Kludgeocracy results in negative costs to society such as programmatic and legal complexity. Businesses profit from maintaining these complexities to sell individuals services to navigate them. In this way, kludgeocracy also poses a threat to the quality of our democracy. (p. 2-3).</p> <p>Kludgeocracy also creates both the reality and image that government is incompetent (p. 4).</p>
<b>Literature Specific to Early Care and Education Governance</b>			
Atchison & Diffey, 2018	<i>Governance in Early Childhood Education</i>	Complexity of early childhood governance, disconnect between the birth-to-five and K-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade systems,	<p>Five strategies for early childhood governance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Coordination</i>: connecting different parts and programs within the early childhood system.</li> <li>2. <i>Alignment</i>: providing coherence across systemwide tasks and breaking down silos associated with the administration of funding and program oversight.</li> <li>3. <i>Sustainability</i>: withstanding political and administrative changes and accounting for the full range of programs in the state's early childhood system.</li> <li>4. <i>Efficiency</i>: wisely allocating resources, reducing duplication of efforts, and providing a significant return on investment.</li> <li>5. <i>Accountability</i>: holding programs and services responsible for quality, equality, and outcomes (p. 3).</li> </ol> <p>Three methods for organizing state agencies:</p>

Author and Year	Title	Key Concepts	Findings/Takeaways
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Creation</i> of a dedicated early childhood agency.</li> <li>2. <i>Consolidation</i> of existing programs and divisions into one state agency.</li> <li>3. <i>Collaboration and Coordination</i> across different agencies (p. 3).</li> </ol> <p>Policy Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the governance initiative survive through political change (p. 7)?</li> <li>• Will the working relationships among policy leaders at the state and local levels function in a way that reinforces pupil success and policy cohesion (p. 7)?</li> <li>• Will the governance entity have the fiscal and policy/rule-making authority and administrative oversight to achieve these goals (p.7)?</li> </ul>
Child Care Law Center, 2021	<i>The ECE Advocates' Toolkit: Effective Communications and Messaging</i>	Value messages, problem messages, solution messages, action messages	<p>Value messages explain the “why.” They tap into deeply held and shared values, answering the question of why your audience should care. Value messages allow your audience to hear and relate to your point of view (p. 19).</p> <p>Problem messages present a conflict or threat to your values. They articulate the problem that your effort intends to solve and outline your motivation for action. They use statistics and facts and show how the problem hurts us all (p. 19).</p> <p>Solution messages support our vision for a more positive future once the problem is dealt with. These messages inspire a “can-do” ingenuity and assign responsibility, making it clear who needs to do what (p. 19).</p>

Author and Year	Title	Key Concepts	Findings/Takeaways
			Action messages offer an action your audience can picture themselves doing. The more specific the action message, the better (p. 19).
Emberling, 2020	<i>Expanding and Improving High-Quality Early Care and Education in California: Is There Alignment Between Policymakers and the Public?</i>	Mixed methods study findings, series of system models	<p>Obstacles identified from interviews with policymaking experts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complicated and inadequate funding impedes expansion and improvement of high-quality early care and education programs and services (p. 41).</li> <li>• Teacher workforce issues. Specifically: low wages; need for improved training, credentialing, and professional development; challenges with recruitment and retention; and a persistent societal notion that providers' work is more custodial than instructional (p. 43).</li> <li>• Inconsistent and low quality of care. Specifically: lack of consistent quality measurement tools, minimal data on outcomes, and a lack of quality alignment between early care and education curricula and expectations for kindergarten readiness (p. 46).</li> <li>• Insufficient policy development, legislation, and a lack of transparency in the state budget, which impede the progress of all facets of the early care and education system (p. 49-50).</li> <li>• Inconsistent and/or incoherent messaging within the field and externally to the public, making it difficult to attract media attention and establish universal policy goals (p. 58).</li> <li>• Societal factors such as poverty, systemic racism, sexism, and economic segregation (p. 59).</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public perception that early care and education should be the concern of individual families, not society, and that it is unskilled work (p. 60).</li> </ul>
Smith, Tracey, Campbell, & Pluta-Ehlers, 2018	<i>Creating an Integrated Efficient Early Care and Education System to Support Children and Families: A State-by-State Analysis</i>	Scoring system evaluating states on their delivery and organization of early care and education services	<p>California ranked 12<sup>th</sup> among all states.</p> <p>States that scored higher in the ranking system had consolidated program administration, functioning state advisory councils, and had implemented a state quality rating and improvement system (p. 7).</p> <p>In most or all of the top 10 scoring states, a single agency administered funds from federal programs as well as administered the state's own programs (p. 7).</p> <p>Recommendations for Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint an independent review board charged with completing a business analysis and developing concrete recommendations for improving early care and education program administration and governance at the state level (p. 8).</li> <li>Conduct hearings and focus groups with families to identify barriers to services (p. 8).</li> <li>Ensure that monitoring efforts are coordinated between child care licensing agencies and child and adult care food program and quality rating and improvement systems, which can improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight (p. 8).</li> <li>Consider implementing a system that assigns each child a unique identifier number at birth or</li> </ul>

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			<p>when the child enters the state's early care and education system. The number would remain with the child over time and across programs or services and key databases, allowing the state to track each child's progress over time and reduce redundant paperwork requirements for children who participate in multiple programs (p. 8).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support or create an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) (p. 8).</li></ul>