



Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment
University of California, Berkeley
2521 Channing Way, #5555
Berkeley, CA 94720
(F)/cscceucb (T)@CSCCEUCB

To: Early Childhood Policy Council- Joint Parent and Workforce Committee
From: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley
Subject: Public Comment Submission for Policy Council Meeting #1
Date: 3/16/2020

We at the [Center for the Study of Child Care Employment](#), University of California, Berkeley are pleased to provide public comment for the Joint Parent and Workforce Committee.

For the past 20 years and counting, we have contributed research and policy analysis about the characteristics of those who care for and educate our young children. This includes the 2006 [California Early Care and Education Workforce Study](#) which provided seminal information about the diversity of the ECE workforce and their levels of educational attainment, the 2008 report on the [Diversity and Stratification of our State's ECE workforce](#), as well as our 2015 [California Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory](#) of the landscape of early childhood degree program offerings. Across our work, we have continued to provide sobering evidence of poor working conditions¹ and unlivable wages for early educators. Our 2018 [Early Childhood Workforce Index](#) found that 58% of child care workers families' were participating in some level of public income support, such as food stamps and TANF programs in our State. Yet, families are being asked to spend so much on child care that it becomes a financial burden².

Given these realities, we are pleased to see the merge of the Parent and Workforce Committees today and hope to see this collaboration continue as historically, the parent and educator communities have met points of contention. The reality is that there are two truths that need to be held and addressed. First, the system is currently subsidized by low teacher salaries, and second, parents cannot afford to pay more for child care. We have a short video, [Who Do Parents Spend So Much on Child Care, Yet Early Childhood Educators Earn So Little?](#) which highlights this tension and illustrates the shared interests in realizing a robust, publicly funded system that works for children, families, and the educators that work with them. We see a real opportunity and accountability for these two committees to advance this shared interest and vision.

¹ Whitebook, M., King, E., Philipp, G., & Sakai, L. (2016). *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

² Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. (2020, March 13). *Why do parents spend so much on child care, yet early childhood educators earn so little?* Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfK8BTX24sQ>

To achieve an early care and education system that is equitable, efficient, and effective for all of California's children, their families and early educators requires a transformation of early childhood policies, infrastructure, and financing and an embrace of early care and education as a public good. This requires that we think beyond the confines of the existing infrastructure and delivery mechanisms to consider what is needed and what is possible, beyond expanding eligibility and funding of the current, disparate system.

To better understand the magnitude of the disparities we all seek to address, there is a dire need for more localized data regarding the issues at hand³. To that end, CSCCE will be launching the [California ECE Workforce Study](#), which is our State's most comprehensive statewide data collection effort since our 2006 study.

These data, along with that of our other reports, are here as a resource of data-driven information to inform your work onward. We aim for our research and analyses, with a particular focus on the ECE workforce, to continue contributing to the policy discourse and disruption of systemic barriers that negatively impact their educational attainment, workplace conditions, economic status, and overall well being.

³ Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E. (2018). The Workforce Data Deficit: Who It Harms and How It Can Be Overcome. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/the-workforce-data-deficit/>