

# UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Report Brief

Prepared by:

**The Early Education Division  
Opportunity for All Branch  
California Department of Education**

**March 2024**

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 185 (Chapter 571, Statutes of 2022),  
which has been codified into *Education Code* Section 8202.6.

**With support from the Glen Price Group**





The science of learning and development has made clear young children are best positioned to reach their full potential when they experience ongoing, language-rich, nurturing, inclusive, and developmentally informed interactions with caring, culturally and linguistically diverse adults and peers. They thrive in environments that foster their curiosity; embrace and affirm their culture, language, race, and community; support their social and emotional development, and guide their learning through intentional, playful experiences from the earliest possible moments.

When Governor Gavin Newsom took office in 2019, he committed to a “California for All”—a California that provides all children with a great start. The Newsom Administration, led by the California Health and Human Services Agency, in collaboration with the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, developed a Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (Master Plan), with a core objective to **promote school readiness through preschool for all three-year-old children experiencing poverty and universally for all four-year-old children**.<sup>1</sup> Achieving this goal requires a dedication to **improving preschool quality** in a way that is child-centered; culturally, linguistically, and racially affirming; inclusive; and that supports playful learning and intentional instruction focused on whole-child development, including cognitive; social and emotional; physical; and math, language, and literacy development.<sup>2</sup> It also requires **increasing access to these learning experiences, including through a mixed-delivery approach**.

## Background: UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup

The California State Legislature established the Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup (the Workgroup), directing the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the California Department of Education (CDE), in consultation with state partners, to convene interest holders to make recommendations related to preschool quality and access, pursuant to Assembly Bill 185 (now codified into *Education Code (EC)* Section 8202.6.)

The Legislature focused the scope of the Workgroup on preschool-aged children and the education quality standards and the regulations that are developed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction based on the statutory authority found in *EC* Section 8203. This Workgroup was charged with:

1. Providing recommendations on best practices for increasing access to high-quality universal preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children offered through a mixed-delivery model that provides equitable learning experiences across a variety of settings.

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<sup>1</sup> To access the Master Plan, see: California Health and Human Services Agency. 2020. Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for All Kids. Sacramento, CA: California Health and Human Services Agency. <https://californiaforallkids.chhs.ca.gov/home>.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the definition of inclusion provided by the U.S. Department of Education, creating a high-quality inclusive learning environment for preschool children necessitates considering their individual learning needs and acknowledging that what constitutes an inclusive learning environment may differ as children have varying needs.

2. Providing recommendations to update preschool standards pursuant to *EC* Section 8203 to support equitable access to high-quality preschool and TK programs through the mixed-delivery model and across all appropriate settings and funding sources.
3. Ensuring recommendations align with the work of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, without recommending new system changes that create increased state or local costs to offer preschool across the mixed-delivery system.

The Workgroup’s scope did not include all early learning and care programs across California’s broad mixed-delivery system. Instead the Workgroup was charged with recommending changes to *EC* Section 8203 to improve preschool quality and for making recommendations to increase access to UPK more generally. High-quality UPK includes Head Start, TK, and preschool programs pursuant to *EC* Section 8320 that provide learning experiences, coordinated services, and referrals for families to access health and social–emotional support services, and that meet indicators of quality determined by the Superintendent pursuant to *EC* Section 8203. It also includes the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) inclusive of Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs) operating through a Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN).

The Workgroup held 12 public meetings from January 2023 through February 2024 and learned from an impressive group of presenters, including over 35 practitioners, experts, and researchers. More than 25 memos and briefs were developed to inform this process. The Workgroup process uplifted the voices of hundreds of parents, through surveys, focus groups, and video panels. While advising the CDE, Workgroup members and members of the public had opportunities to inform the full report through three public surveys. The Workgroup received over 275 public comments, and recommendations were vetted with over 800 preschool educators and administrators.

The full UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Report summarizes the substantial body of research that supports the long-term learning benefits for children of attending high-quality preschool, the evidence that key program quality elements correlate with improved child outcomes, and that the dosage of experiences matters. It also provides a summary of family perspectives on elements of quality and access. The report provides recommendations for preschool quality standards, recommendations for preschool access, recommendations at the intersection of both quality and access, and other considerations. This brief summarizes those recommendations.

PHOTO BY DREW BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

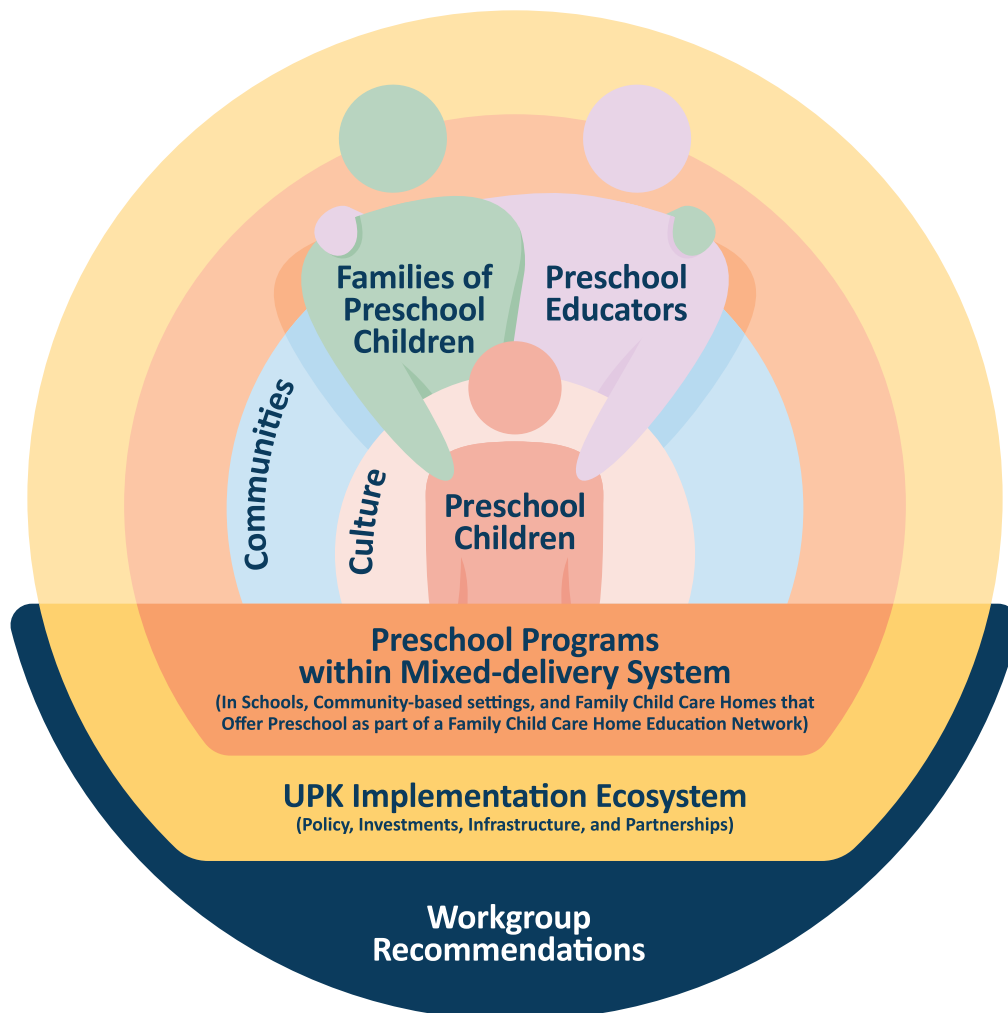




## Applying a Child-Centered Framework

The Workgroup coalesced around an understanding that high-quality preschool experiences, by definition, require a child-centered approach. A child-centered approach emphasizes the child and their holistic development as a fundamental driver of the learning process. The workgroup recognized that although its recommendations were directed at the outer layers of influence on children’s development (See Graphic 1, specifically the *Preschool Programs within the Mixed-Delivery System* layer and the *UPK Implementation Ecosystem* layer), the interplay of their recommendations on the context of children’s communities, culture, families and educators is critically important to child outcomes.

**Graphic 1: Child-Centered Framework**

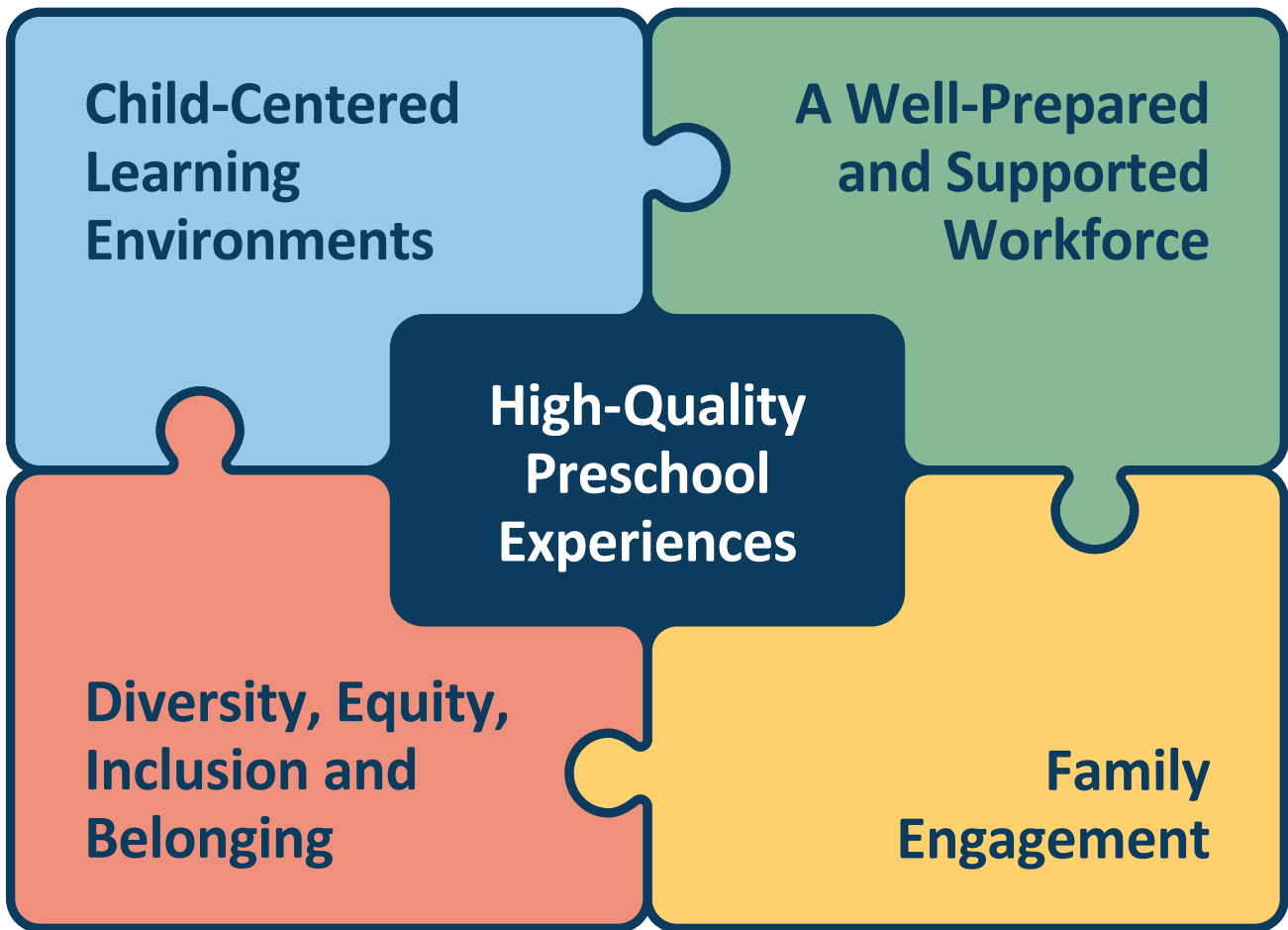


# Unpacking the Importance of High-Quality Preschool

There is significant evidence for the positive effects of high-quality preschool participation on children and for society.<sup>3</sup> Even stronger outcomes have been found for children experiencing poverty. High-quality programs should be defined by core elements that have been linked to improvement in child outcomes and promising practices that support equitable and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Evidence also suggests that to achieve the outcomes described above, preschool programs, regardless of the setting in which they operate, require programmatic support to implement high-quality early learning opportunities. Such support—including ongoing professional learning, coaching, and continuous improvement efforts—is especially critical for implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum and play-based learning experiences that nurture each child’s early development.<sup>4</sup>

**Graphic 2: Framework for Quality**



<sup>3</sup> Schweinhart, Lawrence J., and David P. Wikart. 1980. *Young Children Grow Up: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 15*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> Bredekamp, Sue, and Carol Copple. 1997. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*. Revised Edition. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## What the Research Says on Quality:

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging:** Children must have equitable access to high-quality early learning experiences that meet their developmental needs, are culturally, linguistically, and racially affirming, and support their overall sense of belonging.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Families are children’s first and most important teachers. Families’ knowledge of child development, attitudes about parenting, and parenting practices are associated with positive child outcomes across developmental domains.<sup>5</sup> Preschool programs that proactively partner with parents and the community more effectively promote children’s learning.
- **A Child-Centered Learning Environment:** Children learn best in a safe, inclusive and language-rich environment that provides intentional learning opportunities to support their development. Play, within the context of these intentional and scaffolded learning opportunities, directly supports children’s learning and development across cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains.<sup>6</sup> High-quality curriculum with a specific scope and sequence across math, language, and literacy benefits children’s school readiness.
- **Well-Prepared and Supported Educators:** Children thrive in the context of warm, nurturing, and stable relationships with adults.<sup>7</sup> The ability of preschool educators to establish strong and supportive relationships with every child they serve is critical to providing a high-quality early learning experience across all settings within the mixed-delivery system.



## What California Families Say about Quality

Recognizing the importance of family perspectives and lived experiences, the Workgroup uplifted family voice throughout its process, both directly through a panel of family members and through focus groups, interviews, and surveys of families.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging:** Families value a nurturing learning environment that respects their children’s cultural background, language, and ability or exceptional needs. As such, families emphasize that programs should use culturally, linguistically, racially, and ability-affirming practices that are free from bias.<sup>8</sup> Families also value language access and support and uplifted the importance of access to services that support children with disabilities across settings.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Families shared the need to be informed about their preschool options. Once enrolled, families have a desire for frequent and ongoing communication in relation to their children’s safety, progress, and development.<sup>9</sup>
- **A Child-Centered Learning Environment:** Families consistently highlight physical and psychological safety as their first consideration, along with the importance of responsive and individualized attention for their children. Families also value environments and educators that support play-based learning experiences that promote the development of early math and literacy skills that prepare children for success in school.

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<sup>5</sup> Stipek et al., “Defining Child-Centered Quality.”

<sup>6</sup> Brooks, Jennifer, Chrisanne Gayl, and Ellen Roche. 2023. “California Title 5 Preschool Standards: Analysis and Recommendations Regarding Quality Evidence.” Memo developed for the UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NQPSXVmn4HXe7eL-V08J-sZicNGyTDF0/view>.

<sup>7</sup> Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2016. “From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/from-best-practices-to-breakthrough-impacts>.

<sup>8</sup> Catalyst California. 2023. “CDE UPK Workgroup Memo (February and April 2023).” Memo developed for the UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UoEvxcQK3PrK4TXl9lhqaShrgwBMYB5v/view>.

<sup>9</sup> Catalyst California, “CDE UPK Workgroup Memo.”

- **Well-prepared and Supported Educators:** For many families, the expertise and training of preschool educators are synonymous with high-quality across mixed-delivery settings. Families value educators with training and necessary pedagogical experience to provide play-based and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for their children.<sup>10</sup> Families also valued traits related to relationship building and creating a comfortable learning environment.

## Unpacking the Importance of a Mixed Delivery System

Research suggests that increasing the number of options families have for preschool programs across mixed-delivery settings helps meet their needs.<sup>11</sup> Research is also clear that different programs across the mixed-delivery system can provide high-quality learning opportunities when they are provided with intentional support to implement evidence-based quality standards associated with improved child outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

Families want access to “affordable, quality early learning and care that provides the full hours of care needed, meets basic needs, and offers programmatic support for specific young child populations.”<sup>13</sup> Core components that parents may consider when choosing settings for their child include distance and proximity, safety of setting, transportation options, costs, supports, and the quality of the program, such as educator qualifications and positive learning environments.<sup>14</sup>

Without authentic choice, families engage in trade-offs when selecting the setting for their children. Families may desire specific program elements such as low teacher-to-child ratios, multilingual capacity, and representation of diverse populations in settings. At times, those preferences may be incompatible with other considerations like setting, hours of program operation, proximity to home, or availability at all.<sup>15</sup> The historical evolution of early learning and care systems currently affects children’s and families’ sense of belonging and the extent to which children and families have equitable and authentic access to high-quality preschool experiences across settings.

Increasing access to quality early childhood programs can have an immediate impact on children’s school readiness skills, such as social–emotional development, language, literacy, and mathematics.



<sup>10</sup> Catalyst California. “CDE UPK Workgroup Memo.”

<sup>11</sup> Bipartisan Policy Center. 2021. “Building Bipartisan Support for Childcare Toolkit: 2021 Update.” Washington, DC: Bipartisan Policy Center. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/BPC-Child-Care-Toolkit.April-2021.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Weiland, Christina, Meghan McCormick, Jennifer Duer, Allison Friedman-Kraus, Mirjana Pralica, Samantha Xia, Milagros Nores, and Shira Mattera. 2022. “Mixed Delivery Public Prekindergarten: Differences in Demographics, Quality, and Children’s Gains in Community-Based Versus Public School Programs Across Five Large-Scale Systems.” *EdWorkingPaper*: 22-651.

<sup>13</sup> Catalyst California. “CDE UPK Workgroup Memo.”

<sup>14</sup> Parent Institute for Quality Education. “Family Perspectives Towards Universal Pre-K.”

<sup>15</sup> Child Trends. 2023. “Identifying Families’ Needs and Preferences and Their Barriers to Accessing Preschool.” Materials developed for UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AarSRct7D5qd3Y9RqsDMEWupO2IFQCeT/view>.

# Recommendations

Recommendations found in the UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access report are presented through the following organizational structure:

- **Recommendations for Preschool Quality Standards:** Specific proposed changes or additions Title 5 of the *California Code of Regulations* (5 CCR) associated with EC Section 8203.
- **Recommendations for Preschool Access:** Recommendations on increasing access to high-quality universal preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children offered through a mixed-delivery model.
- **Recommendations for Both Quality and Access:** Recommendations that pertain to both increasing quality and access and reflect the interconnected nature of these issues.
- **Other Considerations:** Approaches for increasing access to high-quality preschool through a mixed-delivery system that will require additional funding and should be prioritized if funding becomes available.

Unless otherwise stated, recommendations can be acted upon by the CDE through the regulatory process, through administrative changes, and by building on the progress made by the Workgroup and through the materials developed by experts that contributed to the Workgroup and to the overall scope of the report.<sup>16</sup> This brief includes top-line recommendations from the report, but does not include all recommendation details or content related to implementation considerations. These details can be found in the full report.

## Preschool Quality Standards Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations pertaining to the Workgroup’s charge, as outlined in EC Section 8202.6, to “provide recommendations to update preschool standards pursuant to EC Section 8203.” The changes recommended in this section would apply to all programs required to meet preschool standards pursuant to EC Section 8203, including home-based California State Preschool Programs (CSPPs) operated through a FCCHEN.

- Include definitions of the following terms: “Comprehensive learning approach,” “Curriculum,” “Instructional materials,” and “Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF).”
- Make changes to include teachers in the regular update of program philosophy, goals, and objectives that support cultural and linguistic affirmation and multilingualism, and equitable child development and school readiness outcomes.
- Create a new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging section to define Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging within the context of quality standards and the needs of California’s preschoolers.
- Add language to require programs to articulate an approach to guiding and promoting positive behavior that is culturally, linguistically, and racially affirming and focuses on the social–emotional development of children.
- Add facilitating family connections and community building as a required component of family engagement and strengthening.
- Define goals to better survey family engagement and sense of belonging.
- Amend language to require teachers to use results from the DRDP to guide learning, inform instructional strategies, and design environments to support developmental progress for all children, and to support progress toward individual education program (IEP) goals for children with IEPs.
- Require programs to adopt an evidence-based curriculum that is aligned with the PTKLF and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP).

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<sup>16</sup> Materials developed in service of the Workgroup scope and charge will continue to be noticed publicly and be posted on the Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Workgroup site on California Educators Together website: <https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/groups/bzsgmy7y/upk-mixed-delivery-quality-and-access-workgroup>.



- Include support for home language in the list of ways programs must provide for the development of each child’s cognitive and language skills.
- Add language to ensure all programs schedules provide a balance of structure and flexibility with opportunities for a variety of play activities.
- Specify a group size cap of 24. *(To the extent that programs are not currently operating at this group size cap, such a cap would need to be achieved within existing contract funds.)*
- Create a new section called Instructional Materials and Environment to Support Learning. This section would include language stipulating that children from all backgrounds and of all abilities shall have access to both indoor and outdoor learning environments including opportunities for napping and rest, and developmentally appropriate materials.
- Clarify how alternative self-evaluation reports required by other agencies can be submitted to the CDE and the process for monitoring such reports.
- Include that staff professional learning should be aligned with the PTKLE, in addition to the DRDP.

## II.C Intersectionality of Quality and Access

This section includes recommendations to increase both quality of and access to high-quality preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children offered through a mixed-delivery model.

### Support Quality and Access by Increasing the Number of High-Quality Preschool Programs

- Establish pathways for prospective UPK programs to meet and regularly verify meeting preschool quality standards with a specific focus on increasing the number and capacity of programs.
- Provide pathways for FCCHs to join FCCHENs.
- Provide best practice recommendations and technical assistance for high-quality preschool programs wishing to begin or expand dual language immersion programs.<sup>17</sup>
- Share information and encourage LEAs to utilize Title I, Part A funding to increase preschool quality and access.<sup>18</sup>

### Support Quality and Access by Improving Quality Improvement and Communications Infrastructure

- Implement changes to define and clarify a day of operation as inclusive of professional development.
- Update CSPP Program Quality Standards to clarify the role of FCCHENs.
- Ensure CDE monitoring staff who work with FCCHENs are knowledgeable about the unique strengths and needs of FCCH providers.
- Analyze the statutory roles of entities within local early learning and care infrastructure to identify potential changes needed to ensure coordinated and linguistically responsive outreach, training, and technical assistance for prospective and existing UPK programs.
- Develop a language justice plan to inform CDE communications efforts related to UPK quality and access.
- Continue to cultivate cross-sector collaboration, through the UPK Planning and Implementation Grant, local UPK Mixed Delivery Planning grants, and in partnership with other early learning and care infrastructure and TK-12.

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<sup>17</sup> Dual language immersion programs provide integrated language learning and academic instruction for native speakers of English and native speakers of another language, with the goals of high academic achievement, first and second language proficiency, and cross-cultural understanding.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Education. 2024. *Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended*. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2024/02/Title-I-Preschool-Early-Learning-Guidance-Revised-2023-FINAL.pdf>.

### Support Quality and Access by Cultivating Belonging

- Build capacity through training for CDE staff working with UPK programs on culturally, linguistically, and racially affirming practices, and practices that support belonging.
- Provide technical assistance and guidance on cultural and linguistic responsiveness and implicit bias for all UPK trainers, observers, coaches, and coordinators, and for FCCHEN administrators.
- Collaborate with Tribal CSPP, the Tribal Child Care Association of California, tribal childcare programs funded by the federal Child Care and Development Fund, and Tribal Head Start programs, to learn from the unique strengths of these programs and to better understand the needs of tribal children.
- Celebrate multiculturalism and multilingualism by honoring the diversity of California preschool educators through annual recognition of Preschool Educators Appreciation Day.
- Explore waivers to address workforce criteria to better support Indigenous language revitalization and immersion.
- Provide best practice recommendations related to supporting age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate foods and meal service options.

### Support Quality and Access through Transparent and Disaggregated Data

- Develop annual, publicly available UPK factsheets with information on access to and outcomes from high-quality publicly funded preschool programs.<sup>19</sup>
- Share factsheets with the public, the Legislature, and state agency partners, highlighting any identified disparities. Use the information from the factsheets to inform direct impact indicators, as specified in *EC* Section 8263.

### Support Quality and Access by Supporting New Administrators

- Partner internally and externally to create training modules and provide technical assistance for new CSPP contractors and new CSPP administrators.
- Explore mechanisms to ensure elementary school principals overseeing UPK programs have training in early childhood and in supporting and promoting inclusive and affirming settings, including trauma-informed and positive discipline practices.
- Uplift to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) how current requirements of the Administrative Services Credential preclude early childhood education staff, many of whom have knowledge of child development and experience in preschool programs with monitored preschool program standards from having overseen TK, CSPP, and Head Start teachers. Elevate potential changes that may allow more individuals with preschool teaching and administration experience to obtain the Administrative Services Credential.



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<sup>19</sup> The data would ideally be aligned with the Early Childhood Integrated Data System, the Cradle-to-Career Data System, and other similar data systems.

## Preschool Access Recommendations

This section includes recommendations to increase access to high-quality preschool programs for three- and four-year-old children offered through a mixed-delivery model, including TK.

### Recommendations to Increase Access to Preschool Programs that Support Child Development

- Provide additional guidance to accelerate inclusion in preschool programs.<sup>20</sup>
- Support the coordination of special education and related services among agencies supporting children with disabilities at the local, regional, and state level to create more inclusive programs and better serve children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, as determined appropriate by the IEP Team.<sup>21</sup>
- Provide best practices and technical assistance to encourage the workforce to utilize the Universal Design for Learning framework for proactively addressing the needs of diverse and exceptional learners.
- Provide guidance on the current allowable use of funds for transportation for children with disabilities, including allowable costs of transporting children to and from home and the preschool program, and between the preschool program and other early learning and care settings.
- Assess existing workforce development funding sources and recommend changes to ensure funding can be used for preschool educators to earn college credits.<sup>22</sup>
- Encourage the CTC to review reciprocity rules for the Child Development Permit and other early education credentials, with a goal of increasing the number of qualified UPK educators in California.
- Uplift best practices in implementing Career Technical Education pathways to obtain a Child Development Permit.
- Work with the resource and outreach centers at the California Schools for the Deaf through the California Department of Education's State Special Schools and Services Division to increase preschool access for deaf and hard of hearing children.

### Recommendations for Increasing Access to Preschool Programs that Meet Family Needs, Including Cost and Reasonable Effort to Enroll and Attend

- Implement a continuous improvement process within the Early Education Division at CDE to award CSPP contracts to a wider array of providers more efficiently.
- Support better connections and coordination across UPK programs and other programs, early learning and care infrastructure, and TK-12 infrastructure serving children and families from birth through third grade.<sup>23</sup>
- Develop and communicate guidance to inform prospective and existing UPK programs about current flexibilities available to serve children in mixed-income settings.

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<sup>20</sup> In November of 2023, the Administration of Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, released a "Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs" reaffirming that all young children with disabilities should have access to high-quality inclusive early childhood programs that provide individualized and appropriate support so they can fully participate alongside their peers without disabilities and achieve their full potential. See: Office of Early Childhood Development. 2023. "Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs." <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/policy-guidance/policy-statement-inclusion-children-disability-early-childhood-programs>.

<sup>21</sup> A As stated in the Special Factors section of the IDEA, Part B, Section 614(d)(3)(B)(iv), the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team shall

Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode.

<sup>22</sup> Existing workforce development funding sources may include, but are not limited to, those described in the California Department of Education and Commission on Teacher Credentialing's jointly developed "Universal PreKindergarten Teacher Pipeline Resource Compendium."

<sup>23</sup> Early learning and care infrastructure includes Resource and referral agencies, local childcare planning councils, Alternative Payment organizations, etc. TK-12 infrastructure includes Statewide System of Support Geographic Lead Agencies and County Offices of Education.

- Collaborate with CDSS to assess the impact of abandonment of care policies on currently enrolled families, families who are on waiting lists to enroll, and on program implementation and funding and make regulatory adjustments in alignment with findings.
- Improve data collection efforts related to the UPK P&I Grant and the UPK Mixed Delivery Planning Grant and use this data to improve guidance and build stronger local connections between LEAs and early learning and care infrastructure.
- Analyze which aspects of the CSPP application and enrollment process are most difficult for families to complete and revise the requirements to streamline the process and minimize burden on families. Provide comprehensive technical assistance on the revised process to CSPP contractors and relevant early learning and care infrastructure entities.
- Analyze which aspects of the TK enrollment process are most difficult for families to navigate and share best practices with LEAs for how to build awareness, streamline the process, and minimize burden on families.
- Encourage community schools serving elementary grades to focus on supporting expanded access to high-quality UPK programs through a mixed-delivery model.<sup>24</sup>
- Continue to develop guidance and communicate widely on the existing ways the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) funding can be used to serve children enrolled in TK in other early education and care programs, inclusive of CSPP and Head Start, to create full-day learning opportunities that are developmentally informed and supportive of children’s and families’ needs.



<sup>24</sup> A community school is a public school that serves preschool through grade twelve and has community partnerships that support improved academic outcomes, whole-child engagement, and family development. Community school partnership strategies include integrated support services, extended learning time, and collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators. See: California Department of Education. 2022. Community Schools. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/ts-communityschools.asp>.

## II.E Other Considerations

This section provides a prioritized list of issues and approaches that could be considered if funding becomes available in the future. Based on Workgroup discussions and public comment, these recommendations have been identified as critical strategies for improving quality and access. Achieving these recommendations will require additional investment, partnerships, and in some cases, may require new statutory authority or changes to existing statutory authority.

1. Support prospective UPK programs with pathways to contract with, or be recognized by, the state through technical assistance and expanded funding as it becomes available, prioritizing areas where there are gaps in access.
2. Support access to CSPP provided by FCCHs operating within a FCCHEN by including prioritization of FCCHEN services in future CSPP expansion funding in areas of the state with a low supply of preschool programs or under enrollment of eligible families in CSPP who may prefer preschool program services offered in an FCCH setting.
3. Support access to dual language immersion programs by ensuring CSPP programs can apply for any future dual language immersion investments in the state education budget and by including prioritization of dual language immersion programs in future CSPP expansion funding.
4. Revise and expand the CSPP Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant to support all CSPPs, reflecting CSPP expansion since 2012 and annual cost of living adjustments.
5. Strengthen P—3 alignment by revising the CSPP QRIS Block Grant to support joint professional learning with educators from TK programs, and Head Start programs as applicable and promoting approaches that support LEAs in considering the role of CSPP and TK in their strategic planning and goal setting for student outcomes.
6. Update CSPP teacher requirements, either through statutory change or changes to the CTC’s Child Development Permit requirements, to reflect the intent of the Administration’s Master Plan recommendations and require educators in preschool classrooms, including those operated by an FCCH in a FCCHEN, to meet the following minimum qualifications:
  - a. Lead teachers have a minimum of an Associate of Arts (AA) degree with an Early Childhood Education (ECE) specialization.
  - b. The second adult, and, if applicable, the third adult in the CSPP that is not the lead teacher has a minimum of the Associate Teacher Permit (12 units of ECE).



*Note: A Child Development Permit is considered a property right of the holder. All permits authorized before any potential changes to the permit requirements would still be valid to the permit holder as long as the permit holder continues to meet the requirements for renewal of that Permit. Current holders of a valid Child Development Permit would not be required to “transition” to these new standards or requirements, unless otherwise changed in statute.*

7. Provide flexibility on program ratios and group sizes:
  - a. For programs to implement a 1:8 ratio with a group size cap of 24, or a 1:10 ratio with a group size cap of 20, for classrooms that serve a majority of four-year-olds. Adjust other parameters (for example, napping) as needed.<sup>25</sup>
  - b. For programs operating classrooms that serve a majority of three-year-old children to implement a group size of 17 with one teacher and one additional adult.

*Note: Only implement recommendations 6 if updates are made to CSPP teacher requirements to require lead teachers have a minimum of an Associate of Arts (AA) degree with an Early Childhood Education specialization and to require the second adult in the CSPP who is not the lead teacher has a minimum of the Associate Teacher Permit (12 units of ECE). (See Recommendation 6)*

8. Align the use of the three-year-old adjustment factor with the statutory definition of three-year-old as found in EC Section 8205, allowing programs to access the adjustment factor for the entire school year that the three-year-old is enrolled.<sup>26</sup>
9. Explore the appropriate requirements for staff in local educational agencies (LEAs) and FCCHENs that oversee UPK programs to ensure adequate familiarity with the needs of preschool-age children and their families and educators.
10. Provide financial incentives and invest in effective models for professionals to achieve permits, credentials, and degrees, and to progress along leadership pathways. Incentives could include scholarships or other financial aid, stipends, and resources to pay substitutes; effective models could include apprenticeships, other “earn and learn” programs, and models that offer online instruction or opportunities for evening and weekend coursework.<sup>27</sup>
11. Collaborate with the CTC and institutions of higher education to explore flexible, cost-effective, culturally, linguistically, and racially affirming ways to measure early educator competencies and acknowledge expertise.
12. Work across state agencies to streamline the eligibility and enrollment process to make it easier for families to choose and enroll in their preferred program.
13. Require the CDE to assign a unique identifier to CSPP preschoolers, as well as to educators in CBOs and FCCHENs, and collect data that is comparable to data collected on CSPP and TK students and educators in LEAs. Use this data to publicly report on preschool access and quality across all settings.
14. Provide a tiered structure of support for implementing anti-bias and anti-racist practices with (1) technical assistance to UPK programs on anti-racist and anti-bias practices, (2) use of the Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale (ACSES), or a similar tool, to provide individualized technical assistance to UPK programs on equitable teacher-child interactions with racially minoritized children, and (3) continuous quality improvement with ongoing observation, reflection, and technical assistance for UPK programs to implement anti-racist and anti-bias practices using the ACSES tool, or a similar observation tool.
15. Require the CDE to develop a system to collect and integrate data in ways that can inform efforts to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, including collecting data on the use of federal Title I funding for preschool.
16. Expand and extend funding for the UPK P&I Grant and require the designation of a UPK Coordinator role housed at county offices of education. Allow UPK Coordinators to serve a single county or a consortium of counties, as necessary based on local need. Additional funding should support capacity building and technical assistance for UPK Coordinators and support for UPK Coordinators to collaborate with local birth to age twelve systems.

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<sup>25</sup> Programs should consider special education enrollment and impact of caseloads when establishing adult to child ratios.

<sup>26</sup> Currently, programs get an “adjustment factor” of 80 percent more than the daily reimbursement rate for children age 47 months or younger. However, programs cease getting this benefit on the child’s fourth birthday, even if it is the child’s first year in CSPP and they are considered to be a three-year-old child based on the statutory definition.

<sup>27</sup> “Earn and learn” programs are those in which preschool educators experience learning and preparation while also engaging in paid work in early learning and care programs.

17. Advance legislation and increase investments in Shared Services Networks that can support small center- and home-based preschool programs to offer pedagogical and professional learning supports that are aligned with positive child-outcomes and offer business services to support program and provider stability.<sup>28</sup>
18. Provide a separate allocation for California’s Schools for the Deaf and Blind Early Start Education to operate preschool programs, such as CSPP.

## Conclusion

The recommendations found in the full report present additional details, a thorough set of strategies for implementation, and longer-term priorities for advancing preschool quality and access. Implementation of these recommendations will require time as the CDE looks for possible opportunities to integrate these recommendations into existing work. Implementation of these recommendations could be accelerated if prioritized and funded by the Legislature. Philanthropic or other partners could work also with the CDE to accelerate or enhance action on specific recommendations.

Enacting the recommendations outlined in this process, if fully implemented and ultimately supported with future funding, would establish California as a national leader in delivering high-quality UPK through a mixed-delivery approach and would ensure all families in California have more genuine access to and choices among programs that both support their children to thrive and meet their families’ needs.

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<sup>28</sup> Shared Service Networks are developed to “strengthen small early learning and care businesses by supporting them to become more financially sound and more efficient, which allows them to offer cost-effective and high-quality early learning and care opportunities to children and families.” See: First 5 California. 2021. “Request for Applications: Shared Services Alliance Pilot for Early Learning and Care.” <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PZCcyeUqqK9Sxhy39wK9HNkwBSMQCO2S/view>.



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“History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children.”

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Prepared by:

**The Early Education Division Opportunity for All Branch**  
**California Department of Education**  
with support from the Glen Price Group

