

A Call to Fully Fund California's Early Learning and Care Mixed-Delivery System during a Constrained Budget Year

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Early Edge recognizes that even in a constrained budget year, investing in California's children, families, and providers must remain a top priority. We thank Governor Newsom for his leadership on behalf of children over the years, including establishing and funding the country's largest universal prekindergarten program through the full implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK) and continued funding of the State Preschool Program.



Early Edge California

To truly support families and ensure every child has access to high-quality Early Learning and Care, California must invest in the entire mixed-delivery system, including programs for infants and toddlers. This includes funding additional subsidized child care slots to address the state's unmet need and ensuring providers are compensated at a just, livable wage that reflects the true cost of care, so high-quality programs can remain available and sustainable across California.

Some key highlights from the Governor's [proposed state budget for 2026-27](#) related to investments in Early Learning and Care in California include:

Child Care:

- \$89.1 million ongoing General Fund for a Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) for child care programs administered by the Department of Social Services
- Inconsistent with state law, no funding is included for the previously planned 44,000 subsidized child care slots for the 2026-27 fiscal year

Transitional Kindergarten:

- \$228.2 million ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund for a COLA adjustment of 2.41 percent
- \$2.8 billion discretionary block grant to support various statewide education priorities, including professional development for TK teachers and site administrators on the principles and guidelines of developmentally appropriate TK instruction

- Transitions oversight authority of the Department of Education from the State Superintendent to the Governor and the State Board of Education

In 2026, families and providers are already facing attacks on child care from federal policies that threaten access and stability. In these current times, with families being left without access to care and providers experiencing further strain in supporting California's working families, the need for fulfilling the investment in the additional subsidized child care slots is even more dire.

"This is not the time to step back from California's children, but to build on the state's strong leadership and prior investments. With federal policies threatening child care stability, California must continue to lead by fully funding its commitments to children, families, and the Early Learning and Care workforce," says Patricia Lozano, Executive Director, Early Edge California.

We will continue to work with our partners and state leaders to see the promise of these additional subsidized child care slots fulfilled and providers earn a just and livable wage through the implementation of rate reform.

Joanna Cole
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