

San Francisco Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education - Executive Summary

Introduction

San Francisco is a City that has long valued and prioritized the availability of equal opportunities for all of its citizens, including its youngest -- children aged birth to five -- regardless of ethnic, cultural or socio-economic background. Proposition C establishes that it is a goal of the City and County of San Francisco to “provide all children between the ages of three and five years who are City residents the opportunity to attend quality early education programs, giving priority to four year old children”, and expands the scope of our Public Education and Enrichment Fund ("PEEF") as potentially available for services for children birth to three years old. To this end, this Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education presents a basic roadmap for aligning and improving early childhood services across the City beginning in 2016.

Proposition C also created the Our Children, Our Families Council to recommend priorities, program goals, and best practices for meeting the needs of children and families in San Francisco. This advisory group is tasked with preparing and adopting a citywide plan every five years, with a first plan adopted no later than July 1, 2016, including a comprehensive assessment of City policies and programs that address the needs of children and families in San Francisco, and relevant policy recommendations to make those programs and policies more supportive of children and families. This Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education is designed to inform the work of the Our Children Our Families Council as it prioritizes its goals for 0-5 year olds and their families.

In 2013, Mayor Ed Lee established a new San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education, responsible for aligning programs and funding streams to ensure that the City provides high-quality early education programming for children ages zero to five. By coordinating among and consolidating other City early childhood agencies' work -- including that of First 5 San Francisco, the Department of Children Youth and Families, and the Human Services

Agency -- this new Office brings greater efficiency and quality to the early childhood programs and supports in San Francisco; a shared goal of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and the greater San Francisco community.

The Office of Early Care and Education is required to develop a strategic plan and proposal for San Francisco's early care and education system to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors. The OECE Citizens' Advisory Committee, required by ordinance and established in April 2015, is charged with offering expertise in the areas of policy, planning, collaboration and strategic partnerships. In order to develop these recommendations the OECE Citizens' Advisory Committee met 13 times in an 11 month period. In partnership with OECE, First 5 San Francisco and SFUSD staff, and incorporating the input of stakeholder voices as proposed recommendations have been vetted in the community over the past year, the OECE Citizens' Advisory Committee has endorsed the following set of recommendations:

Birth-to-Five Approach

San Francisco will take a birth-to-five approach in order to support all families with children 0-5 years old in accessing high quality early education and care. This approach will be implemented through a data driven system linked to quality standards and improved outcomes for children, while recognizing the developmental needs of children aged 0-5 as reflected in continuous eligibility and continuity of care.

Endorsed Recommendations:

- *Build a citywide ECE system which enables all families with children 0-5 years old to access high quality early education and care.*
- *Develop mechanisms to achieve continuous eligibility and continuity of care for 0-5 year olds.*
- *Ensure SF's ECE system is data driven and linked to quality standards and improved outcomes for all children.*

Racial Equity and Diversity

The City sets out to increase the number and percentage of children who are school-ready as indicated by the appropriate metrics: measures of physical well-being and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches towards learning; communication and language usage; and cognition and general knowledge.

Endorsed Recommendations:

- *Increase the percentage of children who are school-ready as indicated by the Kindergarten Observation Form ("KOF") on measures of physical well-being and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches towards learning; communication and language usage; and cognition and general knowledge.*
- *Target Populations should include: African American Children, Latino Children, Dual Language Learners, Low-Income Children, and Children with Disabilities.*

Quality Improvement

San Francisco will utilize a quality improvement strategy that can be adapted to local needs, involving collaboration between all early childhood agencies and programs in San Francisco. The City's quality improvement strategy builds upon the success of the Preschool for All program and will serve as a framework for all local subsidies.

Endorsed Recommendations:

- *San Francisco will modify/streamline the state's existing QRIS to meet local needs; seeking to increase the flexibility and efficiency of the assessment process based on individual program needs and conditions, in particular for family child care.*
- *San Francisco will require that providers meet a minimum agreed upon quality standard in order to qualify for city subsidies. The City*

will offer resources and support to providers not meeting the minimum standard in order to help them improve their quality.

Family Engagement

The City recognizes the importance of promoting family engagement in young children's learning and development, offering meaningful opportunities for families and institutions to become partners in children's learning, and enabling seamless transitions between early childhood experiences, including between informal and formal child care and early education environments.

Endorsed Recommendations:

- *Include parents as equal partners in their child's development.*
- *Value the culture, language and unique assets of families and reflect that value at the ECE program and ECE system levels.*
- *Ensure access to family support programs which provide information about child development, early care and education and parenting practices; that provide resources and referrals; and that offer peer support.*
- *Incorporate family engagement as an essential component of San Francisco's ECE standards and local QRIS.*
- *Involve families in ECE decision-making at the program and at the citywide levels.*

Professional Development and Workforce

The City will provide support for all early education workforce participants - who reflect the rich diversity of our City - by creating a simplified, flexible, transparent, data-driven and evidence-based approach to professional development; and by working toward compensation on par with that for teachers in K-3 settings.

Endorsed Recommendations:

- ***Strategies to support compensation parity with K-3 are developed and financed.***
 - *Evaluate and improve SF's teacher recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies.*
- ***Develop an early childhood professional development system that addresses the professional development needs of all workforce professionals in all ECE settings: schools, child care centers, family child care, and license exempt care.***
 - *Encourage effective pathways and incentives for new and existing workforce members to advance educationally in the field of early childhood in San Francisco (educational attainment).*
 - *Align local ECE professional development funding and policies to address race, ethnicity and language with the goal of supporting SF's diverse ECE workforce.*
 - *Establish a SF Professional Development System Advisory Committee with cross-sector stakeholders with authority to make policy recommendations for the SF Professional Development System.*
 - *Data systems (CA ECE Workforce Registry, WELS) have aligned workforce data fields, standardized document collection and inform professional development and compensation policy decisions.*

Financing Models

San Francisco will offer a more seamless system for children, families, and providers which effectively makes use of all funding and that includes mechanisms to foster progress towards reaching citywide goals for young children and families.

Endorsed Recommendations:

- *Restructure city funding to ensure a simple and seamless system for children, families, and providers to maximize utilization of federal and state resources. Determine funding based on the cost of providing quality ECE as defined by the local QRIS.*
- *Organize local funding into two categories: direct service supports and system supports.*
- *Streamline system-wide reporting requirements. Utilize one report that combines fiscal accountability and quality assurance (continuous quality improvement) which is aligned to the local QRIS.*
- *Align and integrate the city's system supports and link these supports to the local QRIS in order to ensure supports are fully utilized and achieve expected outcomes.*
- *Increase resources to provide access to high quality ECE to all children 0-5 in San Francisco.*