

## **Guidance on Enrollment Priorities for City-Funded Early Care and Education Programs**

The San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education (OECE) is committed to ensuring all children are ready for kindergarten. We take the stance that in-person educational experiences are essential for young children to develop the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical skills they need to succeed. Children who attend high-quality early care and education (ECE) are better prepared for school and life-long success.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented thousands of young children in San Francisco from attending their early care and education in person since the middle of March 2020. As our ECE system reopens under new group size restrictions and social distancing requirements, capacity constraints could exacerbate racial inequity in early education opportunities and outcomes. OECE requests that its funded programs take action to preserve in-person ECE experiences for children who need it most. As your program enrolls children for the 2020-21 program year, we strongly recommend that you apply the following guidelines to prioritize enrollment for all Early Learning Scholarship and/or Preschool for All spaces. OECE's priorities are aligned with recent City [public health guidance](#) that takes into account structural oppression and aims to focus attention on people experiencing marginalization, systemic inequity, and health inequities.

### **General Provisions**

- In general, we intend for OECE enrollment priorities to apply to new enrollments for ECE spaces only. If you have previously enrolled families, we are not asking you to displace them.
- If you face a situation in which you do not have sufficient space in your program to accommodate all of your previously enrolled families, we ask that you apply the OECE enrollment priorities to identify children most in need of in-person early education.
- If your program is using a mix of in-person and remote learning components, we ask that you apply the OECE enrollment priorities to your in-person program.
- If your program is subject to enrollment priorities attached to federal/state funding/subsidies, then apply those priorities before local priorities.
- Younger siblings of a previously enrolled child may be enrolled before applying the OECE enrollment priorities.
- We ask that you reserve open spaces for children in the OECE enrollment priorities to the extent that your funding from OECE allows.
- OECE is asking that programs make a good faith effort to enroll children from its priority populations, because our community will collectively benefit from your actions. We are not planning to set up monitoring systems or take enforcement actions against programs.

## **Preference for Children in their Pre-Kindergarten Year**

- If you have openings in your program for preschool-age children, we ask that you enroll priority children who will enter kindergarten in the next year before you enroll younger children (i.e., three-year-olds).
- We do not mean that you should stop offering care to infants and toddlers, especially if your program is tailored to meeting their specific care and learning needs.

## **CATEGORY ONE (Top Priority)**

We ask that you grant the following groups top priority for enrollment in in-person ECE, regardless of age (in no particular order):

- Children who are clients of Family and Children's Services (FCS) or are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Children eligible through the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children
- Children experiencing homelessness
- Children of domestic violence survivors

## **CATEGORY TWO (Second Priority)**

We ask that you grant the following groups second priority for enrollment in in-person ECE (in no particular order) before enrolling children outside of these groups:

- Black/African American children
- Latina/o/x children
- Native Americans/Indigenous children
- Pacific Islander children
- Immigrant and undocumented children
- Children with disabilities or special health care needs whose individualized education programs (IEP) and/or individual family support plans (IFSP) include ECE services
- Children from low-income families, including those who receive or are eligible for free or reduced meals, Medi-Cal, SNAP (food stamps), WIC, CalWORKs, and other public assistance programs