



SUMMIT UPDATES CHILD CARE AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

May 5, 2005

CHILD CARE

Nancy Strohl from the Child Care Law Center (CCLC) continues to champion the cause of providing quality child care for low- and middle-income families, the theme that unified her recommendations at the 2005 Summit. In the 2005 session, Strohl and other child care leaders are focusing on the three priority areas established in her Summit recommendations.

In the Governor's budget proposals, Strohl and colleagues are working to

*** Restore the over \$575,000 cut in resources for community care licensing.**

The state's licensing program, responsible for inspections of child care centers, family child care homes, and other licensed providers, has already had sizable cuts; and research from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicates that California has one of the lowest frequencies of inspections among all 50 states.

*** Oppose the significant reduction in reimbursement rates proposed for license-exempt providers.**

Currently, providers that do not have licenses can claim up to 90 percent of the rate provided to Family Child Care facilities, which are licensed. If the budget proposal is enacted and if the license-exempt providers do not pursue additional training, their rates would be reduced to 55% of the Family Child Care ceiling after 90 days. Even if they do pursue training, their maximum rate would be 60 percent of the Family Child Care ceiling. Strohl and others argue that 90 days is not a realistic time frame to develop or pursue training. Most importantly, the reduction of reimbursable rates would mostly affect providers of child care to CalWORKs and other low-income families who, for a variety of reasons – affordability, lack of access to licensed facilities, cultural preference, work schedule – cannot secure or do not prefer licensed care.

*** Oppose cuts in reimbursement rates for licensed child care providers.**

Beginning in 2007, the Governor's budget proposes to establish a tiered quality system that would cut reimbursement rates to the many licensed centers and providers who are paid using the Regional Market Rates. Only those with the highest rating would retain the current payments. Cuts in reimbursement rates would affect quality of service and could force some centers and providers to close their doors.

*** Ensure that providers in the lowest income communities are not penalized with rate cuts.**

The Governor's budget proposes paying a lower rate to licensed providers that serve only subsidized families. Strohl argues that this approach essentially penalizes licensed providers committed to serving in low-income areas, and that they should be paid an equivalent rate to providers serving a mix of both subsidized and private-paying families.

*** Oppose time limits for child care subsidies.**

The Governor has proposed limiting to three years the amount of time that CalWORKs families can receive child care support after transitioning off of cash aid in CalWORKs. Currently, families that exit CalWORKs enter Stage 3 child care, which is available as long as the family's income remains at 75% of the State Median Income. Strohl proposes the continuation of an income test for low-income families to receive child care, not an arbitrary time limit.

Preschool For All

A coalition of leaders (see <http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/>) has introduced a Pre-School for All Initiative, which they are hoping to qualify for the June 2006 ballot.

For more information, see the initiative sponsors' 2-page summary and a set of frequently asked questions and answers.

Federal Issues

CCLC is extremely concerned about the FY 2006 Congressional Budget Resolution compromise that provides the wealthiest Americans with billions in unfunded tax cuts while shrinking funding for vital programs. CCLC also opposes the language in the House TANF Reauthorization Bill (H.R. 240) requiring TANF participants to work additional work hours without providing sufficient funding for child care (it is not certain when action will be taken on Reauthorization). CCLC supports an increase of \$1 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in the FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. For new developments and more information on these issues go to www.nwlc.org or www.cbpp.org

Child Care Legislation

In addition to following up on its Summit priorities, CCLC is also tracking a number of child care bills. Go to "Issues we Address" on the CCLC website at <http://www.childcarelaw.org/>. Available May 16.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

The California School-Age Consortium (CalSAC) used their participation in the Summit to clarify and write-up their goals relating to the implementation of Proposition 49, the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Act, the after-school initiative sponsored in 2002 by now-Governor Schwarzenegger.

Following the Summit, CalSAC organized a Day at the Capitol for After-School on February 16, 2005. Over 200 after-school supporters, from Siskiyou County to San Diego, convened in Sacramento to meet with their legislators, distribute the Summit materials, and advocate for the three proposals identified in the CalSAC Summit materials: change ASES program funding formulas to ensure quality after-school care, define a role for community-based organizations in implementation of Proposition 49, and revise the criteria for measuring ASES Program outcomes. A new coalition, the After-School Policy Forum, has formed to ensure that the after-school community is prepared for the implementation of Proposition 49, which is now expected to occur as early as FY 2006-2007.

Darci Smith, Executive Director of CalSAC, has also been working on several fronts since the Summit, supporting bills and testifying on budget items.

Supporting bills that relax ASES requirements

CalSAC is working with other after-school groups to support **SB 707** (Kehoe) and **SB 638** (Torlakson). Together, these bills would relax some requirements of the ASES Programs. The Kehoe bill would give more flexibility for operating hours, changing the requirement from three hours per day and until at least 6:00 p.m., to 15 hours per week and until 6:00 p.m. The bill also reduces the minimum time for participation in before-school programs (thus opening up the program for children whose parents need morning care for less than the 90 minutes currently mandated), allows reimbursement to grantees for payment lost due to natural disaster, and guarantees 15% of the grant for administrative expenses, untying funding from pupil attendance figures. **SB 638** (Torlakson) would require that training and support provided to ASES programs include the development and distribution of voluntary guidelines for physical activity programs.

Strengthening the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

CalSAC and its partners successfully proposed that **SB 854**, authored by Senator Roy Ashburn, be amended to increase the reimbursement rate for the 21st Century Community Learning Center program from \$5 to \$7.50 per pupil per day. This bill would also create a statewide advisory committee on after school; provide after-school facilities an up-front payment of 40% of their grant to improve service; and provide flexibility during crisis or natural disaster by allowing students to attend alternate sites. At this point in the bill's progress in the Legislature, SB 854, which would increase the draw down of federal dollars, is supported by the Governor.

For updates on CalSAC's policy activities, go to
http://www.calsac.org/news_section.asp?newssectionID=2.

Or sign up for CalSAC's free After-school Policy Updates at:
https://www53.ssldomain.com/calsac/ssl/public/news_signup.asp