

1 CHILD CARE IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY



1.1 CHILD CARE PLANNING IN SACRAMENTO

In 2007, the Sacramento Child Care and Development Planning Council (Council) published the third comprehensive countywide five-year plan for child care in Sacramento County. The context and focus of that plan was growth, of the Sacramento community and of the child care field. In the last five years, the nation has faced a massive economic recession, and Sacramento County has been hit particularly hard.

The 2011 Children's Report Card¹ reported that unemployment was 12.6 percent as of December 2010, and that it had more than doubled since 2005. Both Sacramento County and the state as a whole have an unemployment rate higher than the nation. Of the five occupations expected to have the most job openings (Personal and Home Care Aids, Cashiers, Retail Salespersons, Waiters and Waitresses, and Nursing), four pay a wage that is below the self-sufficiency standard for working families with one parent in the workforce (\$27.74/hour). The number of foreclosures has decreased, however, there were still more than 116 times as many foreclosures in 2009 than there were in 2005. Almost 18 percent of families with children in Sacramento County live below poverty, up from 14 percent in 2007.

The Center for Strategic Economic Research reports that "the continued upward momentum at the statewide and national levels should have a positive effect on economic conditions regionally; however, recovery in the region will likely continue to lag other markets . . ."²

These changes have influenced the nature of child care in the county through both cuts to child care funding and limits on accessibility.

During this same time period the Sacramento e0arly learning community has expanded its efforts to improve the quality of child care and development services. Quality assessment and consultation services for child care and development programs have expanded since 2007. Planning has continued, with leadership from the Sacramento County Office of

Education and the Sacramento First 5 Commission, to develop community based, integrated models for preschool services that ensure school readiness and successful transition to Kindergarten.

This plan, the fourth in Sacramento County, summarizes these changes, and looks ahead, toward economic recovery and the eventual increase in demand, the rebuilding of our child care supply system, and a continuation of the planning and shaping of the systems that support child care services within our region.

The 2012 Child Care Plan explores five components of the child care delivery system in Sacramento County. Section 1, Child Care in Sacramento County, describes the public/private system of care that regulates and funds child care and development services for more than 55,000 children between birth and the age of thirteen. Section 2, The Child Care Consumer, describes the needs and desires of the population that uses child care services. Section 3, Child Care Supply and Demand, documents the current needs of the child care consumer and capacity of the existing supply to meet those needs. Section 4, Early Learning Workforce Development and Training, describes the educational systems in Sacramento County that support the development of a skilled early learning workforce. Section 5, Building Excellence In Child Care, describes the programs in place that support the development of a quality child care workforce and delivery system.

1.2 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since the 2007-2012 Child Care Plan, a number of developments have emerged which have impacted child care services in Sacramento County.

■ Cuts to Child Care Funding

Recent years have seen a reduction of child care services across California and Sacramento County. More than \$300 million in funding for child care programs was eliminated in the California State budget for the fiscal year 2011-2012. Another \$23 million of mid-year reductions to state child care programs are scheduled to be instituted due to lower than expected tax revenues as of December 2011.³

In Sacramento County there has been a reduction of \$31.4 million in funding for child care services since 2007. These cuts represent a significant loss in funding for early childhood programs, making it more difficult for families to access child care services and for child care providers to care for children receiving child care subsidies. These issues are discussed in more depth in Section 1.9 of this report.

■ Expansion of Quality Initiatives

- In 2010, the First 5 California Commission approved funding for CARES Plus for three years (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013). CARES Plus was built upon the positive impact of the original CARES Program. The “Plus” represents an enhancement of earlier CARES components, such as a strong focus on outcomes and accountability, an expansion of the CARES Database to an Early Learning Workforce Registry, and expanding the Higher Education Plans to Higher Education Quality Pathway Partnerships. In Sacramento County, CARES Plus was integrated into the existing Preschool Bridging Model (PBM), now called PBM Plus. PBM Plus participants learn new ways to support children’s early learning with a special emphasis on their social-emotional development using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
- The Sacramento County Office of Education’s Early Learning Website (<http://www.sacramentocountyearlylearning.org/>) provides a centralized portal to access research-based, innovative, promising practices and resources to support high-quality early care and education programs, school readiness, and positive transitions to kindergarten. The website also connects parents with child development information and local resources to support their child’s care and education.

■ Preschool Planning Initiatives

- The Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools

Preschool Committee facilitates communication, collaboration, and coordinated planning for expansion of high quality preschool in Sacramento County. Committee members represent a breadth of public and private organizations that impact the early care and education field. The committee developed the 2010-2015 Sacramento County Preschool Plan, which outlines the goals and implementation strategies for five major areas encompassing programs, family engagement, workforce development, facilities, and funding. This plan is a five-year action plan that provides clear goals focused on excellence and equity in order to promote school readiness and narrow the achievement gap in Sacramento County.

- Preschool Leadership Institute coordinated a series of leadership development and networking experiences for preschool directors and managers that focused upon providing effective and inclusive child development practices, building public and private preschool partnerships, providing positive program administration and leadership, strengthening countywide kindergarten transition practices, and leveraging resources in order to improve and expand programs.

■ Kindergarten Planning

- Sacramento County Transitional Kindergarten Steering Committee provides leadership, technical assistance, and support to local school districts in their planning and implementation of the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (SB 1381, Simitian). The steering committee has explored models, strategies, and resources for effective implementation of two-year kindergarten in Sacramento County.
- In partnership with First 5 Sacramento, the Sacramento County Office of Education hosts an annual Kindergarten Transition Summit to convene early childhood teachers, kindergarten teachers, and administrators to share ideas about effective kindergarten transition practices and to discuss strategies to strengthen articulation and collaboration.

1.3 CHILD CARE LICENSING IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Parents who work or attend school or job training have a number of child care settings available to

them. These settings have differing requirements for the caregivers and offer many different choices for families. The majority of children are cared for in one of the following settings:

- Licensed child care centers serve children birth through 13
- Licensed family child care homes serve children birth through 17
- Family, friend or neighbor (license-exempt) care serves children birth through 17

Child care centers and family child care homes are governed by Title 22 of the California Health and Safety Code, which regulates the basic health and safety of the facility. In Sacramento County child care facilities are monitored by two agencies. Child care centers are regulated by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing. Licensed family child care homes are regulated by Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services. These licensing entities are responsible for a provider's license and ongoing oversight of the facility.

In Sacramento County there is a capacity to care for 55,250 children in licensed child care facilities and homes. In 2010 there were 501 licensed child care centers with a capacity to care for 34,348 children. Nine percent of this capacity is designated for 2,997 infants and toddlers; 64 percent for 22,124 preschool age children; and 27 percent for 9,227 school-age care children. There were also 2,222 licensed family child care homes with a capacity to serve 20,902 children birth through 17 years of age.⁴

Publicly
funded
child
care



centers are also governed by Title 5 of the California Education Code, which regulates the educational requirements for personnel and the child care program. In Sacramento County 8,246 children are enrolled in state-funded Child Development Centers and State Preschool Programs. This is an increase of 1,500 children ages three through five enrolled into the California State Preschool Program since 2008.⁵

In California, publicly-funded license-exempt, non-relative child care providers must obtain fingerprint clearance through a program called Trustline, administered by the California Department of Social Services. Trustline is California's registry of in-home child care providers, tutors and in-home counselors who have passed a background screening. All caregivers listed with Trustline have been cleared through a fingerprint check of records at the California Department of Justice. This means they have no disqualifying criminal convictions or substantiated child abuse reports in California. In Sacramento County there are 1,448 exempt providers that care for 4,526 children who receive child care subsidies.⁶ For more information on regulation of exempt care see Appendix G.

1.4 CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

California provides support to low-income families and children through a variety of child care programs.

■ **The California Department of Education, Child Development Division (CDE, CDD)** administers a variety of programs that support and provide child care and early education opportunities. These programs offer subsidized child care services through a variety of program models including direct care and alternative payments. These funds are primarily contracted from the California Department of Education, Child Development Division to school districts, public municipalities, and community-based organizations for the delivery of child care and development services, such as full day child care, state preschool, after school programs, campus child care and alternative payment programs. Funds are available to the lowest-income families who: 1) need child care in order to work, attend school, or participate in a job training program; 2) are at risk of child abuse or neglect; 3) earn up to 70 percent of the state median income; or, 4) have a child or parent incapacitated because of medical or psychiatric needs.

■ Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Child Care funds are administered in California as the CalWORKs program, through the California Department of Social Services and the California Department of Education.

Recipients of the CalWORKs grant program are required to engage in work or work preparation activities unless they have children under the age of five. CalWORKs programs provide an array of welfare-to-work services. Child care is provided with state and federal funds in three stages.

- Stage 1 is administered by the California Department of Social Services through county welfare departments. Stage 1 begins when a participant enters the CalWORKs grant program and engages in activities pursuant to welfare to work plan developed for each family.
- Stage 2 is administered by CDE through its Alternative Payment Programs. CalWORKs families are transferred into Stage 2 when the family is engaged in stable employment. Families may remain in Stage 2 for two years after they stop receiving a CalWORKs grant.
- Stage 3 is administered by CDE through the Alternative Payment Program. A family can move to this stage when it has exhausted its two-year limit in Stage 2 and may receive child care support as long as the family remains eligible.

■ Public funding from both the state and federal government is allocated to Sacramento County child development programs for planning and support

of quality improvement activities. These programs include child care resource and referral, local child care planning, provider recruitment and training, workforce development and quality improvement. Quality dollars are critical to the child care field as a whole because they strengthen the infrastructure of the child care system, moreover, quality dollars are the only funds targeted at improving child care services for all families, regardless of income.

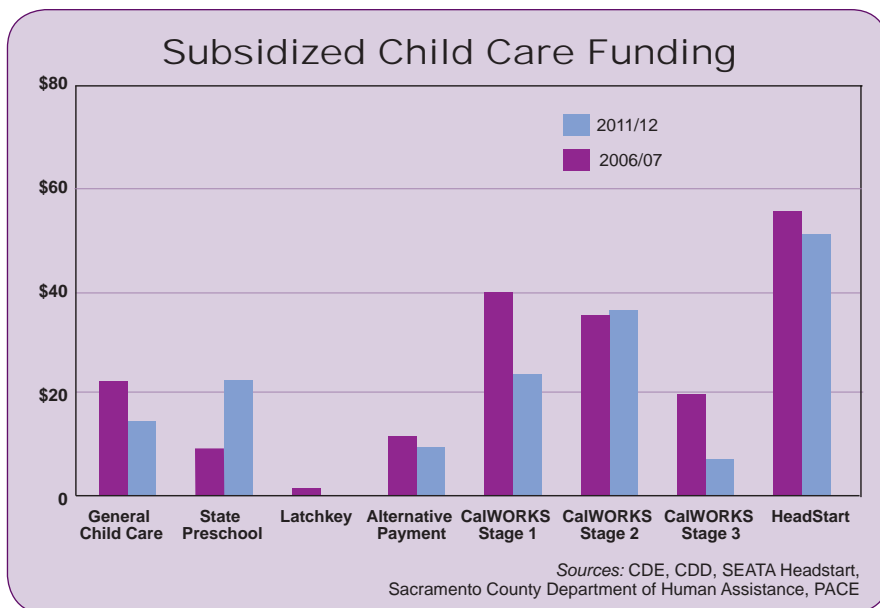
■ Federal Head Start and Early Head Start administered through the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) are federally funded programs that work to "...improve the lives of low-income children by providing quality comprehensive child development services that are family focused, including school readiness, health, nutrition and mental health." ⁷ Through the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), services are delivered at more than 116 early learning centers located throughout Sacramento County in either half-day or full-day options at centers or in home-based programs. Head Start and Early Head Start support the healthy growth of children, families and staff through encouragement, nurturing, education and empowerment.

1.5 CHILD CARE FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Sacramento Child Care and Development Planning Council is mandated to plan for child care and development services based on the needs of families in the community. Part of this mission is to

identify local funding priority areas for child care services for new state and federal funds. The funding priorities are reviewed annually and reported to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

The Council identifies priorities for: 1) General Child Care – Full Day (Subsidized); and 2) Preschool – Part Day (Subsidized). All zip codes in the county receive a child care needs priority score, from which priority rankings are determined. For a listing of the priorities, and the methodology used to identify the priorities, please reference Appendices B and C.



1.6 OTHER CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

■ Tribal Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) Programs

Of the 104 federally recognized Tribes in California, 70 percent have Child Care and Development Fund services available to them either from their own Tribe or as part of a consortium of tribes. Each tribal lead-agency operating a child care program through the Administration for Children and Families may choose which counties they will serve. Typically, only enrolled members of a tribe and their children are eligible for child care subsidies through tribal CCDF Programs. There is one tribally-operated Child Care Center in Sacramento County which belongs to the Buena Vista Tribe. The Buena Vista Tribe does not apply for CCDF funds and instead funds their center through other means of income. The Buena Vista Tribe's Child Care Center operates under a state license for a child care center. Indian children are dually eligible, which means they qualify for both Tribal CCDF and the CCDF program administered by the State lead agency. For more information on California Tribal Child Care Programs see Appendix D.

■ After School Enrichment Programs

- The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 signed into law in January 2002, authorizes the California Department of Education (CDE) to administer California's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. This state-administered, federally funded program provides five-year grant funding to establish or expand before and after school programs that provide disadvantaged K-12 students with academic enrichment opportunities and supportive services to help the students meet educational standards. Programs are administered by school districts, cities, counties, community-based agencies, and other public or private entities, which may include faith-based organizations.⁸
- The After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program is the result of the 2002 voter approved initiative, Proposition 49. The ASES Program funds the establishment of local after school education and enrichment programs intended to encourage schools and school

districts to provide safe and educationally enriching alternatives for children and youth during non-school hours. The programs are created through partnerships between schools and local community resources to provide literacy, academic enrichment, and safe, constructive alternatives for students in kindergarten through ninth grade.

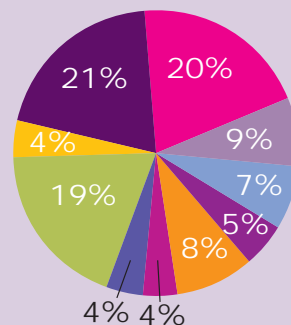
- In 2009 School-age Community Child Care Services (Latchkey) Programs were eliminated. This subsidized child care program for school-age children was operated by several Sacramento County school districts and the City of Sacramento and represents a loss of \$1,423,340 for Sacramento County.⁹ Families enrolled in these programs were transferred to ASES programs or other general child care programs.

1.7 SCHOOL READINESS

Between 2008 and 2012, First 5 Sacramento allocated \$6.2 million for school readiness programs to prepare children to enter kindergarten "ready to learn." At the time this plan was written, efforts were underway to extend funding for school readiness programs beyond 2012. School readiness includes five major areas: physical well-being and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language development and communication; and, cognition and general knowledge.

First 5 Sacramento has partnered with high quality learning programs committed to providing children with the tools necessary to make them successful

School Readiness Allocations



Source: First 5 Sacramento, 2011/2012

life-long learners through three School Readiness components:

- **The School Readiness Initiative** provides state-match funds to six Sacramento County school districts serving children in the lowest academically performing schools. These funds are matched dollar for dollar by the First 5 California State Commission.

- **School Readiness Program Expansion** - When First 5 California formally announced the availability of Cycle 2 (FY2008-2012) state-match School Readiness funding, they stipulated that no additional funds would be available for program expansion. Cycle 2 School Readiness funds are earmarked for 'maintenance of effort' in currently funded School Readiness programs. The First 5 Sacramento Commission, however, assessed the effectiveness of existing programs, examined more current academic performance data, and opted to use local funds to expand School Readiness programs into targeted areas with large numbers of underserved children. Natomas Unified School District, Galt Joint Union Elementary School District, and River Delta Unified School District are the most recently added districts.

- **Bright Futures** partners with School Readiness programs to offer free health screenings for children ages zero through five. Working in collaboration with other local health programs, dental, vision, hearing, speech, health, development, and social and emotional screenings are made available to young children. Children who may exhibit a health and/or developmental problem are identified prior to entering kindergarten, and referrals and resources are provided to the families. The goal is that every child enters kindergarten ready to learn.

1.8 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PLANNING

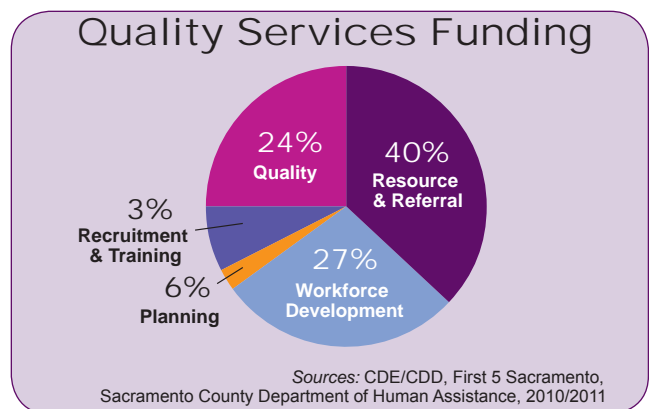
In Sacramento County, funding for quality improvement and planning has a variety of sources including the federal child care and development block grant, the California Department of Education, First 5 Sacramento Commission, First 5 California Commission, and the County Department of Human Assistance.

- **Federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)** - A minimum of four percent of CCDF funds must be used to improve the quality of child care, which includes an expansion of activities to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers, school-age care and child care resource and referral services. In

Sacramento County these funds support Child Care Resource and Referral Services, the Local Child Care and Development Planning Council, the California Child Care Initiative Project, the Trustline Registry, Child Care Licensing, Health and Safety training, and the CARES Project. Other statewide services such as the Program For Infant Toddler Care, Family Child Care At Its Best, California Preschool Instructional Network, and the Child Development Training Consortium, provide quality improvement services within Sacramento County.

- **The First 5 Sacramento Commission** - The First 5 Sacramento Strategic Plan allocates funds for quality improvement to the Quality Child Care Collaborative to meet its Early Care and Education Result Strategy. The Sacramento County Quality Child Care Collaborative is a partnership of ten community agencies, educational institutions and government social services. The purpose of the collaborative is to help Sacramento County child care centers and family child care homes provide quality child care programs through provision of mental health and inclusion consultation services, quality assessment and technical assistance and the Sacramento CARES program.

- **Federal TANF funds**, administered by the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance, support child care referral services and capacity building services for CalWORKs participants.



1.9 IMPACT OF THE CALIFORNIA BUDGET REDUCTION ON CHILD CARE SERVICES

Recent years have been a time of tremendous reduction and change for publicly-funded child care services, in Sacramento County and across the state. Changes have reduced the amount of funding for

eligible families, as well as direct funding for child development center services. The reductions also impacted the private sector child care services who may receive child care payments from CalWORKs or an Alternative Payment Program.

■ **Impact on Families** - According to the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 31,742 children in California lost child care services due to an 11 percent across-the-board reduction to child care programs and the lowering of child care subsidy eligibility to 70 percent of the State Median Income (SMI). Across the state, this budget decision has caused many parents to leave their children unattended, quit their jobs, or turn to welfare assistance.

- **Child Care Services for Low-Income Families** - The state decreased funding for subsidized child care in the 2011-2012 California State budget by approximately \$300 million (11%). In 2011-2012 Sacramento County received \$163,610,933 for child care and development services for children of low-income or at-risk families. This amount reflects a loss of more than \$29.9 million in funding to child care and development programs in Sacramento County since 2007. This means an estimated 4,000 children are no longer receiving child care subsidies.¹⁰
- **The elimination of the Child and Dependant Care Tax Credit** - This policy change diverted \$75 million from working families and made it harder for families to afford child care. For many families, the increasing cost of food, health care, transportation, and housing leaves very little at the end of the month. These combined cuts only add to the struggles of the thousands of families on the child care eligibility list.¹¹
- **Reduction in Income Eligibility Ceilings to 70 percent of State Median Income(SMI)**- Prior to July 2011, families eligible for the state's child care programs were able to earn 75 percent of the SMI. This was lowered to 70 percent for all state child care programs except state preschool. For a family of three, this reduces the maximum eligible monthly income from \$3,769 to \$3,015.
- **Cuts to the Child Care Eligibility List** - In 2005, Sacramento County implemented a Centralized Eligibility List to track families seeking to enroll their children in subsidized child care. This list created a single point of entry for eligible families. In 2011, funding for the CEL was eliminated. However, Child

Action, Inc. continues to maintain a voluntary Child Care Eligibility List (CCEL) in Sacramento County with several community partner agencies that have agreed to continue to use the CCEL to fill openings in their child care programs. To date, because of cuts in funding, the frequency of updates to the CCEL has been greatly reduced resulting in fewer children listed on the CCEL. Families must now contact each of the contracted providers separately in order to be placed on each provider's eligibility list.

■ **Impact on the CalWORKs Families** - With the economic downturn and major changes to the CalWORKs program, many low-income child care consumers no longer use child care services. This reduction in child care utilization has forced many child care programs to close or reduce staff, leaving programs ill-equipped to handle increased child care demand that will surely come with economic recovery. Three major policy changes to the California CalWORKs program have reduced the utilization of child care services, especially in low-income communities.¹²

- **Employment Services Exemptions** - Employment services exemptions from Welfare-to-Work (WTW) requirements were expanded for the parents of one child under 2 years or two children less than 6 years. In Sacramento County there are approximately 16,000 CalWORKs families in this category. In fiscal year 2009/2010, 74 percent of families entering the CalWORKs system accepted the exemption, choosing to "wait out" the



economic recession and raise their children rather than attempting to reenter the workforce or obtain additional training or education.

- Reduction to the Earned Income Disregard - The State policy of disregarding up to \$225 of earned monthly income was changed. Clients can now only receive a maximum of \$112 of the Earned Income Disregard.
- Shortening of the Time Limits for Adults to Receive Aid - Effective July 1, 2011, the amount of time parents or caregiver relatives could receive CalWORKs cash aid was reduced from a lifetime limit of 60 months to 48 months. In Sacramento County this resulted in 2,500 families being discontinued from aid and subsequently losing eligibility for subsidized child care. On an on-going basis approximately 400 families are being discontinued monthly due to the change in time limits for aid.

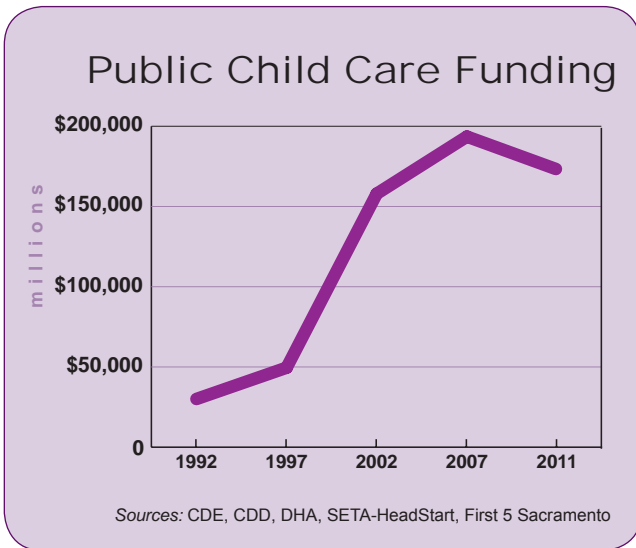
■ **Impact on the Child Care Delivery System** - The infrastructure for planning and support of the early learning workforce was impacted by program funding cuts, policy changes and reallocation of First 5 Commission funding.

- Reduction in funding for Community Care Licensing of Child Care Centers and Homes - Over the past five years, the frequency of regular monitoring visits has declined. The current statutory requirement is to make unannounced site visits to 30 percent of the providers and to visit every provider at least once every 5 years.
- Twenty percent reduction in the rate paid to license-exempt child care providers - Exempt caregivers provide families with parental choice of the type of care they desire and are an essential support for families unable to access licensed child care programs. In Sacramento County, this reduction amounts to a decrease of \$6.54 per day, per child for an exempt child care provider and creates a disincentive to care for children receiving a child care subsidy, decreasing child care access for families. In Sacramento County, the reduction in payment to exempt providers represents a loss of \$7,372,038 to our community. While this is a 20 percent reduction in income for the 1,448 exempt providers caring for 4,526 children, it is also an economic loss to the businesses in the community that supported those providers.
- Reduction of funding for the Local Child Care and Development Council - In 2010, the state

budget reduced funding to the Child Care and Development Planning Councils statewide by 50 percent. Since its inception, the Child Care and Development Planning Council has been an integral part of the early care and education community in Sacramento County. The collaboration that takes place through the Planning Council is critical to ongoing availability of quality, affordable child care in Sacramento County.

- Reduction of funding for Sacramento CARES - The Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES) program focuses on improving the quality of child care through retention and training of the child care workforce. Funding from the CDE was reduced by 25 percent in 2010. Funding from the First 5 Sacramento Commission was reduced 31 percent in 2011.
- Reallocation of Federal Child Care Funds - Since 2007, Sacramento County has lost approximately 35 percent of the funding supporting quality improvement, impacting child care planning, work force development, program quality improvement, and training programs for the child care and development field.¹³
- Reduction in First 5 Commission Funds - In May 2011, the First 5 Sacramento Commission approved budget reductions totaling \$43.7 million. The reduction plan was developed in response to the State's redirection of \$1 billion in First 5 reserve funds from First 5 commissions across California to help balance the state budget. The budget reduction strategy included reductions to multiple community-based programs. High priority programs, such as those that help provide a safety net to the County's most vulnerable children, will face a 25 percent reduction in future years. Most programs categorized as medium priority faced an immediate 50 percent reduction, while several lower priority programs were terminated all together. The Sacramento Commission's share of the \$1 billion was approximately \$48.5 million, \$43.7 million of which will be in reductions spread over the upcoming four years while another \$4.8 million will be absorbed in future years. The Early Care and Education Result Strategy supporting the Quality Child Care Collaborative was reduced by \$1,180,977 or 50 percent over a two-year period.

The following chart details the trends of subsidized and quality dollars over the course of the past ten years:



1.10 EMERGING ISSUES AND POLICY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The child care system is complex and in many cases under-resourced to meet the needs for assistance in paying for child care or to develop and support high quality programs for all families. The following are some policy questions to consider in the context of challenges presented by the current economic climate:

- Preserving the child care system. Fluctuations in funding have led to instability in the system. How does Sacramento County prepare for the eventual economic recovery and associated increase in the need for care?
- Prioritizing child care quality. Child care quality is strongly linked to positive developmental outcomes for children. Improving quality and accessibility benefits families by allowing parents to engage in employment and education opportunities, and benefits the economy by building a strong workforce. How can the county maintain quality care despite economic and funding challenges?
- Focusing on maintaining quality in child care workforce. Child care quality is greatly dependent upon professional development and training for caregivers, yet limiting funding often means limiting these opportunities for child care providers. How does the county identify and mitigate the effects of cuts and economic hardship on the child care workforce?

- Considering Transitional Kindergarten in the context of other programs. While there may be benefits for children enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten, there may also be concurrent decreases in enrollment in other programs. What are the benefits and unintended consequences associated with the implementation of Transitional Kindergarten programs for families and the community?

- Cuts to Child Care Licensing Programs. California's licensing program performs the essential function of protecting the basic health and safety of children in care. Yet, budget cuts and ineffective compliance procedures have resulted in a program that provides minimal oversight and monitoring of child care facilities. This gradual decline in the effectiveness of the licensing program puts the health and safety of children at risk.

- Blueprint for Great Schools.¹⁴ In 2011, recognizing the need for broad and deep stakeholder involvement in the issues facing California public education, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson convened a 59-member Transition Advisory Team, including parents, teachers, superintendents, business and union leaders, higher education and nonprofit representatives, in order to develop a Blueprint for Great Schools. The following goal was developed for Early Childhood Education: Develop an infrastructure for a birth-to-3rd-grade system that serves our youngest learners and includes expanded access to programs designed to meet quality standards, supported by well-prepared and supported educators, guided by aligned standards and curriculum, and informed by readiness data. How will these goals be implemented in our county? For more information on the Blueprint and its policy committee, please see www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/bp/. ●