2016-2018 Public Policy Platform

This public policy platform was adopted by the San Mateo County Child Care Partnership Council and serves as a touchstone for its advocacy work. It captures long-standing positions of the Council, as well as emerging concerns. This document enables the Council Co-chairs and Coordinators to take action as needed, between meetings, on legislation that addresses issues on which the Council has taken a previous position. It is not organized in order of importance, but is intended to describe values and comprehensive positions. In addition to regularly updating this platform, the Council also chooses a few urgent advocacy priorities for which it develops specific action plans.

QUALITY
To ensure the best outcomes for young children aged birth to 13 and their families, we support a sufficiently funded system that ensures high quality programs including: developmentally appropriate curriculum; inclusive environments that are conducive to learning and development for all children; knowledgeable, well-educated and well-compensated staff; robust and authentic family engagement; and comprehensive services, that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and that are respectful and supportive of diversity. We advocate the use of research and evidence-based practices, effective evaluation, monitoring and support to ensure that children, families and our community benefit. We also support the use of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to assist families to choose quality, programs to improve, and public / private entities to invest more in services that meet higher levels of quality.

FACILITIES
To ensure that all children are cared for and educated in high quality, inclusive environments within a diverse delivery system, we support strategies at the state and local levels that improve and expand the public and private capital resources and technical expertise available to develop, finance, and maintain needed new and existing high quality child care and early learning facilities. We also advocate for city and county planning and land use policies that promote the inclusion and expansion of child care and early learning facilities. The lack of an adequate supply of appropriate child care facilities and the complexity of developing new spaces are creating substantial barriers to providing early care and education services and must be addressed through public policy changes.
WORKFORCE
To ensure that a qualified workforce cares for and educates our diverse population of young children, we promote public and private efforts and systems that recruit, retain, and support a diverse, well-educated, well-compensated early care and education workforce that is recognized as professional. This workforce must have access to high quality, coordinated educational and professional development systems that address developmental, social-emotional, cultural, linguistic, and literacy needs on a continuum from entry-level through degree attainment. We advocate for coordination between local providers of professional development and higher education and support.

AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND AFFORDABILITY
To ensure all families and their children benefit from high quality early care and education services, including children who face challenges such as learning a second language, poverty, developmental disabilities and special health care needs, we support investments and strategies that increase the availability, accessibility and affordability of inclusive, high quality services provided within a diverse delivery system. Because San Mateo County families face very high costs for housing, child care and basic necessities, we strongly support increasing the eligibility threshold for subsidized early care and education services. And we support thoughtful income supports, or other strategies, to improve the short and long term stability of families and healthy outcomes for children.

HEALTH AND SAFETY
To ensure all children are cared for and educated in safe and healthy environments, we must have a sufficiently funded and staffed Community Care Licensing system and supports that monitor, and provide technical assistance and resources to, current and future licensed programs and providers. We advocate annual monitoring visits for licensed centers and homes. We support ensuring the capacity of the early care and education system/workforce to meet all of children’s health and safety needs including mental, physical, and developmental; responding to medical or situational crises; and ensuring safe routes to schools.

SYSTEMS, FINANCING AND ADMINISTRATION
To ensure and support a comprehensive, high quality early care and education system, serving children from birth to age 13, we advocate for increased, protected and stable funding for that system. We promote streamlined and efficient administration, including adequate resources for Local Child Care Planning, coordinated regulatory, contracting and reimbursement processes. The early care and education system will require strong coordination between State and local agencies that support physical or mental health, prevention/ early intervention, K-12 and higher education, community and economic development, family support, food/nutrition, social services and recreation services. This system should support a smooth transition for children and families from 0 -3 into the TK-12 system and collaboration to align Pre-K –TK – Kindergarten to 3rd grade standards, curriculum, credentialing, and assessment. We seek opportunities to test new ideas and pilot innovative services and practices to improve the educational and life outcomes for young children and their families in San Mateo County.