



SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT  
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

# Strategic Plan 2023–2027







# CREATING A SHARED FOUNDATION

## Vision

Every child in San Francisco has the best start in life and our City is a great place to raise a family.

## Mission

To weave together family, community, and system supports so that all children who grow up in San Francisco have a strong foundation of nurturing, health, and learning.

## Guiding Values


As the Department of Early Childhood, we are committed to:

- 1. Racial Equity:** We prioritize taking concrete action with Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities to address the disparities that persist across early childhood development outcomes for their families. We hold ourselves and one another accountable to measurable change and consider equity impacts in all our shared decision making.
- 2. Universal Access:** All families should have access to high-quality education and services to support healthy early childhood development.
- 3. Collaboration with Community:** When we engage parents, providers, and grantees as partners in decision-making, we expand the reach and impact of our work for countless children and families.
- 4. Continuous Learning and Improvement:** To have our desired impact, we must consistently and frequently engage parents, providers, and grantees in helping us understand what is working well and where improvements are needed—and use what we learn to shift and adapt our work.
- 5. Transparency:** To build and maintain trusting and productive relationships, we are open, authentic, and clear in our communication with parents, providers, grantees, and staff.

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

More than three years ago, when First 5 San Francisco (First 5 SF) and the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education (OECE) first began planning together and exploring the possibility of more closely integrating our work on behalf of San Francisco's young children and their families, we had no idea how much our world would change from then to now. In the ensuing months and years, the world was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic, ravaging its populations, decimating its economies, and interrupting learning for hundreds of millions of children. The United States reckoned with its racist past and present in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. We saw an unprecedented rise in misinformation and the greatest challenge to the country's democratic institutions since the Civil War. Wildfires across the state torched our landscapes and filled our air with toxic smoke.

With so much loss, devastation, and disruption to our lives around us, it would be easy to miss that something truly special was happening in the world of early childhood in San Francisco. After years of political infighting and hypothetical talk of better planning and coordination across City agencies serving our youngest residents, we took concrete steps to come together around common goals, leading to the merger of First 5 SF and OECE and the official formation of the new Department of Early Childhood (DEC). Almost three years after the 2018 passage of "Baby Prop C" and subsequent lawsuits by special interests challenging its legality, the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City, children, and families, unlocking hundreds of millions of dollars of funding that has already begun transforming the early childhood system in San Francisco. DEC-funded Family Resource Centers proved their worth in the City's pandemic response, delivering critical support and services to families to meet basic needs during the most trying of times. Continued DEC funding kept early care and education programs open and at the ready to aid in the pandemic and economic recovery. Early educators began receiving unprecedented wage increases that finally recognized their qualifications and essential role in children's education and development, and families started to benefit from the largest expansion of eligibility for free, high-quality early education that the City has ever undertaken, giving us greater reach into working- and middle-class families.

There has never been so much promise and opportunity for young children and their families in San Francisco, but DEC cannot rely on expanded resources alone to close the significant gaps in opportunity and outcomes faced by our youngest children. We strategically engaged parents and caregivers these past two years, and learned that families indeed value and benefit from DEC's core strategies of early learning, family strength, and child health, yet, their experiences and outcomes are tied to structural racism, and voiced the need to have service improvements in parent engagement, cultural responsiveness, and ease of access to information and services. Therefore, this strategic plan lays out a path to not only expand the reach of our programs and services but more importantly strengthen their effectiveness by addressing these strategic priorities tied to racial equity.

The task before us is immense as we grow our capacity to implement these ambitious reforms while improving outcomes for more children and families. We are grateful to the generosity of San Francisco voters who bestowed financial resources and invested in the collective power and commitment of our grantees and partner organizations, the wind is at our backs. Great things have already arrived, and even greater things are on the horizon.



**Ingrid X. Mezquita, Executive Director**  
*Department of Early Childhood*

# Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the Office of Early Care and Education Citizen's Advisory Committee (OECE CAC) members, First 5 San Francisco Children and Families Commission, and the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee for their commitment and contributions to the first-ever Department of Early Childhood Strategic Plan. We would also like to acknowledge our grantees and staff, who provided invaluable input all along the way.

Finally, we want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the group of 50 parents who engaged in critical conversations with us, generously sharing their experiences, ideas, wisdom, and time. This plan was driven and significantly shaped by their voices and expertise.

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# Executive Summary

This inaugural strategic plan guides the work of the newly formed San Francisco Department of Early Childhood (DEC). The five-year plan defines our vision, mission, and values; sets ambitious goals and strategies; and establishes a shared foundation for action. With the convergence of several key opportunities, now is the time to make bold changes for our youngest children and their families.

Over the next five years, with unprecedented resources and clear purpose, DEC will make a holistic, tangible, and lasting impact on early learning, child health, and family strength.

This unique position allows San Francisco to implement innovative practices that can transform our early childhood system and drive better outcomes for our City's youngest learners. This five-year plan makes the case for racial equity as one such transformative approach, and demonstrates that when you engage families, it benefits our children and the people who care for them.

There is already significant work being done by DEC, and we are building on decades of groundbreaking political leadership and innovative policy and practices, and some of these standout early childhood services are highlighted. DEC will leverage the significant

local, state, and federal resources in early childhood programming – \$380 million annually through DEC alone – to generate equitable early learning opportunities, strengthen families and our communities, and improve compensation and working conditions for all the incredibly talented people that make up our early childhood system of care.

## VISION

Every child in San Francisco has the best start in life and our City is a great place to raise a family.

## MISSION

To weave together family, community, and system supports so that all children who grow up in San Francisco have a strong foundation of nurturing, health, and learning.





## GUIDING VALUES

As the Department of Early Childhood, we are committed to:

- 1. Racial Equity:** We prioritize taking concrete action with Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities to address the disparities that persist across early childhood development outcomes for their families. We hold ourselves and one another accountable to measurable change and consider equity impacts in all our shared decision making.
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## INTENTIONAL APPROACH

Kindergarten readiness is a key educational benchmark that leads to continued success in future years. Decades of research show that access to high quality early care and education, child health, development and early intervention services, and family and parenting support are critical contributors to children's kindergarten readiness. The City of San Francisco has made significant and sustained investments in each of these areas. Over time, these investments have led to:

- 90% of SF 4-year-olds participating in preschool
- thousands of families working with Family Resource Centers (FRCs) developing increased confidence in their parenting skills
- over 3,000 children receiving developmental screenings annually

Despite these significant advancements in the early childhood development field, we still see racialized outcomes in kindergarten readiness. Our strategic planning process was designed to determine what we need to do differently to achieve different results.

To understand and address why research-based investments have not produced the outcomes we hope for, we took an intentional approach to strategic planning based around two core tenets:

- Equity-centered strategy can only be developed through equity-centered planning
- Parents and families know what is best for their children

With these tenets in mind, we co-designed our strategic planning process with parents most impacted by structural racism, engaging them in deep and sustained conversations. Only by truly listening to these parents about what they want for their children and implementing their feedback, could we identify the missing link between current investments and the outcomes we hope to achieve.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

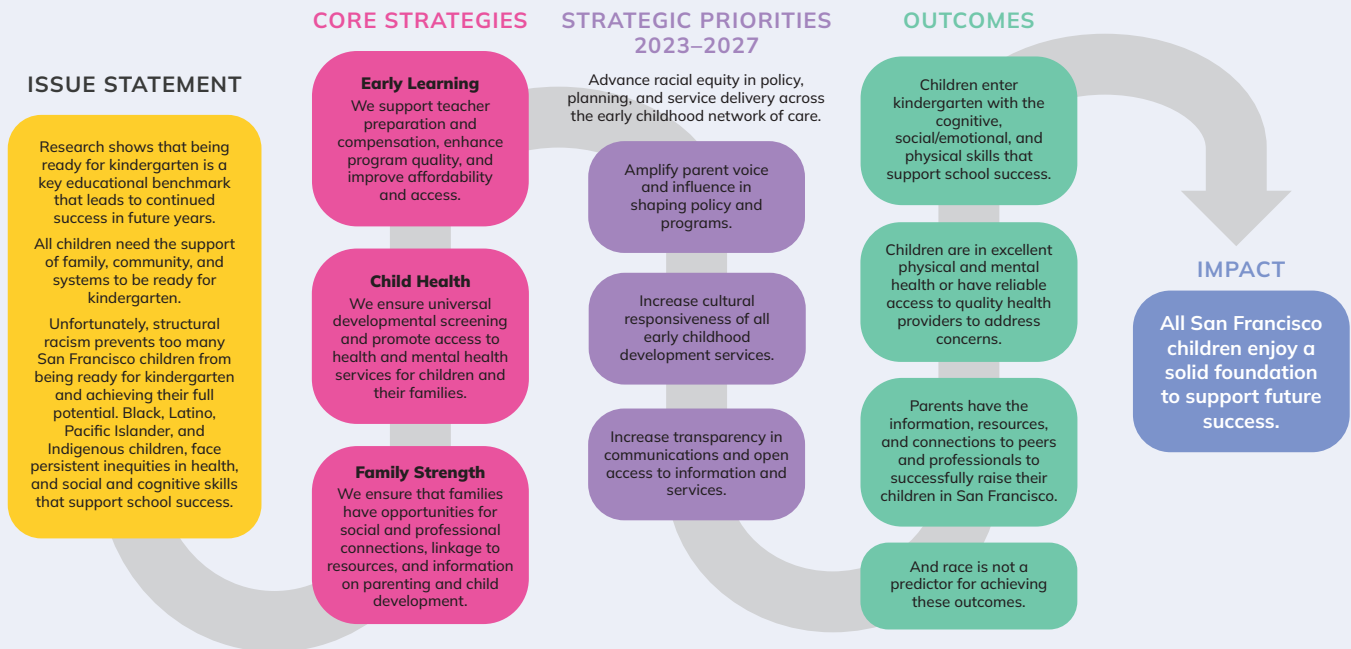
Time and time again, parents affirmed that the City is already investing in the right services. However, parent insight made it clear that to address racialized outcomes, we must advance racial equity across our system of care by improving the user experience, accessibility, and delivery of all programs and services.

The DEC strategic plan is structured according to a theory of change that centers on this key finding. It begins with a recognition of the challenges faced by San Francisco's young children and their families and describes DEC's three "core strategies" to solving these challenges that cover early learning, child health, and family strength. In accordance with parent input, we will continue to develop and expand these core strategies while also implementing improvements specific to equitable access and experiences—which we are calling "Strategic Priorities." These critical Strategic Priorities are:

1. Amplify parent voice and influence in shaping policy and programs.
2. Increase cultural responsiveness of all early childhood development services.
3. Increase transparency in communications and open access to information and services.



## THEORY OF CHANGE



If DEC and its grantees and partners are successful in carrying out these plans, we expect to see improvements in children’s kindergarten readiness, children’s health and access to quality health care, and families’ sense of self efficacy – and that race will no longer be a determinant of these critical outcomes.

## CALL TO ACTION

With the energy, commitment, and passion of the entire early childhood development network of care working together, we will achieve our vision of a San Francisco where every child has the best start in life and our City is a great place to raise a family. Over the next five years, DEC’s imperative is to advance racial equity, disrupt racialized child outcomes, and create greater shared accountability. We will ensure all families have access to culturally and linguistically responsive information and services by engaging parents and communities as partners and leaders, working side-by-side to make our City a place where race is not a predictor for early childhood outcomes.





01



## Chapter 01

# A Holistic Approach to Early Childhood Development

This inaugural strategic plan guides the work of the newly formed San Francisco Department of Early Childhood (DEC). The five-year plan defines our vision, mission, and values; sets ambitious goals and strategies; and establishes a shared foundation for action.

With the convergence of several key opportunities, now is the time to make bold changes for our youngest children and their families, particularly those who have been underserved for far too long. Over the next five years, with unprecedented resources and clear purpose, DEC will make a holistic, tangible, and lasting impact on early learning, child health, and family strength.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS WORK

Children's earliest experiences shape the trajectories of their lives. Supporting children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development needs—prenatally and during their first five years—is what builds a strong foundation for success in school and in life. Responsive, age-appropriate opportunities for play and learning, optimum early learning environments, family well-being, and access to quality health and mental health care—all these factors contribute to positive child outcomes.

Public investment in our youngest learners and their families is critical to ensuring a bright future for all of us.



Each organization had been investing in long-term, key initiatives, driven by their respective missions and legislative mandates. This was the time to chart a new course together.

IMAGE 1: OECE AND FIRST 5 SAN FRANCISCO

	OECE	FIRST 5 SAN FRANCISCO
<b>History</b>	Established in 2013 by the late Mayor Edwin M. Lee	Established by Proposition 10, the California Children and Families Act, which was passed in 1998
<b>Vision</b>	Every child in San Francisco from birth to age five has access to high-quality, affordable early care and education.	All children birth to five will be safe, healthy, and thrive in supportive, nurturing, loving families, and communities. They will start school eager to learn and grow with confidence and connections to families, community, and society.
<b>Focus</b>	OECE administers programs to help San Francisco families access and pay for high-quality early care and education and offer early learning providers quality improvement assistance and financial support.	FIRST 5's initiatives are designed to increase access to and ensure the quality services in three focus areas: family support, child development, and child health.

## A NEW DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

In Spring 2019, Mayor London Breed made a call to action to streamline and improve the City's early childhood development system to achieve greater impact for children birth to five and their families. She requested that the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education (OECE) and FIRST 5 San Francisco (FIRST 5) align their investments and structures. OECE and FIRST 5 joined forces to begin the planning needed to effectively merge the two organizations into a single entity now known as the San Francisco Department of Early Childhood (DEC).

The history, vision, and focus of the two organizations are illustrated in **Image 1**.

As these two early childhood organizations came together, they embarked on the development of a strategic plan for the new, integrated department. Each organization had been investing in long-term, key initiatives, driven by their respective missions and legislative mandates. This was the time to chart a new course together.

## OVERVIEW OF NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

To inform the strategic priorities for the next five years, DEC and its consultants, MIG, Inc., reviewed existing literature to better understand the needs of San Francisco's young children and their families, as well as the opportunities that DEC can leverage now to advance its work.

### Needs

A review of the literature identified four pressing early childhood development needs in San Francisco.

#### 1. Availability & Affordability of Early Care and Education

Access to early care and education is proven to be one of the greatest factors in closing the opportunity gap in kindergarten readiness and addressing racial inequities in education. Forty-two percent of San Francisco families surveyed in a Family Survey Conducted by the San Francisco Controller's Office (2018), reported that the cost of early education was the most significant challenge families face. The availability of child care and waitlists were also noted as significant challenges by 22% and 14% of respondents. Families of color experience these burdens even more heavily than white families. Thirty-six percent of black respondents identified waitlists as a challenge compared to their counterparts, of which only 14% rated waitlists as a challenge. Access for program locations, hours, quality, and parent resources specifically for lower income families or by monolingual Spanish-speaking families, were also noted as significant challenges.

#### 2. Early Educator Compensation

A Grantee Survey identified that among both First 5 and OECE, one of the greatest needs for over half of respondents is higher compensation. In California and the greater

United States, early care educators are some of the lowest paid positions in the workforce. There is a significant need for greater financial security so that early care educators can meet the high cost of living in San Francisco. While greater financial support is essential for all early educators, educators experience the burden of low compensation differently based on gender and ethnicity. The distribution of compensation for non-white women nationally in early care is significantly less than their white counterparts. Women of color represent over 73% of the workforce in early education in San Francisco.

#### 3. Kindergarten Readiness Disparities

The academic disparity among groups of children living in San Francisco is more persistent among specific racial/ethnic groups of children. Kindergarten readiness data shows a disproportionate gap in kindergarten readiness among Latino, African American, Indigenous and Pacific Islander children, with a reading level 44% and 47% below the overall readiness rate (IMPACT needs assessment). The academic disparity among children in early education settings is indicative of deeper-rooted indicators of well-being, such as secure housing, economic security, and family well-being. High quality early care and education in San Francisco plays a critical role in reducing this opportunity gap and improving outcomes for all children later in life.



## A SHORTAGE OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SUPPLY



**80.3%**

### Children Ages 3-5 Enrolled in Preschool or Kindergarten (2014-2018)<sup>1</sup>

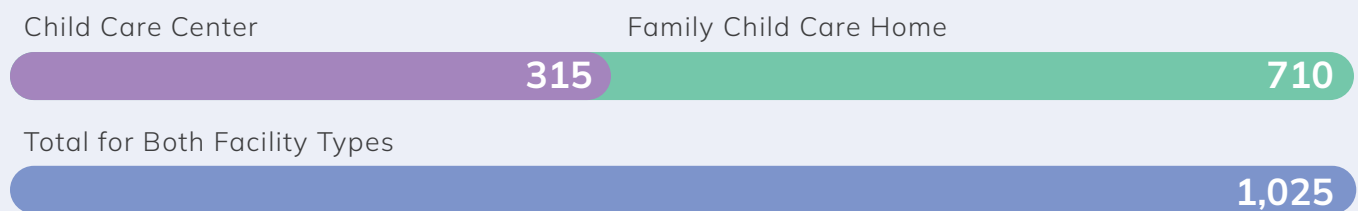
Estimated percentage of children ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool or kindergarten (e.g., in 2014-2018, 61.3% of California children ages 3-5 were enrolled in preschool or kindergarten).



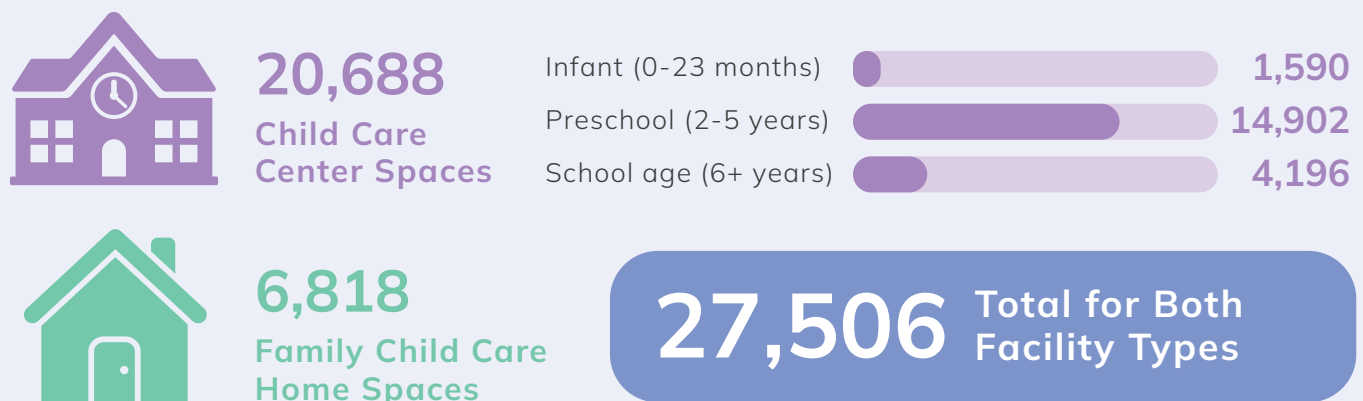
### Availability of Child Care for Working Families (2019)<sup>2</sup>

Estimated percentage of children ages 0-12 with parents in the labor force for whom licensed child care spaces are available and unavailable (e.g., in 2019, licensed child care spaces were available for 24.5% of children with working parents in California).

## Licensed Child Care Facilities [for children 0 to 6+] (2021)<sup>3</sup>



## Child Care Spaces in Licensed Facilities [for children 0 to 6+] (2021)<sup>4</sup>



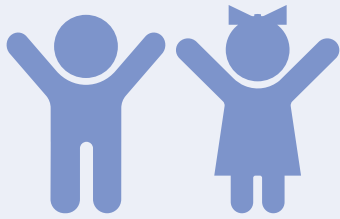
<sup>1</sup> Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey microdata files (Jan. 2020)

<sup>2</sup> California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, California Child Care Portfolio (Apr. 2020); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey public use microdata (Oct. 2020)

<sup>3</sup> California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Child Care Data Tool

<sup>4</sup> California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Child Care Data Tool

## UNDERSTANDING THE GAP<sup>5</sup>



# 7,910

### 2019 Gap Number

The number of children zero to five who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access formal child care facilities by driving.



# 24.1%

### 2019 Gap Percentage

The percentage of children zero to five who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access formal child care facilities by driving.



# 25,270

### 2019 Supply

The number of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers.



# 32,810

### 2019 Potential Need

The number of children zero to five with all available parents in the labor force.

<sup>5</sup> Bipartisan Policy Center, Child Care Gaps Assessment

#### 4. Equitable access to developmental screening

According to the Parent Information Form Survey in 2015, only 44% of children received developmental screening. Compared to their white counterparts, non-white children receive even less early intervention screening. There is a critical need for more targeted early intervention screening for children that will improve school readiness and reduce inequities in outcomes based on race/ethnicity, economic status, and other factors.

### Opportunities

Three key funding opportunities provide unprecedented resources to address early childhood development needs in San Francisco.

#### 1. “Baby” Prop C (2018)

In 2018, the Early Care and Education for All Initiative was passed, funded from the appropriations of “Baby” Prop C (2018). In a community and parent centered process, OECE established a comprehensive Baby Prop C spending framework outlining key priorities heard from the community. The top two priorities identified by the community were 1) Expanding access to affordable early care and education for low- and middle-income families and 2) Increasing compensation to the early educator workforce. Additional priorities include expanding facilities, capacity building, supporting early childhood mental health, and creating a systematic approach to supporting families. The three broad priorities of the San

Francisco Early Care and Education for All Initiative are listed below.

- Increase access for low income and moderate-income families
- Increase workforce compensation
- Invest in other services to support the well-being of children under six

#### 2. The Mayor’s Child and Family Recovery Plan

Leveraging “Baby” Prop C (2018), the Child and Family Recovery Plan invests \$32 million dollars to support families with young children in accessing quality early care and education. The initiative will provide \$3.7 million over the course of two years to improve Citywide communications, referral services and navigation of children’s services. Direct childcare vouchers, training, and classes for parents of children ages birth to five will directly support higher access to quality care and education.

#### 3. California Comeback Plan

The California Comeback plan includes a transformative \$123.9 billion Pre-K and K-12 education package. The plan will provide Universal Pre-K investments and K-12 education investments with full implementation of free, high-quality pre-kindergarten for all four-year-olds. Implementation will begin in 2022-23 with the goal of full implementation by 2025-26. Universal transitional kindergarten will ensure access to high quality learning opportunities for every child in San Francisco and ensure that children’s developmental needs are met.





02

# Innovative Planning, Bold Vision

DEC set out to create an innovative and bold strategic plan that would address Citywide needs and opportunities, and interrupt disparities in outcomes for Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander children.

## OUR PLANNING APPROACH

To create such a plan, the planning process needed to be equally bold and innovative. DEC developed an approach that would:

- **Intentionally co-design** both the planning process and the plan with parents, providers, and partners.
- **Center the voices of parents** in co-design, with the belief that parents are the experts on their children and know best what they need to thrive.
- Focus on **racial equity** in all planning activities.
- Promote **authentic power-sharing** across participants.

Development of the plan was also guided by the following parameters:

- Meet the legislative mandates of California Proposition 10 and San Francisco “Baby” Proposition C (2018), which together focus on early learning, child health and family support
- Be responsive to the directives from the Mayor’s Office
- Continue to follow San Francisco City and County contracting procedures
- Focus on evidence-based practices
- Build on lessons learned from previous work and planning

HOW can we build authentic, non-extractive relationships with parents?

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HOW can we make a measurable change in kindergarten readiness for young children, particularly for Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander children?

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HOW can we be a catalyst for true system integration?





DEC worked with a consultant, MIG, Inc., to assist with the development of the strategic plan. The following key planning questions were developed as a launching point for co-design:

- **HOW can we build authentic, non-extractive relationships with parents?** How can we build mutual trust and truly partner with parents in a power-sharing way? How do we find them, welcome them, and have them welcome us? What will they influence or make happen in the City? How will they stay engaged over time?
- **HOW can we make a measurable change in kindergarten readiness for young children, particularly for Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander children?** What needs to change? What partnerships need to be established and strengthened? What programs are needed to support this goal? How can all efforts be leveraged, integrated, and measured?

- **HOW can we be a catalyst for true system integration?**... bringing together all relevant initiatives and programs, services and supports, across organizations, sectors, geographies, ethnicities and races, missions, and funding streams? How can we create a seamless system that is open, friendly, convenient, effective, and accountable?

Please see **Appendix B** for definitions of terms that may be used in the strategic plan.

## LISTENING AND LEARNING

Seven distinct groups were engaged in co-designing both the strategic planning process and the plan. Below, we describe each group, the planning activities in which they were engaged, and a high-level summary of their feedback.

### Partners

In July 2021, MIG conducted one-on-one, influencer interviews with four key partners, including:

- Supervisor Myrna Melgar, San Francisco Board of Supervisors District 7; FIRST 5 Commissioner
- Lynn Merz, FIRST 5 Commissioner
- Dr. Zea Malawa, FIRST 5 Commissioner
- Jenny Lam, Mayor's Education Advisor

Interview participants were invited to share what was important to keep in mind as the DEC strategic plan was developed. The key themes from across the interviews are reflected below.

- **Racial Equity:** Prioritize outcomes for children of color. Racial equity should be the priority and driver for the plan.
- **Kindergarten Readiness:** Center kindergarten readiness, primarily for Black, Latino, Indigenous and Pacific Islander children.
- **Families:** Ensure the direct and ongoing engagement of families during planning and implementation.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Evaluation:** Engage stakeholders (grantees, staff, etc.) throughout the planning process. Evaluate what is and is not working for program stakeholders (e.g., institutions, City agencies, school districts, community-based organizations).

### CO-DESIGN PARTICIPANTS

- 1 Partners
- 2 DEC Staff
- 3 Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC)
- 4 Parents/Caregivers
- 5 Grantees
- 6 OECE Citizen's Advisory Council
- 7 FIRST 5 Commission

- **Key Elements of the Strategic Plan:** Ensure the Strategic Plan provides specific decision-making guidelines, as well as internal infrastructure building and strengthening.

### DEC Staff

A total of five one and a half hour sessions were held with DEC staff between September 2021 and May 2022. Twenty to 25 staff members were present at each session. These sessions allowed an opportunity to:

- Ask the key planning questions (see page 19)
- Update on engagement activities with parents and grantees
- Solicit input on the emerging themes and strategies from parent conversations
- Facilitate discussion on the strategic planning framework and generate new strategies

Key themes from discussions with staff related to strategic priorities, goals and strategies included:

- **Deep and trusting relationships:** Invest in building non-extractive relationships with parents and partners.
- **Engagement:** Provide continued engagement to parents throughout the draft of the Strategic Plan and continuing through implementation.
- **Integration:** Support integration and further alignment among existing programs and partnerships.
- **Resource coordination:** Identify and build from existing programs, resources, and efforts.
- **DEC capacity building:** Provide the infrastructure to support strategy implementation (professional development, data collection systems, internal evaluation, professional development, etc.).
- **Evaluation:** Implement mechanisms for evaluating and supporting the success of strategies.
- **Shared expectations:** Foster relationships and shared expectations among staff and partners.

### Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC)

A Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC), composed of a diverse group of 15 parents, providers, partners, and policymakers was established to advise the development of the DEC strategic plan. Over the course of the planning process, the SPAC had seven virtual sessions, between an hour and a half and two hours long, where they advised the design of parent engagement activities, reflected on

parent and stakeholder feedback, and refined and generated strategies. The meetings were conducted in English with interpretation available to those who requested it. Below is the breakdown of members seats in the SPAC.

- Parent panel representatives (4)
- Grantee representatives (3)
- Early childhood/ECE partner agency representatives (3)
- FIRST 5 Commission members (2)
- OECE Citizen's Advisory Committee members (2)
- Board of Supervisors (1)





## Parents/Caregivers

Feedback was gathered from parents in two ways: 1) convening small, multi-session conversations with families most impacted by systemic racism; and 2) conducting a pulse survey for all parents in the City to test strategies.

### *Parent Conversations*

DEC distributed an interest form for the parent conversations through numerous channels. While educating parents and caregivers about the strategic planning process, DEC was also inviting parents to participate directly in the process. A total of 899 parents responded to the initial interest form. The following is the race distribution of respondents.

- Black or of African Descent (5%)
- Asian (44%)
- Hispanic or Latino (22%)
- White or Caucasian (36%)
- I prefer not to say (7%)
- American Indian, Native American, or Indigenous (6%)
- Pacific Islander (3%)
- Middle East (2%)
- Amazigh (Indigenous North African) (1%)
- Arabic (1%)
- Lithuanian (1%)
- Mixed race (1%)
- Multi racial (1%)
- North African (1%)
- White, north African (5%)

Respondents identifying with target races and preferred languages were then randomly sampled and invited to confirm their participation in one of the following three parent

cohorts, which met between November 2021 and April 2022:

- Cohort A - African American/Black (15)
- Cohort B - Monolingual Spanish speaking (20)
- Cohort C - Monolingual Cantonese speaking (15)

For each cohort, we hosted three, two-hour, virtual conversations, where the facilitator was of the same culture and spoke the same language as participants. A total of 50 parents were engaged across all three cohorts.

**Tables 1 and 2** provide information on the income breakdown and ages of children for the 50 participants. More than half of participants make less than \$25,000 annually and had at least one child between the ages of 0 and 5 years.

### *Parent Pulse Survey*

DEC distributed the Parent Pulse Survey to residents throughout San Francisco through multiple channels. The survey asked questions about general demographic information, current use of existing services in San Francisco, and how respondents would prioritize proposed goals and strategies to be included in the strategic plan. A total of 1,565 participants responded to the survey.

For those who chose to answer the question, respondents identified as:

- Asian or Asian American (38%)
- Hispanic or Latino (20%)
- White or Caucasian (17%)
- American Indian (16%)
- Black or African Descent (8%)
- Pacific Islander (3%)

TABLE 1: INCOME DISTRIBUTION

INCOME	% OF PARTICIPANTS
Less than \$25,000	52%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	18%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2%
Prefer not to say	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

TABLE 2: AGES OF CHILDREN

AGE OF CHILD	%	NUMBERS
0–1 years old	15%	12
2–3 years old	23%	18
4–5 years old	32%	25
6–7 years old	17%	13
8+ years old	12%	9
Not raising children in SF	1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>

Most respondents, 65%, reported English as their preferred language. Approximately 25% preferred Cantonese, 23% preferred Spanish, and 15% preferred Mandarin. A significant 88% of respondents reported that their children are growing up learning more than one language.

In terms of service usage by ethnicity, we found that:

- Family Resource Centers, Parent Education, CalFRESH, and WIC are the most utilized services across all groups.
- Family Resource Centers are least utilized by Pacific Islander and Asian families.
- Latino, American Indian and Pacific Islander families reported using services for children with disabilities more than the other groups.
- Only Black or African American families reported using the warm line.

- American Indian respondents are currently accessing the least services across all groups.
- Pacific Islander families reported using school district early intervention services more than the other groups at 66.7%, compared to Hispanic or Latino utilization of the services, which was the second highest at 33.33%.

Survey respondents were asked to reflect on preliminary goals and strategies and: 1) tell us how important they felt each goal would be for their family; and 2) rank the strategies in order of how impactful they would be for their families. MIG analyzed the findings from the pulse survey and used them to validate the goals—there was strong support across all respondents, regardless of ethnicity or income level for all the goals—and to prioritize the strategies.

## Grantees

Like parents, 26 grantees participated as a cohort in a three-part conversation series during March and April of 2022. Each session was one and a half hours.

The objectives of the Grantee Sessions were to:

- Understand the emerging direction of DEC and the critical role of grantees and partners as a “network of care”
- Share ownership of the importance of parent co-design in planning and implementation
- Consider parents’ lived experience and perspectives (from parent conversations with Cohorts A & B)
- Gain insights from grantees on the most critical themes to address in the strategic plan
- Gain perspectives from grantees on how to strengthen existing initiatives/programs and where new investments should be made

Below are key findings that emerged across the conversations:

- **Culture:** Hire staff and parents that reflect the cultures and speak the languages of the families served
- **Engagement:** Provide direct funding and structures to support family engagement
- **Language:** Increase access to resources in various languages to serve diverse multilingual community
- **Collaboration:** Expand collaboration across the early childhood development network to leverage resources

- **Evaluation:** Develop methods to assess and evaluate current needs and strengths
- **Capacity:** Support providers and educators with the resources necessary to provide high-quality services
- **Communication:** Increase collaborative and targeted communication strategies to expand awareness of program across the network
- **Equity:** Advance a shared vision of anti-racism that supports multigenerational households in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways

## Oversight Bodies: OECE Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) and FIRST 5 Commission

Both the OECE Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) and the FIRST 5 Commission were engaged throughout the strategic planning process. Presentations were done to each group at the beginning of the process to understand their desired outcomes for the effort and to present the co-design approach for discussion. At each stage of the planning process, DEC leadership provided both groups with regular updates. At the end of the process, the two oversight groups came together in a special Joint Session where they were able to discuss the strategic plan framework, core components of the emerging plan, and provide feedback.



# CREATING A SHARED FOUNDATION: VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING VALUES

Through our multi-stakeholder planning process, including deep and iterative conversation with DEC staff and oversight bodies, we developed the following Vision, Mission, and Value statements to guide the new Department:

## Vision

Every child in San Francisco has the best start in life and our City is a great place to raise a family.

## Mission

To weave together family, community, and system supports so that all children who grow up in San Francisco have a strong foundation of nurturing, health, and learning.

## Guiding Values

As the Department of Early Childhood, we are committed to:

- 1. Racial Equity:** We prioritize taking concrete action with Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities to address the disparities that persist across early childhood development outcomes for their families. We hold ourselves and one another accountable to measurable change and consider equity impacts in all our shared decision making.
- 2. Universal Access:** All families should have access to high-quality education and services to support healthy early childhood development.
- 3. Collaboration with Community:** When we engage parents, providers, and grantees as partners in decision-making, we expand the reach and impact of our work for countless children and families.
- 4. Continuous Learning and Improvement:** To have our desired impact, we must consistently and frequently engage parents, providers, and grantees in helping us understand what is working well and where improvements are needed—and use what we learn to shift and adapt our work.
- 5. Transparency:** To build and maintain trusting and productive relationships, we are open, authentic, and clear in our communication with parents, providers, grantees, and staff.







03

# A Parent-Informed Theory of Change

We co-designed our strategic planning process with parents most impacted by structural racism, engaging them in deep and sustained conversations. Only by truly listening to parents about what they want for their children and implementing their feedback, could we identify the missing link between current investments and the outcomes we aspire to achieve.

Time and time again, parents affirmed that the City is already investing in the right services. However, parent insight made it clear that to address racialized outcomes, we must advance racial equity across our system of care by improving the user experience, accessibility, and delivery of all programs and services.

## WHAT WE HEARD FROM PARENTS

The parent conversations were rich and meaningful. Participants were candid and passionate about their hopes and concerns for their children and themselves and the support they would like to see from an early childhood system of care. The theme that cut across all three cohorts reinforced findings from the literature—the early childhood system of care is doing many things well, but not all families in San Francisco are benefitting equally.

A full summary of the findings from the parent cohort conversations can be found in **Appendix A**. Below, we provide a high-level summary of the key themes that emerged across the cohorts.

### Theme #1: Parent Engagement and Leadership

Parents want to be well informed and engaged. They want to be engaged as leaders and equal partners. They expressed frustration with the lack of information, particularly about how families can access early care and education, parent support, and family resources. Some parents want more direct access to information and value being connected to peers for support and knowledge sharing. Some parents valued partnering with knowledgeable staff to navigate and access resources. To address the unique needs and preferences of each family, parents want DEC to offer a variety of user-friendly



Parents want high-quality early care and education environments for their children. An important theme that emerged was that parents want settings to be culturally responsive, including both an understanding and reflection of language, and engaging all aspects of cultural life.

tangible tools and hands-on support to assist them in the parenting journey and in navigating the system of care that supports families with young children.

### **Theme #2: Race & Racism**

Black/African American and monolingual, Spanish-Speaking Latino/Hispanic and Cantonese-Speaking parents identified racism and English-centered communication as barriers to getting the support they need. They want to feel welcome and included in their communities. They want early education and service environments to be responsive to their culture, language, and insights about their own children. And they want to see themselves in the staff working with their children and see their cultures understood, represented, and valued.

### **Theme #3: Kindergarten Readiness**

Parents would like to be full partners in preparing their children for kindergarten. They want early care and education programs to support their children in developing both the social-emotional and concrete skills required for success. They also want more information on kindergarten expectations, so they know what to do at home to support a successful transition to school. The array of options available can be confusing, and they want to know how to choose a care setting and school that is best for their child and family.

### **Theme #4: Family Wellness**

Black/African American and monolingual, Spanish-Speaking Latino/Hispanic and monolingual Cantonese speaking children and their parents are experiencing trauma at a higher rate and often do not feel supported or welcomed in the City. Parents expressed concern for their children's well-being and mental health, as well as their own. They would

like access to culturally responsive mental health services and community programs that support healing and wellness.

### **Theme #5: Child Care Access**

Parents want early care and education to be more accessible. This means many things to them including knowing how to find it, being able to afford it, knowing how to assess the quality, having quality options in their neighborhoods, having culturally responsive options close to where they live, and care at hours that support parents who work full day, evenings, and weekends. And it is critical that all information is provided in the multiple languages spoken by families in San Francisco.

### **Theme #6: Child Care Quality**

Parents want high-quality early care and education environments for their children. An important theme that emerged was that parents want settings to be culturally responsive, including both an understanding and reflection of language, and engaging all aspects of cultural life. Quality also means that early learning environments are designed for working with children of all abilities and supporting healthy social/emotional development.

### **Theme #7: Early Intervention and Inclusion**

Parents talked about wanting support for their children of all abilities. They want early care and education settings to be inclusive and providers to be skilled in working with all children, regardless of ability or behavior challenge. They also need access to early intervention services, like speech therapy. Finally, parents whose children have special needs want free and low-cost parenting classes and connections with culturally specific peer networks for support and skill development.



## Theme #8: Family Security

Black/African American and monolingual, Spanish-Speaking Latino/Hispanic and monolingual Cantonese-speaking parents want to meet their children's basic needs. Many spoke about the challenges of being low-income but not destitute—they make too much to be eligible for safety net programs. Some families reported inadequate access to quality services or no services at all. Parents also voiced concerns about their children being safe in their neighborhoods and early care and K-12 educational settings.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

The Office of Early Care and Education and First 5 San Francisco have been building the components of an early childhood system of care to address the identified needs. The core initiatives of our legacy organizations have already established strategies that start to address the shortage of early care and education placements, build a system to provide support to parents and identify and support children experiencing developmental, physical, and mental health challenges.

Parents consistently affirmed that the City is investing in the right core initiatives and strategies. But they also told us that core initiative strategies need to be adjusted and expanded to better serve them in specific ways—often related to cultural and linguistic differences specific to monolingual Spanish and Chinese speaking children and families and to bias encountered specific to Black children and families.

In other words, to address racialized outcomes in kindergarten readiness, we must advance racial equity across our system of care by improving the user experience, accessibility, and delivery of all programs and services.

The DEC strategic plan is structured according to a theory of change that centers on this key finding. It begins with a recognition of the challenges faced by San Francisco's young children and their families and describes DEC's three "core strategies" to solving these challenges that cover early learning, child health, and family strength. In accordance with parent input, we will continue to develop and expand these core strategies while also implementing improvements specific to equitable access and



IMAGE 2: DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD THEORY OF CHANGE



experiences—which we are calling “Strategic Priorities”. **These critical Strategic Priorities are:**

- 1. Amplify parent voice and influence in shaping policy and programs**
- 2. Increase cultural responsiveness of all early childhood development services**
- 3. Increase transparency in communications and open access to information and services**

If DEC and its grantees and partners are successful in carrying out these plans, we expect to see improvements in children’s kindergarten readiness, children’s health and access to quality health care, and families’ sense of self efficacy—and that race will no longer be a determinant of these critical outcomes.

Chapter 4 of this strategic plan will detail the work we are already engaged and planning to engage in to expand our core initiatives. Chapter 5 will highlight the strategic priorities DEC views as the path to ensure our core strategies fulfill their promise to eliminate racial disparities in the outcomes that define our work.



04

# Building on Our Core Work

This section describes current, in-process, and upcoming work to expand and improve our core strategies and the associated initiatives, programs, and services.

Seven key initiatives are foundational to DEC's ongoing work. While evaluation is ongoing, existing quantitative and qualitative data indicate these efforts are promising and valued by early educators and families. Below, the initiatives are organized under DEC's three core strategies.

## CORE STRATEGY 1: EARLY LEARNING

We support teacher preparation and compensation, enhance program quality, and improve affordability and access.

### Initiatives

#### 1. Early Learning San Francisco

**Goal:** All children have access to high-quality early care and education experiences to help them explore, learn, and arrive at school ready to succeed.

**Description:** Early Learning San Francisco (ELS) provides financial assistance to pay for quality early care and education to eligible San Francisco families with children 0-5 years old. More than 400 Early Care and Education Centers and Family Child Care Homes

across San Francisco have been qualified to participate in ELS. Participating programs prioritize quality early learning programming and continuity of care for children.

The ELS Initiative also works to expand access through early childhood education facilities development and support for field-building and advocacy efforts at the local, state, and federal levels.

#### 2. Workforce Compensation Initiative

**Goal:** Increasing compensation to support a well-educated, well-compensated, and stable workforce that achieves parity with SFUSD TK-12 teachers with equivalent education will improve outcomes for San Francisco's children and families.

**Description:** Through grants and educator stipends, the Workforce Compensation Initiative advances pay raises, increases benefits, improves working conditions, and supports educational attainment for San Francisco's workforce of over 2,500 early educators working at City-funded early care and education programs.



# EARLY LEARNING SAN FRANCISCO

## What are we doing now?

Across San Francisco there are a variety of programs that provide quality early care and education for children 0-5 but it is not always affordable, impacting who is able to access these programs. Early Learning San Francisco (ELS) provides financial assistance to eligible families to help pay for participating Early Care and Education Centers and Family Child Care Homes throughout San Francisco. In the last few years, the initiative has expanded subsidy eligibility to families earning up to 110% of the Area Median Income (AMI) (around \$150k annually for a family of four).

More than 400 participating programs go through a process of validation to demonstrate that they meet or are in the process of meeting 10 quality standards so parents can feel secure in their choice. The ELS Initiative also works with all participating programs to provide training, technical assistance, coaching and additional grant opportunities so staff are continuously improving and learning best practices resulting in better outcomes for the children.

ELS programs prioritize quality and continuity of care so all children have access to high-quality early care and education experiences so they can explore, learn, and grow and arrive at school ready to succeed.

## What's next (2023-2024)?

DEC will continue to expand the ELS network. In addition, in accordance with the Early Care and Education for All Initiative (Baby Prop C) requirements, and consistent with our strategic direction, DEC has begun implementation planning to expand subsidy

eligibility to families earning up to 200% of AMI. We will intentionally align the subsidy eligibility expansion planning with Transitional Kindergarten (TK) implementation, which is part of our work to build a universal preschool (UPK) system with the school district. Based on lessons learned from prior expansion efforts, we are taking a phased approach to ensure changes to the system are meaningfully informed by the needs of families and children and that those in greatest need are receiving high quality early care and education. We are centering equity and excellence in initiative designs to improve outcomes for children and their families.

## TEN QUALITY STANDARDS

- 1 Child Assessment & Observation
- 2 Curriculum
- 3 Developmental Screening
- 4 Family Partnership
- 5 Environment
- 6 Interactions
- 7 Ratio & Group Size
- 8 Professional Development
- 9 Qualifications
- 10 Continuous Quality Improvement



## WORKFORCE COMPENSATION INITIATIVE

### What are we doing now?

The Workforce Compensation Initiative, which recently launched July 1, 2022, is the first early childhood educator wage initiative of its kind in the nation. Through grants and educator stipends, the Workforce Compensation Initiative advances pay raises, increases benefits, improves working conditions, and supports educational attainment for San Francisco's workforce of over 2,500 early educators working at City-funded early care and education programs. Our work in Phases I and II of the Initiative will bring all eligible early educators working in City-funded early learning programs to a minimum wage of \$28/hour by 2025.

By providing additional compensation to support a well-educated, well-compensated and stable workforce, it will provide an environment that produces improved outcomes

for San Francisco's children and families. Alongside an increase in wages, funding for improving workplace conditions is also included which results in improved teacher job satisfaction and well-being ultimately benefiting the child. This investment will enable educators to be more fairly paid for their crucial work, and help attract new, quality educators to the field.

### What's next (2023-2024)?

DEC will begin Phase II and IV implementation, where we will launch a collaborative planning process with program administrators in centers and family child care, and classroom teachers, to get their insights on how best to support educational attainment and improve educator workplace environments.

### 3. San Francisco Quality Connections

**Goal:** Give early educators the tools, training, and support they need to provide rich, high-quality early learning experiences that prepare children for school success.

**Description:** San Francisco Quality Connections provides a framework, standards, and quality improvement supports for early learning programs. It creates a powerful professional development path for early educators, helping them continually assess and improve the quality of their services.

## CORE STRATEGY 2: CHILD HEALTH

We ensure universal developmental screening and promote access to health and mental health services for children and their families.

### Initiatives

#### 1. Help Me Grow

**Goal:** Ensure that all children receive developmental screenings in early childhood, and that those who need it receive access to early intervention services.

**Description:** Help Me Grow SF brings together families, health care providers, and early educators acting as a liaison between the various programs and professionals in a child's life to develop comprehensive 0-5 screening history for each child in San Francisco, clear referral pathways for providers, and continuity for families receiving supports.

#### 2. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

**Goal:** Build collective and individual capacity to understand the powerful influence of educators' and staff relationships and interactions on young children's development to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral health of children in early education and family resource center programs.

**Description:** Early childhood mental health professionals work with early educators, family resource center staff and parents to understand and meet the needs of young children struggling with mental and behavioral health challenges through on-site observation and consultation, intervention modeling, teacher trainings, and resource referrals.

#### 3. Child Care Health Program

**Goal:** Close school readiness gaps by enhancing the health and safety of children, birth to five years, in San Francisco early childhood education and family resource center settings.

**Description:** The Child Care Health Program (CCHP) is offered by the Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Section of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) in partnership with DEC. Multilingual Public Health Nurses, Health Workers, a Registered Dental Hygienist, and a Certified Audio metrist offer services to improve child care and Family Resource Center environments, programming, policy, and care, such as:

- Health and Safety Consultations
- Dental, Vision, Hearing and Nutrition Screenings
- Disaster and Emergency Preparedness and Response



## HELP ME GROW SF

### What are we doing now?

The goal of Help Me Grow SF is that all children receive developmental screenings in early childhood, and that those who need it receive access to early intervention services. The Initiative brings together families, health care providers, family resource centers, and early educators to ensure that all children receive developmental screenings in early childhood before kindergarten entry. Screening results inform ongoing inclusive strategies to support healthy development of all children and connection to appropriate early intervention services when needed.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, screening tools and information were distributed to early learning sites, early learning coaches, and health care providers via hard-copy paper handouts. When the pandemic hit, this already outdated delivery method became untenable. DEC is now piloting Sparkler – a family mobile app in multiple languages making developmental screening digitally and easily accessible to families, primary clinics, FRCs and ECE providers. The Sparkler platform empowers families and service providers with engaging, explorative learning activities to support and strengthen their child's communication, gross-motor, fine-motor, problem-solving, and personal-social-emotional development.

### What's next (2023-2024)?

Over the next year, DEC plans to expand implementation of the Sparkler app across the entire network of care, including family childcare homes and all ELS early learning programs. We will also be collaborating with early educators, early education coaches, health care providers, family resource centers and families to create a system that better centralizes and coordinates screening results across different settings to ensure we are identifying children's needs early, providing access to care coordination and inclusion support and connecting all children that can benefit from intervention services as early as possible.



Parents are  
recognized as key  
decision-makers  
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to thrive.



### CORE STRATEGY 3: FAMILY STRENGTH

Family Resource Centers share the values of this strategic plan to honor parent leadership and follow the lead of parents in developing service and support offerings. DEC's continued investment in Family Resource Centers ensures that families have opportunities for social and professional connections, linkage to resources, and information on parenting and child development.

#### Initiatives

##### 1. Family Resource Center Initiative

**Goal:** Parents are recognized as key decision-makers in their child's well-being, and have access to the information, programs, and resources they need to thrive.

**Description:** Family Resource Centers (FRCs) provide community-based services where families can join other families in fun activities that enhance their knowledge and skills as parents. FRCs bring together lived experience and real-world knowledge to strengthen parents' confidence and support the needs of families in their neighborhoods.





## FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER INITIATIVE

### What are we doing now?

Throughout the City of San Francisco there are 26 Family Resource Centers (FRCs) that operate under a shared vision built on families who are thriving, connected and able to support their children's lifelong success. Located throughout every neighborhood, FRCs provide safe places where families can join other families in fun activities that enhance their knowledge and skills as parents.

DEC funds the Family Resource Centers in collaboration with other City Departments including the Human Services Agency, Department of Children, Youth, and their Families and the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development. We have been funding this initiative since 2009 and while FRCs serve all families from pregnancy through to children who are 17, the services

funded through our support are geared towards families with young children including playgroups, support groups, education classes, necessities such as diapers and more.

Our role with FRCs goes beyond just a funder. We work very closely with each FRC to structure the services that will be most beneficial to families and to ensure those services are being provided. We also provide ongoing training for all levels of staff at the FRC's, so they are equipped with the best tools and informed on the best practices to serve families with young children.

DEC recognizes that parents are the key decision-makers in their child's well-being and our support of FRCs grants them access to the information, programs, and resources they need to thrive. With our whole family approach,

serving parents and caregivers ultimately results in better outcomes for the child. FRCs are a key component in the system of care and DEC has a vested interest in their success for years to come.

### What's next (2023-2024)?

The Family Resource Center (FRC) Initiative is going to be re-procured in early 2023. As DEC determines the most effective funding structures for Family Resource Centers over the next five years, we will consider neighborhood demographics, needs, and opportunities to take an equity-based approach to grant-making. FRC initiative planning will also include exploring efforts to improve connections and establish more linkages between systems, such as child/maternal health (e.g., public health nurses, lactation, doulas support), pediatric clinics, ECE settings, home visiting programs, and SFUSD schools. As FRCs are highlighted in the county's discussions and communications around the proposed Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Prevention Plan, DEC will actively participate in FFPSA planning and explore leveraging other sources to support the development of evidence-based programming (EBP), eligible for FFPSA funds, as well as the infrastructure needed for the EBP implementation. As a City, FRCs are positioned to partner with neighborhood schools to improve the experiences of children and families, including closer alignment and service coordination with the Community Hubs and Summer Together programming; and further exploring other networks that deepen school partnerships, particularly with new opportunities that may arise through the Student Success Charter Amendment. These improved connections and formalized referral partnerships will result in building strengthened family-provider partnerships.

## NUMBERS



26

Family Resource  
Centers



8,800

Average # of adult  
participants per year



5,350

Average # of child  
participants per year





05



# The Imperative of Advancing Racial Equity

We carefully processed the findings from the literature and the feedback from parents and other stakeholders, each time intentionally and sincerely examining whether we were accurately discerning the key messages.

Overall, the findings reinforced the continued need for key initiatives, such as the Workforce Compensation Initiative, Family Resource Centers, and Help Me Grow. The input from Parents, SPAC, Grantees, and DEC staff also consistently contained themes for improving services:

- Early care and education environments and other early childhood services should embed culturally responsive practices for our diverse cultures of families in San Francisco. This creates culturally and linguistically tailored programming that increases opportunities for optimum early childhood development.
- Historically underserved families in San Francisco are still struggling to find information and to access early care and education, early intervention, behavioral health, and family support services.
- Parents want to be engaged in the decisions that affect them and their children, and they want to support other families in their communities.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND PRIORITIES

In response to specific and consistent input on our funded activities, DEC will focus efforts to **advance racial equity in policy, planning, and service delivery across the early childhood network of care**. For the next five years, DEC will look to review and examine our core funded activities through the lens of strategic priorities that will guide the implementation of DEC initiatives. The priorities address the input from parents on improvements for the network of care for their children and families. DEC priorities will be:

- **Strategic Priority 1:** Amplify parent voice and influence in shaping policy and programs.
- **Strategic Priority 2:** Increase cultural responsiveness of all early childhood development services.
- **Strategic Priority 3:** Increase transparency in communications and open access to information and services.



## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

This section presents the goals and strategies related to the five-year strategic priorities. Strategies to advance racial equity and address DEC's strategic priorities fall under three broad categories:

- 1. Establish guiding framework**—To ensure racial equity is at the center of policy, planning and service delivery, DEC, working with the network of care, needs to define a common language and set of organizational and behavioral standards.
- 2. Enhance existing initiatives and programs**—Many of DEC's existing initiatives and programs are relevant and must be enhanced to ensure effectiveness in reaching and meeting the unique needs of Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities, and families whose primary language is not English, and for families with children who have special needs.
- 3. Influence systems change**—Some key changes needed to advance racial equity are not entirely within DEC's scope of authority, partnering with and influencing other systems to shift their approaches is also a critical approach.

**Cross-Cutting Change Strategy:** This strategy cuts across all three strategic priorities.

### ESTABLISH GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Develop and adopt a racial equity framework for the early childhood development network of care in San Francisco. At a minimum, the framework will include the following elements:

- Shared equity definitions
- An approach to equity-centered planning and budgeting
- Standards for culturally effective and responsive community outreach, communications and marketing, service delivery, and evaluation

Incentivize, fund, provide training and technical assistance, and hold shared accountability for implementation of frameworks across funded programs.

**Strategic Priority 1:** Amplify parent voice and influence in shaping policy and programs.

**Goal:** Expand sustained opportunities for meaningful parent partnership, connection, and leadership across the early childhood development network to center parent perspective in planning and decision-making.

### Change Strategies

#### ENHANCE EXISTING INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

In partnership with families and community stakeholders, assess all current initiatives and programs to better incorporate parent engagement and community partnership.

Establish a formalized parent oversight structure to support implementation of change strategies and guide ongoing policy, program, evaluation, and investment decisions. Invest time in creating a process that is parent-led and ensures equitable representation for groups that have not historically had equal access to the policy process.

#### INFLUENCE SYSTEMS CHANGE

Co-design parent leadership development opportunities to build parents' capacity to engage in and lead systems change efforts. Integrate parent leadership into existing grants and create a mechanism to position parent leaders as power brokers.



**Strategic Priority 2:** Increase cultural responsiveness of all early childhood development services.

**Goal:** Ensure supported programs and initiatives affirm diverse cultures and are culturally and linguistically appropriate and responsive.

**Change Strategies**

<b>ENHANCE EXISTING INITIATIVES &amp; PROGRAMS</b>	In partnership with families and community stakeholders, assess all current initiatives and programs to better incorporate culturally affirming and responsive practice lens.
	Invest in new service pathways and innovation grants to increase access and responsiveness within existing initiatives and programs.
<b>INFLUENCE SYSTEMS CHANGE</b>	Support, partner, advocate for and invest in pipeline programs and pathways for underrepresented groups (e.g., Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities) and parent leaders to enter and advance in early care and education and related early childhood careers and expand availability of services.

**Strategic Priority 3:** Increase transparency in communications and open access to information and services.

**Goal:** Ensure families in San Francisco receive user-friendly information and can access the early childhood services they need.

### Change Strategies

#### ENHANCE EXISTING INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

In partnership with families and community stakeholders, assess all current initiatives and programs to ensure all outreach and communications efforts are culturally effective and responsive.

Fund, incentivize, and promote culturally specific roles, e.g., Promotoras and/or Parent Peer to Peer Parent Navigators. Enable parents and community members to assist other parents with information about services and supports and to expand parent support staff that represent the cultures and speak the languages of San Francisco families.

#### INFLUENCE SYSTEMS CHANGE

Design and launch targeted, culturally affirming, parent-focused public education campaigns for priority populations to increase awareness and understanding of the early learning and early childhood service system, kindergarten readiness, child development, early literacy, and quality early learning environments.

Expand eligibility for early care and education financial support to include middle income families who cannot reasonably afford market-rate child care.



06



# What Matters Most

This strategic plan is responsive to the voices of San Francisco families. Their call is for meaningful action and accountability to address the persistent inequities for Black, Latino, Indigenous, Pacific Islander and marginalized communities. We know all too well that when children do not get what they need in the earliest years to promote healthy development, their life course trajectory can be forever altered. We have the opportunity and the imperative to do better.

## NETWORK APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

As all strong leaders do, DEC recognizes that it is part of a broader network of passionate and talented early childhood development advocates and providers. We have a shared vision for a San Francisco where no child is marginalized, underserved, or oppressed—where every child thrives. As we move into the implementation phase of our work, we will do so in collaboration with our grantees, early educators, partners, and parents.

We are committed to promising early childhood programming on a larger scale than ever before, funding well-established services that can benefit from continued innovation. Given our understanding of early childhood, it is imperative

we fuel innovation to apply learnings and develop more effective interventions and approaches. We will design strategy implementation in partnership with those who have the professional and lived experience to ensure our investments will be responsive and effective. Working together, we will define and measure the quality of implementation, employing continuous quality improvement to ensure that service recipients are getting what they need, the way they need it. We will grapple with obstacles to success and learn together, bringing in additional expertise and technical assistance to grantees as needed. Recognizing that effective implementation takes time and discipline, we will allocate the resources needed to ensure that the drivers for success are in place.

## FUTURE PLANNING

This strategic plan provides direction and focus for our work over the next five years. The overarching findings and principles in this plan will guide DEC's additional and ongoing planning efforts to ensure we are effective, accountable, and impactful. Several of the most significant efforts are described below.

### 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Revision

DEC's enacting ordinance took effect on October 8, 2022, toward the tail-end of our 2023-2027 strategic planning process. The enacting ordinance details requirements for the DEC strategic plan, most of which are already covered in this current plan. The ordinance, however, specifies several additional requirements for the DEC plan that will necessitate further community engagement, data/needs assessment, and collaborative planning work. These include:

- Developing goals for early care and education programs that align with emerging developments in state or federal early care and education policy, and address professional development needs of center-based, family child care providers and, to the extent resources allow, license-exempt care providers;
- Addressing neighborhood-specific needs, including school readiness, subsidy availability, children's dual language development, facility development, parent engagement and education, inclusion of children with special needs, and provider support for both family child care homes and early care and education centers;

- Including a set of equity metrics to be used to compare existing early care and education services and resources in low-income and disadvantaged communities with early care and education services and resources available in the City as a whole;
- An assessment and analysis of the unmet funding needs for family support services for those caring for children ages zero to five and how the Department plans to expand and leverage funding; and coordinate with other relevant City departments, including, by way of example but not limitation, the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, Human Services Agency, Department of Public Health and Office of Economic and Work Force Development to meet those unmet funding needs.

As indicated in the enacting ordinance, DEC will submit a revised plan that includes the requirements above no later than January 2024.

### Evaluation Planning

Building on this Strategic Plan, the Department will develop a comprehensive Evaluation Plan that expands on the high-level outcomes described in the Department Theory of Change. The evaluation plan will address the quality of implementation and effectiveness of DEC's core strategies, as well as how well the Department adapts these strategies to reflect the strategic priorities of amplifying parent voice and influence, increasing cultural responsiveness, and increasing access to information and services. The evaluation plan will center on short- and long-term outcomes for San Francisco's young children and their families, and will focus on advancing racial equity to drastically improve the early childhood experiences and outcomes for Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities.



We intend to engage directly with parents and families to develop evaluation metrics and methodologies that are inclusive, representative, equitable, and relevant. With this in mind, we anticipate completing the evaluation plan by January 2024.

### Racial Equity Planning

The Department has launched an internal Racial Equity Task Force to build better systems of accountability for equitable outcomes into all aspects of its initiative and program design, procurement, implementation, and evaluation. The Task Force is initially focused on developing an official stance on racial equity to communicate its goals and approach both internally and externally, as well as prioritizing infusion of racial equity goals and actions into key programs and initiatives that are either launching or going through new procurements in the current fiscal year. We will build on the work of the Racial Equity Task Force to develop the guiding framework for racial equity described in this Strategic Plan.

### OUR COMMITMENT

Our commitment is to achieve the vital goals put forth in this plan. As the Department of Early Childhood launches, we will align our organizational operations, including staffing, professional development, communications, budgeting, and procurement to our vision for equity. We will also develop a rigorous evaluation framework and plan for DEC, and hold ourselves and our grantees accountable for activating measurable change over the next five years.

DEC will put its values into action. As we take the next steps to develop our implementation plan, we will continue the co-design process, keeping voices of parents at the center of our work to ensure that our strategies are implemented in a way that is responsive to their needs and lived experience. We will use an intentional continuous improvement process, integrating feedback loops with parents, early educators, and providers, so that we understand what is working well and where we may need to change course.

What matters most are our children. And what matters most is that every child in San Francisco gets the best start in life.



# Appendix A: Parent Feedback Summary





## Co-Designing the Future: A Strategic Plan for the Department of Early Childhood

PARENT THEMES & STRATEGIES – COHORTS A, B, & C



San Francisco Office  
of Early Care & Education



**First 5**  
SAN FRANCISCO



## Co-Design Overview



San Francisco Office  
of Early Care & Education

## WHY PRACTICE CO-DESIGN?



### More Equitable Practice

Co-Design is a practice that empowers groups who are traditionally disenfranchised, turning the savior designer complex on it's head.



### More likely to be maintained

When people are part of the design of their own world they are more likely to maintain and improve it.



### Better Ideas From More People

Each member of a co-design team brings ideas from their own lived experience which creates new valuable pathways for innovation.

## CO-DESIGNING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Intentional** about co-designing the process and plan from the very beginning
- **Many different voices** (parents, providers, and partners)
- Input will be used to **inform the approach** and plan development
- Centering **parent** voice
- Focus on **racial equity**
- Focus on strategies for **power-sharing**





## CO-DESIGNING

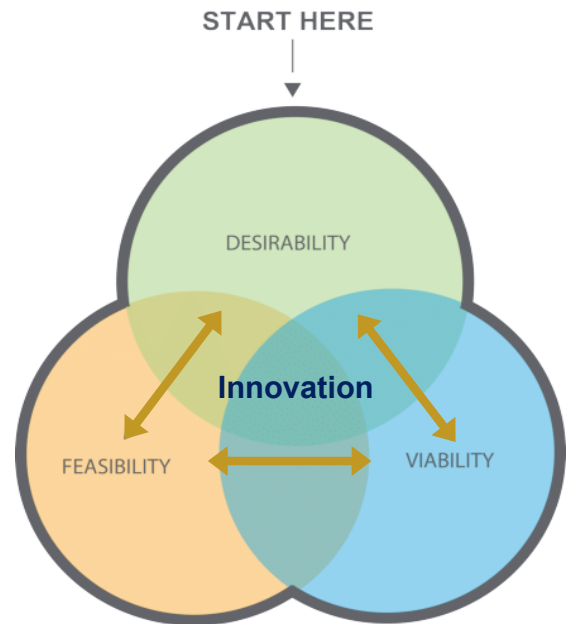
*“Co-design is the **collaborative process** where problems are solved through the use of **participatory design methods** and **power sharing**.”*

**Innovation** happens at the alignment of what is desirable, feasible, and viable

**Desirable**—What families and providers want and need to achieve their aspirations.

**Feasible**—DEC can meet the need within a reasonable level of effort, difficulty, and expense.

**Viable**—The solution has a good return on investment and DEC can sustain it for a length of time to create the desired impact.



## Understanding Parent Perspectives



## SPIRIT AND PURPOSE OF CO-DESIGN

The new San Francisco Department of Early Childhood is **committed to centering parent voice and racial equity** in strategic planning and ongoing work.

We cannot make the progress we want by maintaining the status quo, so we are **co-designing our strategic plan** with parents, grantees and partners.

We have created unique **spaces for parents to share their needs and priorities, particularly those from diverse cultural groups** that are represented in the San Francisco population, such as Asian (36%), Latino/Hispanic (15.2%), Black/African American (5.6%), and Asian Pacific Islanders (.5%)

The ideas that emerge from co-design sessions will inform the Department's **actionable investments**.



## THREE PARENT CO-DESIGN COHORTS



**COHORT A:**  
Black/African  
American



**COHORT B:**  
Latino/Hispanic,  
monolingual  
Spanish-speaking



**COHORT C:**  
Chinese,  
monolingual  
Cantonese-speaking



## COHORTS A & B

Summary #1 includes perspectives from Cohorts A & B

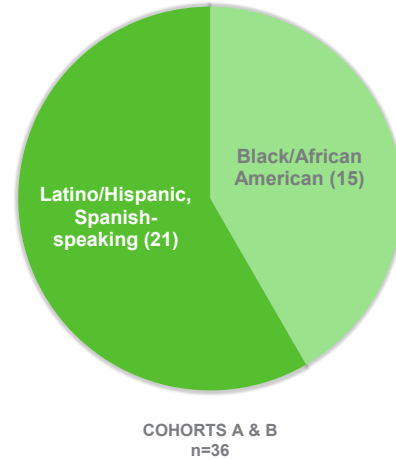
Total of **36** parents

### Cohort A:

- Black/African American parents
- **15** over 3, 2-hour sessions in Dec 2021

### Cohort B:

- Latino/Hispanic monolingual Spanish-speaking parents
- **21** over 3, 2-hour sessions in Jan 2022



## SESSION TOPICS: COHORTS A & B

	Cohort A: Black/African American Parents	Cohort B: Latino/Hispanic, Spanish-Speaking Parents
<b>Session 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Questions: What is most exciting to you? What concerns you? What would make you feel authentically heard?</li> <li>• What topics would you like to discuss further?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Questions: What is most exciting to you? What concerns you? What would make you feel authentically heard?</li> <li>• What topics would you like to discuss further?</li> </ul>
<b>Session 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Tangible Services and Resources</li> <li>• Making the System Work Better for Parent</li> <li>• Building Authentic Relationships with Parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Tangible Services and Resources</li> <li>• Making the System Work Better for Parents</li> <li>• Building Authentic Relationships with Parents</li> </ul>
<b>Session 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten Readiness</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten Readiness</li> <li>• Language Access and Supports Needed</li> </ul>







## CONTENT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

- Entered all parent comments from meeting notes into spreadsheet
- If comment addressed more than one issue, we broke it into several comments accordingly
- Analyzed a total of **237** comments across both cohorts and comments for each individual cohort (**Cohort A=108** and **Cohort B=129**) by identifying:
  - Impact Area
  - Primary Theme
  - Strategy (if a specific strategy was mentioned by participant)



# Findings – Primary Themes



## THEME #1

### Parent Engagement and Leadership

Parents want to be **well informed and engaged**. They expressed **frustration with the lack of information and transparency**, particularly about how families can access early care and education, parent support, and family resources. Some parents want **more direct access to information** and **value being connected to peers** for support and knowledge sharing. They want to be **engaged as leaders and equal partners**. Others want tangible tools and **hands-on support** to assist them in the parenting journey and in navigating the system of care that supports families with young children.



## THEME #1

### Parent Engagement and Leadership

#### In their words...

"Can parents get the list of all programs to see [what] I qualify for? I heard about a program later on, but is there a gate keeper to choose who gets into it? I want a list for all parents (low-income, single parents) to understand what is out there! Someone has that list, but it is not being shared even with caseworkers. If the goal is to help people, why is this information not being shared out to the public?"

"Awareness of services is a big one for me. There are more programs I learn about with each child I have that have been around as long as my oldest child that I had no idea about and could have really, really used."

"Parenting in general. It's hard to tailor your parenting for all your kids, because what works for one may not work for another child. I thought I knew what I was doing, but each child is different, needs, personalities, etc. Parenting resources would be very beneficial. Haven't seen resources for parents that you don't have to pay for."

"I am excited about the information that you are offering us. As parents, we do not know about the workshops for mothers and parents. We don't have access to that information. The lack of information is what keeps us from not being in these programs."



## THEME #2

### Race & Racism

Black/African American and Monolingual, Spanish-Speaking Latino/Hispanic parents identified **racism and English-centered communication as barriers** to getting the support they need. They want to **feel welcome and included** in their communities. They want early education and service environments to be responsive to their **culture, language, and insights** about their own children. And they want to **see themselves in the staff** working with their children and see their cultures understood, represented and celebrated.





## THEME #2

### Race & Racism

#### In their words...

"Providers need training on culture. They need to understand background. They need to know what we are facing in our community."

"[They say] 'She needs to tone it down' but that is not right, dealing with someone that can relate and not assume things about parents."

"It would be awesome if there was some kind of training on culture where they understand the culture and the community they are serving. When you are dealing with each culture it is good to understand their background and when you don't understand their background it's hard to communicate. If I'm African American and my worker is of another culture/another race it is a barrier with my worker because there is no understanding here."

"We need more advocates and people who care, who have been through it. want to see people who look like me and talk like me."

"The languages is very difficult, and I get frustrated with the communication. It makes me want to not say anything and stay away instead of fighting for it."



## THEME #3

### Kindergarten Readiness

Parents would like to be **full partners** in preparing their children for kindergarten. They want **early care and education programs to support their children** in developing both the **social-emotional and concrete skills** required for success. They also want more information on kindergarten expectations, so they **know what to do at home** to support a successful transition to school. The array of options available can be confusing, and they want to know **how to choose a care setting and school** that is best for their child and family.



## THEME #3

### Kindergarten Readiness

#### In their words...

"[My] daughter is in TK [Transitional Kindergarten] and the teacher worked with mother directly—hands-on, especially personal care stuff—tie their shoes use to be something they would teach in school but not anymore—and being comfortable telling another adult that they need to use the restroom, and the rules—having a buddy, hall pass, asking for permission, etc. How can we prepare them in a realistic way at home so that it is not a free-fall of kids coming at different levels."

"It was essential to find a daycare that helps with the transition. All [my] kids went to the same daycare (a retired teacher). She has curriculum "Baby University" to teach kids about going to "Big Kids Schools" + kids learn their colors, site words, kindergarten things to be ready. Daycare provider was [also] passionate about social emotional health - they do meditation."

"It is important to introduce the children to the school. As parents, this would help a lot to have a coach or a mentor who can support the parents, especially if it is their first child."

"I am also confused if it would be better to be educated at a preschool or a daycare."



## THEME #4

### Family Wellness

Black / African American and Monolingual, Spanish-Speaking Latino/Hispanic children and their parents are **experiencing trauma at a higher rate** and often do not feel supported or welcomed in the City. Parents expressed **concern for their children's well being** and mental health, as well as their own. They would like **access to culturally responsive mental health services and community programs** that support healing and wellness.



## THEME #4

### Family Wellness

#### In their words...

"There was no support after my nephew was gunned down - there was no support for their children and their mental health. This was a baby, and these are still little kids that are being overlooked now that they are back in school and interacting with other little kids. SF just pushed them out and forgot."

"That's one thing I am very big on is parenting resources and mental health resources for kids, because there are things that they deal with and internalize that we don't even realize that transfer over into their interactions in the classroom that can interfere with their educational experiences and just like experiences in general."

"Finding a relatable therapist or programs that are tailored to what I am looking for versus what is offered. Long wait list for providers that I would like to connect with or programs that I am interested in that would be a good fit for myself or my family. Not finding the right person to talk to, someone that can understand. cultural background."

"[There are] not enough African American providers."



## THEME #5

### Child Care Access

Parents want early care and education to be more accessible. This means many things to them including knowing **how to find it**, being able to **afford it**, knowing how to **assess the quality**, having quality options **in their neighborhoods**, having **culturally responsive** options close to where they live, and care at hours that **support parents who work full day, evenings, and weekends**. And it is critical that **all information is provided in the multiple languages** spoken by families in San Francisco.





## THEME #5

### Child Care Access

#### In their words...

"If your resources are limited and you don't have transportation it is harder to bring your kids to the nicer schools out of the area code."

"[We're] not destitute but not rich either. Being a working parent seems to be a detriment to getting resources more than being a non-working parent. Would like to see more resources for parents that are not unemployed to be able to get resources. We might not need as much resources later, but we do need something in the beginning."

"Sometimes is hard for parents, not every daycare is going to accommodate the full work schedule. How to accommodate for childcare for later schedules?"

"What if you work until 7:00 but the childcare ends at 5:00? Who is there? What systems support parents who work late and cannot pick their children up?"



## THEME #6

### Child Care Quality

Parents want **high-quality early care and education environments** for their children. An important theme that emerged was that parents want **settings to be culturally responsive**, including both an understanding and reflection of language, beliefs, rituals, and ways of life. Quality also means that environments are **skilled in working with children of all abilities** and supporting **healthy social/emotional development**.



## THEME #6

### Child Care Quality

#### In their words...

"Prioritize services to fund: child care providers that are responsive, responsible, and active (not using the system as a placeholder)."

"Long wait-lists for these relatable providers. You are very lucky and blessed when you do find someone that looks like you (representation)"

"Language is the largest barrier for us."

"[We need] more people to help teachers in the classroom. There is not enough control in the classroom."



## THEME #7

### Early Intervention and Inclusion

Parents talked about wanting **support for their children of all abilities**. They want early care and education settings to be **inclusive** and providers to be **skilled in working with all children**, regardless of ability or behavior challenge. They also need access to **early intervention services**, like speech therapy. Finally, parents whose children have special needs want **free and low-cost parenting classes** and connections with **culturally specific peer networks** for support and skill development.



## THEME #7

### Early Intervention

#### In their words...

"I have a young child with autism. Often the educators punish my child and do not want my child in school because he is "disruptive." As a mom, it is really hard, because I need more resources to support behavior training."

"We need good little schools for the children with trained personnel. Many of the caregivers are unaware of what an IEP is or how to treat a child with special need, and in the end, they hurt the child."

"It is challenging to find speech therapy for my child. I needed guidance to navigate this."

"As Latinas, we need our voices to be lifted. Other students were choking him; he was getting hurt in the bathroom because he was special."



## THEME #8

### Family Security

Like all parents, Black/African American and Monolingual, Spanish-Speaking Latino/Hispanic want to meet their children's basic needs. **They want economic, housing, and food security.** Many spoke about the **challenges of being low income but not destitute**—they make too much to be eligible for many safety net programs. Too often, this means **families can only afford poorer quality services or no services** at all. Parents also voiced concerns about their children being **safe in their neighborhoods and educational settings** (early care and K-12).





## THEME #8

### Family Security

#### In their words...

"In the pandemic, we need more financial resources."

"We wanted my child to transfer schools and it felt like the school director did not want to help us. They pretended like my child was not being hurt."

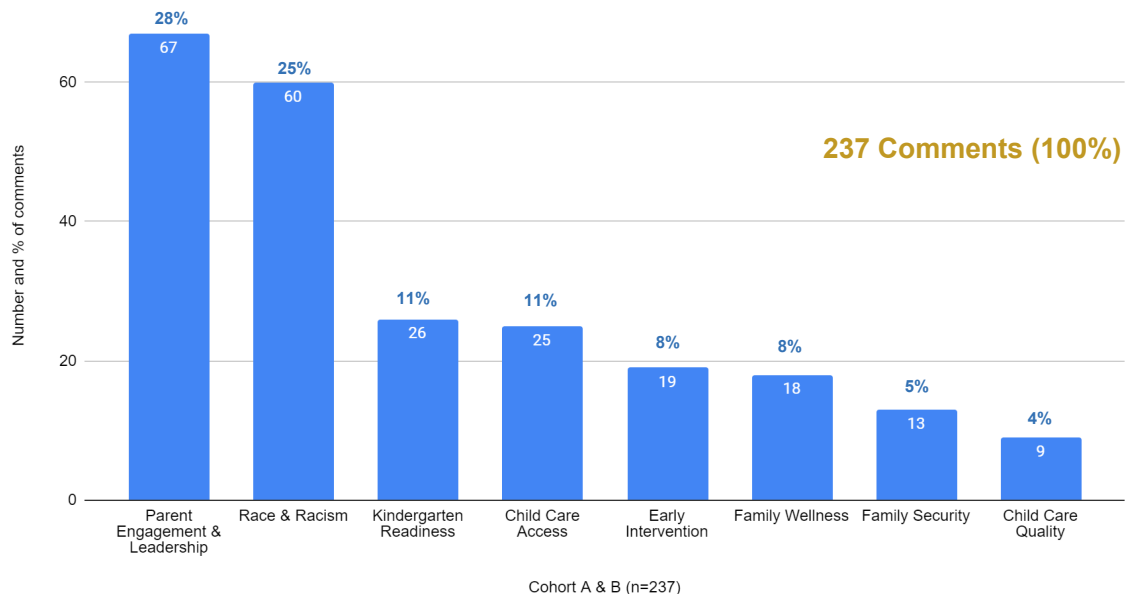
"I had an experience where my daughter was hit in the face, and we were very concerned. It would be very important for daycares to have cameras to see what is going on."

"The institution should take into account where the schools are located; preschools should be located in secure locations."

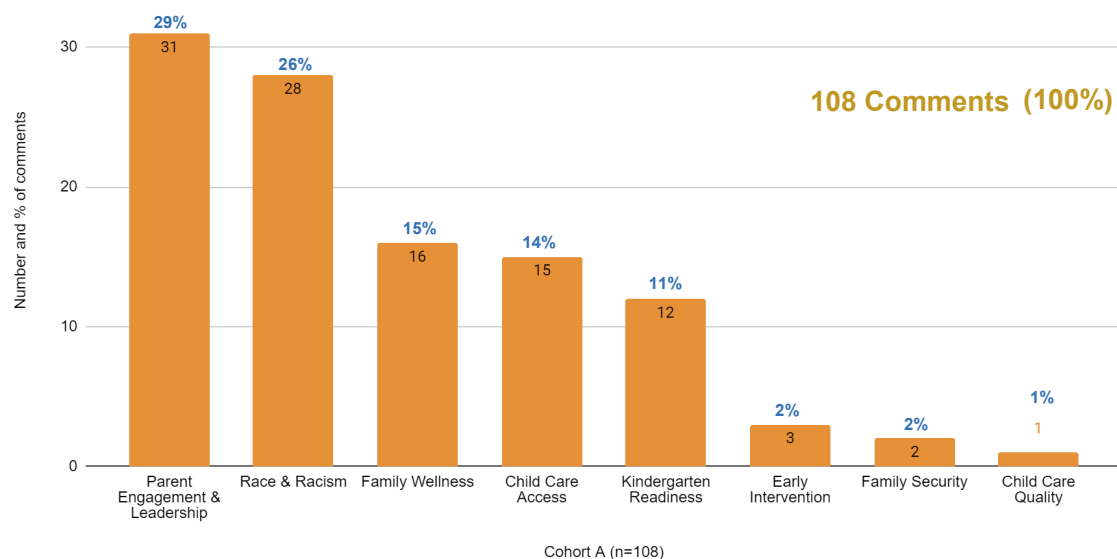
"Sadly, a lot of us don't have cars and transportation is too far. There are lots of obstacles."



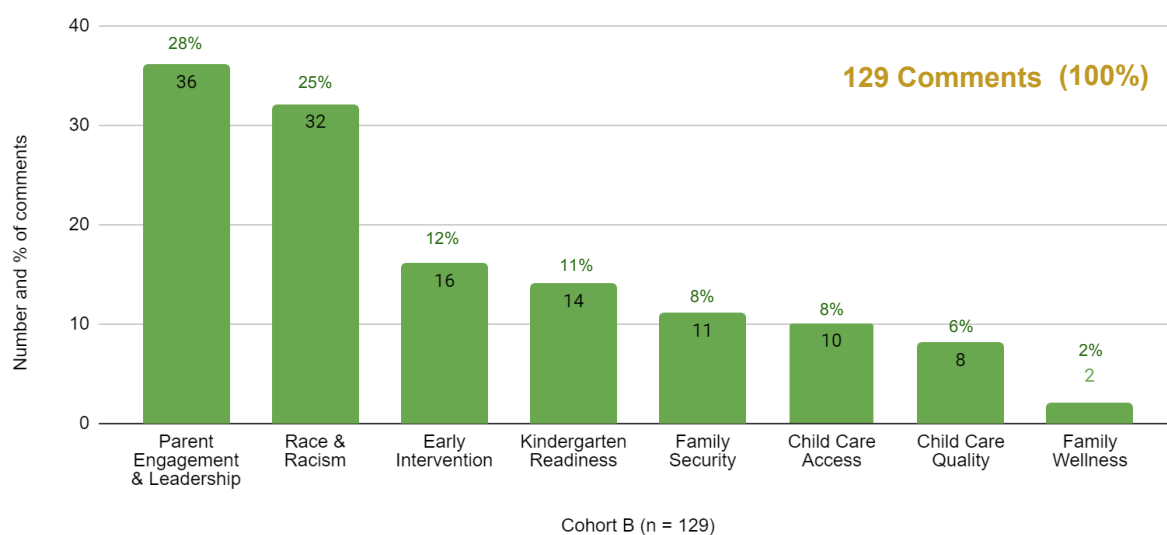
## PRIMARY THEMES: COHORT A & B



## PRIMARY THEMES: COHORT A



## PRIMARY THEMES: COHORT B



## COHORT SIMILARITIES

### What was similar in Cohort A & B?

- The need for **more information about resources** (e.g., early care and education, parent education, parent support services and resources, mental health services, developmental health services, etc.).
- The desire to be **respected, welcomed, engaged, and treated as a partner** in the care and education of their children.
- The need for all services to be **culturally competent and culturally responsive** (e.g., teachers look like me, teachers speak my home language, materials in the classroom reflect my community, etc.).
- A strong interest in **more time connecting with their peers** and learning from one another.
- The request for **more support with preparing for kindergarten** (e.g., having child care and early providers who support their children with the transition, have tools they can use at home, having more support for the transition—lists of options, visits to schools, open houses before school begins, etc.).



## COHORT DIFFERENCES

### What was different in Cohort A & B?

- The **language barriers for monolingual, Spanish-speaking** families make the obstacles faced by all families in San Francisco even more profound for them.
- Black / African American families directly addressed how **racism affects their daily lives** in San Francisco and their ability to access the services and supports they need.
- Overall, Black / African American families focused more of their feedback on issues related to **family support**, while monolingual, Spanish-speaking families focused equally on **family support and early learning**.
- When addressing parent engagement, Black / African American families focused more on the need to create **power sharing relationships with parents** whereas Spanish-speaking families focused more on the need for ongoing advice and **learning opportunities**.



## COHORT C – CHINESE PARENTS

### Similarities to the other cohorts:



- They would like to be connected to parent classes while being on ECE waitlists.
- Also experiencing language barriers in engaging with their children's school environment. They were perceived as not caring because of their silence, and they have noticed poor quality translations on documents from the programs.
- They would like to access information on resources from multiple places.
- Often rely on other parents for information sharing and mutual emotional support.
- Expressed interest in knowing more about kindergarten and how they could support their child to be ready



## COHORT C – CHINESE PARENTS

### Different from the other cohorts:



- Cantonese-speaking parents would like more support finding bilingual programming and multicultural / diverse experiences for their children, while maintaining their home language and culture.
- Parents are traveling from other parts of the city to receive services in Chinatown
- Parents expressed feelings of loneliness, isolation, and helplessness being new immigrants.
- Expressed questions / concerns about the quality of staff at the preschools
- Parents talked about being on waitlists for placements for long periods of time, and using the community playground in the meantime
- There were comments about needing support for couples within the mental health conversation





# Parent Perspective - Strategies



## FAMILY SUPPORT - 1

### Currently Funded by FIRST 5 or OECE

The following strategies, which were suggested by parents, are included in the **Family Resource Center Initiative**.

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Free/affordable parenting classes and workshops	11
Peer to peer support	10
Parent advocate/navigator*	9
Language support services in all types of programs (for families that are not fluent in English)	9
Linkages to mental health services/supports for children**	8
Communication feedback loops with parents are built into all programs and services	6
More focus on the specific needs of the Latino community	4
Multi-lingual information and resources	4

\*Mostly FRC staff assisting family

\*\*Mental Health Consultation



## FAMILY SUPPORT - 2

### Currently Funded by FIRST 5 or OECE

The following strategies, which were suggested by parents, are included (at varying levels of implementation) in the **Family Resource Center Initiative**.

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Parent education re: caring for children with special needs	3
Parent committee/roundtable to guide programs	3
Parenting group for parents with teenagers*	2
Informal parent networking opportunities**	1
Direct financial support and supplies (e.g. diapers)	1
More support for libraries and community centers (e.g., they have good programming for families)	1

\*Limited capacity

\*\*Limited by pandemic and virtual service delivery



## FAMILY SUPPORT - 3

### Currently Funded by FIRST 5 or OECE

These family support strategies are also funded.

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Parent Warm Line*	5
Transportation for families**	1

\*F5 funds Family Warm Line

\*\*Offered ad hoc to parents



## FAMILY SUPPORT - 4

### Not Currently Funded

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Digital information re: child development disseminated to parents regularly	9
Culturally matched mentor programs for parents	3
Mentoring programs for children and youth (e.g., like Big Brother/Big Sister)	3
English classes for parents	2
Parenting classes specific to Black/African American parents	2
Provide information transparently about how the City/Counties early education budget is allocated	1



## HEALTH

### Currently Funded by FIRST 5 or OECE

The following health strategies, which were suggested by parents, are currently funded through a range of initiatives and programs.

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Early intervention services (e.g. speech therapy)*	1
Universal early intervention screening**	1
Nutrition education***	1

\*Support for Families and Help Me Grow do not offer this directly but could be a linkage

\*\*Help Me Grow, nearly all funded FRCs, and most city funded ECE programs act as places where children can receive an ASQ and follow-up information

\*\*\*Not consistent but often leveraged from other sources by FRCs



# HEALTH

## Not Currently Funded

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Prenatal services for homeless mothers	1



# SYSTEM CHANGE

## Currently Funded by FIRST 5 or OECE

The following system change strategies, which were suggested by parents, are currently in place.

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Establish educational standards for early care and education teachers/providers*	4

\*This is a core aspect of the Early Learning Scholarship program; standards were co-developed with center-based and FCC providers





# SYSTEM CHANGE

## Not Currently Funded

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Change income eligibility process to provide more help for all people at lower incomes who are not currently eligible	4
Work with Department of Education and Department of Labor to increase parental leave	1
Link funding for early education settings to quality	1



# EARLY EDUCATION

## Currently Funded by FIRST 5 or OECE

The following health strategies, which were suggested by parents, are currently funded

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Focus in PreK/TK on social emotional preparation for children transitioning to K*	6
Comprehensive, up-to-date information in one place on all of the child care and early education options available in the City/County**	6
Child care options that cover full day, evenings and weekends	5
Support for parents on how to select a kindergarten***	3
More assistance for teachers and providers in the classroom	1

\*CSEFEL -- state standards for social emotional wellness; professional development provided to teachers/FCC. Cohorts funded at WestEd.

\*\*Children's Council and Wu Yee - two main resource/referral agencies funded by DEC to provide direct child care referrals. Also, we fund a data-system with a parent portal that helps parents find child care as a self-service system, but supported by CC/WY staff if more support provided to parents.

\*\*\*FRCs provide general support to families and so do community preschools.



# EARLY EDUCATION

## Not Currently Funded

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Additional security measures in early care and education settings	4
Orientation/open house for families transitioning into kindergarten	4
Kindergarten readiness framework for parents to use at home	3
Parent education about the difference between pre-school and kindergarten	2
Parent involvement in early education settings	2
Hire parents to work in early education settings	2
Website updates on child care availability (e.g., use icons when programs are full)	2



# EARLY EDUCATION

## Not Currently Funded

Strategy Suggested by Parents	Frequency Mentioned
Tailored support in kindergarten for children at different levels of readiness	1
Provide direct support to parents to enroll child in kindergarten	1
Early care and education programs should share curriculum with parents at program outset	1
Daily text messages to parents with child development tips	1
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# Appendix B: Definitions of Terms

# B

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**Access:** With reasonable effort and affordability, parents can enroll their child in an arrangement that supports the child's development and meets the parents' needs.

Four dimensions of early childhood education access:

*Reasonable effort* (i.e., the level of effort a family needs to exert to learn about and enroll in ECE): This dimension includes measurable indicators such as geographical location, supply of ECE programs, and availability of information about ECE programs.

*Affordability:* This refers to indicators such as parents' financial contribution, subsidies, and scholarships, advertised price (i.e., the price families are told they will need to pay, before considering financial supports such as subsidies), and programs' expenses for providing ECE.

*Supporting the child's development:* This dimension includes indicators such as quality designations (e.g., state QRIS ratings), specialized services, language of instruction, and stability of ECE.

*Meeting the parents' needs:* This includes parents' preferred type of program, availability of transportation, and hours of operation.

**Childcare:** The care of children especially as a service while parents are working.

Family Child Care (FCC) is when a licensed childcare provider looks after other people's children in her or his home. FCC's can be licensed to care for as many as 14 children at most, but many have only 8 or fewer children.

Child Care Centers usually have several licensed child care providers. Centers are usually larger than FCCs, and they have children of different ages in separate groups.

**Community engagement:** The processes, methods, and activities whereby an organization shares program and initiative information and actively solicits, considers, and incorporates input from a wide range of stakeholders and constituents. Engagement can only be considered "meaningful" if the solicitor of input demonstrates that input received is considered with an equity lens and incorporated in a way that has influenced the planning process or decision making. The party engaged is the only party that can truly say whether the engagement process has been meaningful for them. As such, it is important to continuously check-in with those providing input to see if the engagement process continues to be meaningful.

**Compensation:** Payment or remuneration for work or services performed.

**Cultural responsiveness:** Enables individuals and organizations to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values their worth. Being culturally responsive requires having the ability to understand cultural differences, recognize potential biases, and look beyond differences to work productively with children, families, and communities whose cultural contexts are different from one's own. In this section you will find resources that describe the elements of being culturally responsive.



**Developmental health:** Developmental health is the physical and mental health, well-being, coping and competence of human beings (Keating, 1999) and is the combination of health and developmental outcomes. Many different factors can positively or negatively affect developmental health. If we want to impact a child's development and ultimate life trajectory, we must understand the key risk and protective factors that strongly influence children's future health and well-being.

**Developmental screening:** A comprehensive review of a child's development completed by medical providers, public health agencies, Head Start, public schools and other qualified professionals. Often developmental screening is part of a well-child visit and may be done using parent questionnaires.

**Early care and education (ECE):** Settings in which children are cared for and taught by people other than their parents or primary caregivers with whom they live. These include center-based care arrangements (for example, child care centers, preschools, and pre-kindergartens) and nonparental home-based arrangements. Most ECE programs are designed to: provide care while parents work and/or promote children's readiness to enter kindergarten by supporting cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral development.

**Early identification:** Refers to a parent, health care professional or other adult's ability to recognize developmental milestones in children and to understand the value of early intervention.

**Early intervention:** A set of services that are provided to eligible children and their families based on their developmental needs. These services can include special instruction, physical/occupational/speech therapy, family support and service coordination. Early intervention is also known as "Infant and Toddler Intervention" or "Part C."

**Infant and toddler intervention:** A State program providing services for children birth through two years of age experiencing delays in their development and who meet state eligibility criteria. Eligible children and their families receive services such as special instruction, physical/occupational/speech therapy, family support and service coordination. These services are also known as early intervention or Part C services.

**Early learning:** Programs that provide education for children outside their own home before kindergarten.

**Educators:** Trained professionals that ensure children's developmental, nutritional, health, and educational needs are taken care of.

**Equitable systems of care:** Equitable learning systems provide access to resources, opportunities, and experiences to children and families that result in positive outcomes that are not associated with children's demographic characteristics. They actively and continuously identify and intentionally eliminate manifestations of systemic racism and other forms of oppression.

**Equity:** Fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and equality of access to information and resources for all. This becomes possible when we build an environment rooted in respect and dignity and take action to ensure equitable access for all communities.

**Family Child Care:** A form of early childhood education in which a caregiver looks after children in their own home, often with the help of an assistant. A family child care program is typically licensed for between 6 and 14 children, although these numbers do vary by state and by type of child care license.

**Family Resource Centers:** Local community centers that support families with parenting, community connection, economic and housing security, and access to resources.

**Family support:** Services that assist and support parents in their role as caregivers. Such services can take many different forms depending on the strengths and needs of the family, but their overarching goal is to help parents enhance skills and resolve problems to promote optimal child development.

**Key initiatives:** Foundational early childhood development investments that have been in place for five or more years under the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education and/or First 5 San Francisco.

**Kindergarten readiness:** A way to describe the things a child should know and be able to do when they start kindergarten. Also referred to as school readiness, these skills and abilities are related to different areas of child development (sometimes called “domains”), including:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Language Skills: Language and Literacy Development
- Cognition, including Math and Science
- Physical Development and Health

**Mental Health vs Well-being:** Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellness. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Well-being is a positive outcome that is meaningful for people and for many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well. Good living conditions (e.g., housing, employment, etc.), the quality of the relationships, positive emotions and resilience, the realization of potential, or overall satisfaction with life. Well-being generally includes life satisfaction and feelings ranging from depression to joy.

**Implementation:** The process of activating a plan.

**Parent Engagement/ Parent Leadership/ Parent Partnership:** When early childhood professionals and families engage in a shared process of relationship-building. The approach is mutual, respectful, and responsive to a family’s language and culture. Meaningful relationship-building is ongoing and requires time and attention. Examples include:

- Families and staff work together to create activities that reflect the cultural traditions and values of the families in the program.
- Families volunteer for leadership activities and provide ongoing and meaningful input about programming.
- Families and staff share in the development of activities and events based on their strengths/interests/abilities.
- Families and staff work together to discuss, implement, and share responsibility for a child’s early learning plan.

**Quality:** Early care and education that will offer children a stimulating, nurturing environment that will prepare them for school and to reach their full potential.

**Racial equity:** Racial equity is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color. Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted how one fares. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

**System of Care vs. Network of Care:** A system of care is a spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships, and addresses cultural and linguistic preferences, to help improve family experiences and child outcomes.

Networks of Care, or purposefully interconnected service delivery touch points, within and between facilities in a defined catchment area, address critical service gaps and create continuity between services. There are four distinct domains within which core efforts must be made to establish and maintain NOC. These domains are: 1) Agreement and Enabling Environment, 2) Operational Standards, 3) Quality, Efficiency and Responsibility, and 4) Learning and Adaptation.

**Systems change:** Change that encompasses a broad set of interrelated changes, including the norms, resources, behaviors, learned habits, culture, authority/decision making and patterns operating within the legal, regulatory, social, and community environment.

**Workforce:** The workforce includes the wide range of individuals who care for and educate children before Kindergarten. This range includes those with little or no training who provide mainly custodial care without attention to educational goals at one end of the spectrum, to individuals with specialized postgraduate degrees providing carefully planned educational experiences at the other, with many others in between. At its most basic level, caregiving can involve caring or providing for a child's safety, meeting basic needs around feeding, diapering, or toileting, and assisting with dressing, bathing, and sleep routines. At its most complex, teaching can involve carefully implementing research-based curriculums, individualizing care, and instruction, and addressing the full range of developmental domains (e.g., cognitive, language, social– emotional, fine, and gross motor, executive functioning) in groups and one-on-one activities.

