



Supporting Early Childhood Education in San Francisco through a Multi-Layered Approach

In San Francisco, we launch a transformative initiative to enhance early childhood education (ECE) by addressing the "true cost of care." Our key components include:

- We increase local subsidy reimbursement rates for providers.
- We expand income eligibility for families from 111% to 150% of the area median income (AMI).
- We provide professional development opportunities, including training and coaching.
- We implement workforce initiatives that emphasize fair compensation, clear career pathways, and improved working conditions.

The Department of Early Childhood focuses on creating a sustainable environment for early education through financial support programs like the Early Educators Salary Support Grant and the Child Care Stipend (CARES 3.0). We have developed two compensation models to assist ECE programs of different sizes. A key feature of these models is that they provide higher pay to programs that serve a greater proportion of low-income families. This approach aims to support those who need it most.

Additionally, we aim to promote professional growth and diversity within the workforce, particularly among educators of children aged 0-5, emphasizing expertise in special needs and dual-language support. Our overarching goal supports a "whole child" and "two-generation" approach, recognizing the impact of quality early education on children and their families while advocating for fair compensation and improved working conditions for educators.

Key Components of the Approach:

1. Increased Subsidy Reimbursement Rates: To better support providers, local subsidy reimbursement rates will be increased, allowing them to match the true cost of care.
2. Expanded AMI Eligibility: Family eligibility for assistance will expand from 111% to 150% of the Area Median Income (AMI), enabling more families to access essential ECE services.
3. Professional Development Opportunities: The approach includes ongoing training and instructional coaching for educators, coupled with workforce development initiatives focusing on career pathways, compensation, and working conditions.
4. Compensation Support: The Department of Early Childhood (DEC) provides compensation through programs such as the Early Educators Salary Support Grant and the Child Care Stipend (CARES 3.0). This includes different approaches tailored to programs serving lower-income families and navigating payroll challenges.
5. Focus on Equity and Inclusion: Professional growth pathways are being developed, emphasizing special needs and dual language specializations to diversify the workforce.



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Challenges Identified:

1. Complexity of Payroll and Tax Laws: Family Child Care (FCC) providers often struggle with understanding employment and tax regulations, which complicates compliance and reporting efforts for programs accessing grant funding.
2. Lack of Statewide Data Systems: The absence of a comprehensive system for educator wages and qualifications hinders effective policy implementation and oversight. Current registries are underutilized and not well-integrated with crucial credentialing systems.
3. Inconsistent Wage Structures: Challenges such as wage compression and misalignment of roles result in inequities within the workforce, particularly between veteran educators and support staff.
4. Job Stability Issues: Many educators feel pressured to change jobs frequently, impacting the continuity of care for children and the stability of ECE programs.

Recommendations:

1. Establish Comprehensive Data Systems: Develop an integrated state data system to track educator qualifications and compensation, facilitating better insights into workforce needs and trends.
2. Streamline Employment Regulations: Create clear guidelines and resources for FCC providers regarding payroll and tax compliance to reduce administrative burdens.
3. Enhance Equity in Compensation: Revise compensation criteria to reflect years of experience, ensuring fair pay structures that recognize the expertise of early educators.
4. Focus on Retention Strategies: Implement policies aimed at improving working conditions and job satisfaction to reduce turnover rates among educators.