

San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education

Summary of Stakeholder Input for Phase One
Implementation of Citywide Plan for ECE

FEBRUARY 2017



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ABBREVIATION KEY

CAC – OECE’s Citizens Advisory Committee

CDE – California Department of Education

CPAC – San Francisco Child Care Planning and Advisory Council

C-WAGES – Compensation and Wage Augmentation Grants for Economic Support

ECE – Early Care and Education

ELS – Early Learning Scholarship

FCC – Family Child Care

OECE – San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education

PFA – Preschool for All

QRIS – Quality Rating and Improvement System

SF3C – San Francisco Child Care Connection

SFUSD – San Francisco Unified School District

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I. Introduction and Context

Mission of OECE

Early learning experiences are fundamentally important to a child’s brain development and quality of life. Numerous studies over the last few decades have demonstrated that early experiences affect a child’s development in every area—cognitive, physical, literacy, social and emotional—which in turn affect the child’s performance in school. Quality early care and education is essential to promoting young children’s success, and also supports families in creating a healthy environment.

The San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education (OECE or the Office) was created by Mayor Edwin Lee in 2012. OECE is charged with aligning and coordinating federal, state and local funding streams to:

- Improve access to high quality early care and education for children 0-5.
- Address the needs of the early care and education workforce.
- Build the early care and education system capacity.

The Office manages a large portfolio of over \$100 million dollars in federal, state, and local funding. By aligning these funding streams and investments, OECE is maximizing resources to support a more streamlined early care and education (ECE) system and to ensure successful outcomes for children and their families. OECE’s mission represents a shared goal of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and the greater San Francisco community.

Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education

In April 2015, an ordinance created OECE’s Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC provides expertise in the areas of policy, planning, collaboration and strategic partnerships. The ordinance also required OECE to develop and submit a strategic plan for San Francisco’s ECE system for approval by the Board of Supervisors.

In July 2016, OECE released the [San Francisco Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education](#), which presents a shared vision for ensuring every San Francisco child has equal opportunity from birth. The CAC partnered with OECE, First 5 San Francisco and San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) staff to develop recommendations for improving the City’s ECE system. The proposed recommendations were fully vetted by the community and refined to incorporate stakeholder input before being formally endorsed by the CAC and the Board of Supervisors.

The Citywide Plan presents the final endorsed recommendations for improving the City’s ECE system in six key areas:

- Birth-to-Five Approach
- Racial Equity and Diversity

- Quality Improvement
- Family Engagement
- Professional Development and Workforce
- Financing Models

After the Citywide Plan was finalized, OECE began the next phase of its planning work to develop a refined, aligned, and streamlined 0-5 early care and education system for San Francisco. This phase of work included developing proposed implementation strategies to achieve the adopted recommendations in the Citywide Plan.

Phase One Implementation of the Citywide Plan

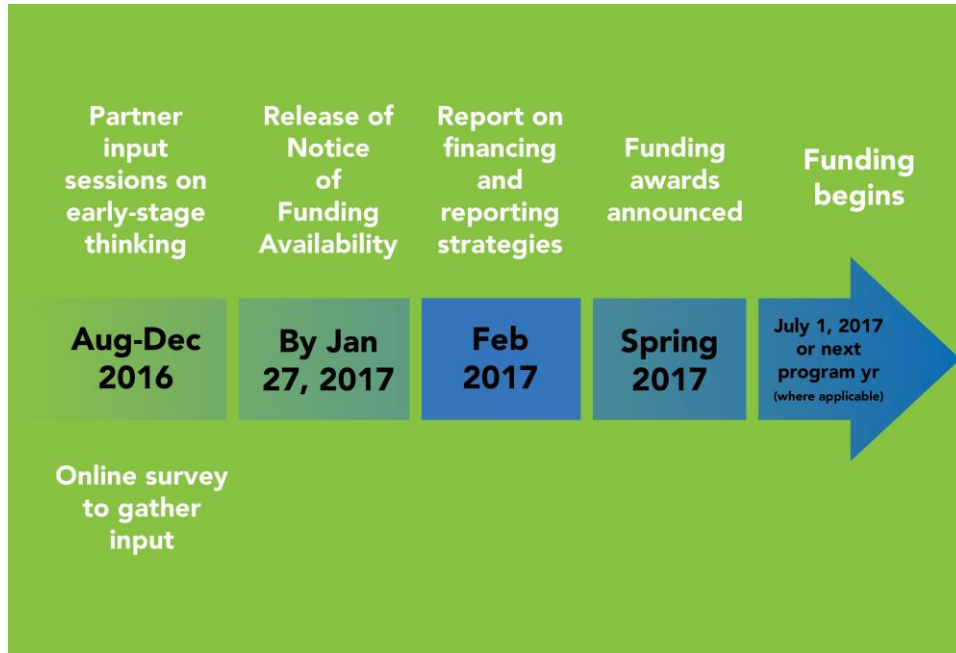
OECE set out to develop the first phase of implementing the Citywide Plan and the [Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis](#) financing recommendations. The goal of the Implementation Plan is to improve and refine the programmatic, reporting and financing approaches used to fund ECE services.

In October 2016, OECE took on administrative responsibilities for the Preschool for All (PFA) program. Since all of the funding contracts administered by OECE expire on June 30, 2017¹, the Office plans to imbed system improvements in the procurements for the next fiscal year. OECE's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Centers and Family Child Care homes—the major funding mechanism to resource ECE providers—was released on January 27, 2017. OECE is committed to launching its next funding cycle without interrupting services to families and providers.

As OECE seeks to fulfill its mission, it is critical for the Office to have a focused and well-vetted approach for determining its implementation strategies in Year One. To ensure that partner input is incorporated—crucial to developing an Implementation Plan that works for all—OECE initiated an extensive community outreach process from August through December 2016 which is the subject of this report. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the project timeline.

¹ For Preschool for All, funding contracts expire at the end of their program year.

Figure 1: Overview of Timeline



OECE sought the assistance of MIG, Inc., a Berkeley-based strategic planning, facilitation, and communications consulting firm to support and document the partner outreach process. This document summarizes the overall stakeholder engagement process, as well as the key themes identified from the detailed analysis of partner input.

II. System Improvement Strategies

OECE began the implementation planning process by evaluating both strengths of the current ECE system and challenges to providing high quality ECE services in San Francisco. The Office identified three key areas for improvement: 1) bridging funding gaps, 2) streamlining reporting and 3) enhancing family support. The system improvement approach was based on the following goals:

- Preserve what is working.
- Finance the cost of quality for providers.
- Focus support on target populations not yet achieving kindergarten-readiness.
- Simplify the system for families and providers.

Building on the Citywide Plan recommendations, OECE formulated two core system improvement concepts and the initial, corresponding strategies:

Concept #1 - Early Learning Scholarship

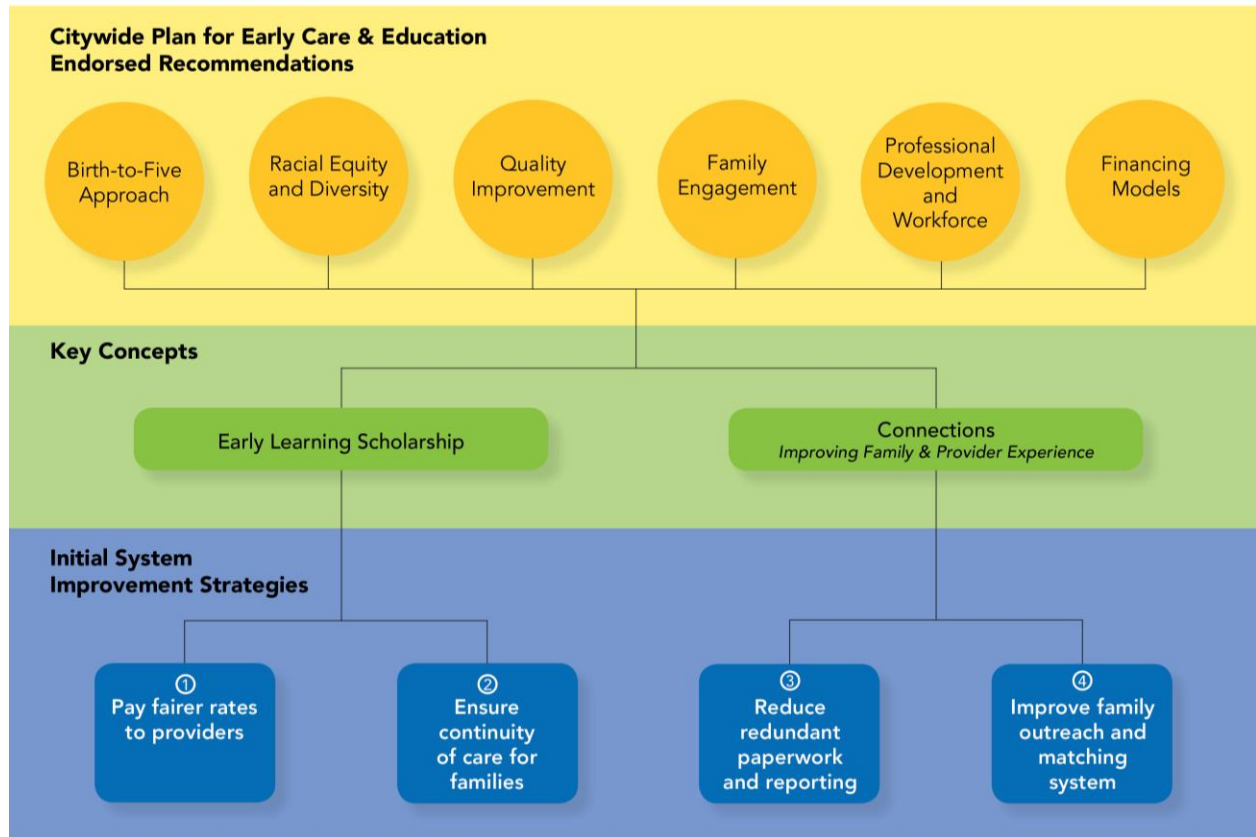
1. Pay fairer rates to providers.
2. Ensure continuity of care for families.

Concept #2 - Connections: Improving Family and Provider Experience

3. Reduce redundant paperwork and reporting.
4. Improve family outreach and matching system.

A graphic was created to succinctly summarize how the Citywide Plan recommendations led to the Implementation Plan approach. This graphic, the "OECE Strategic Framework," is shown in Figure 2. These concepts and strategies were further refined through an iterative, partner input process described in the following section, "Partner Outreach and Engagement Overview."

Figure 2: OECE Strategic Framework



The final strategies, revised through the partner outreach process, are described in greater detail below.

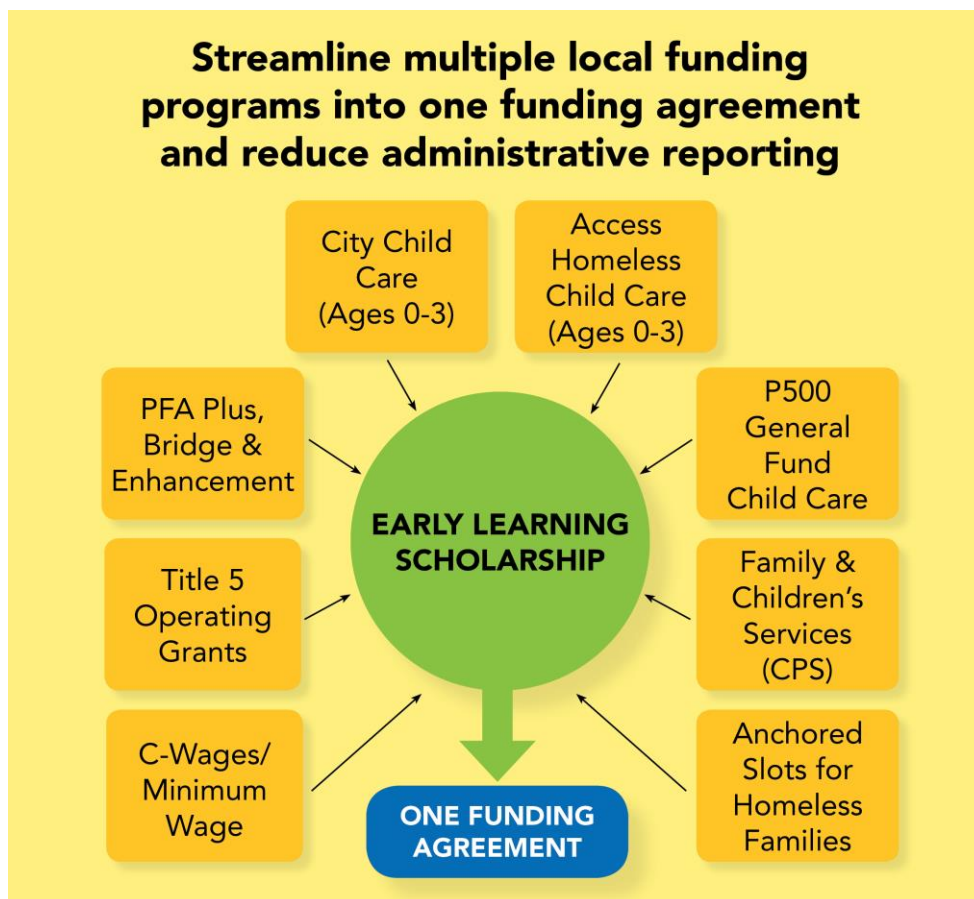
Early Learning Scholarship Strategies

The Early Learning Scholarship (ELS) is designed to meet the goals of paying fairer rates to providers and assuring continuity of care for families. It seeks to better cover the cost of operating quality programs—as defined as at least Tier 3 on the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)—by disrupting the historic cycle of under-resourcing what providers are asked to deliver. The ELS also seeks to close the gap between private, state, and federal funding and the high cost of quality in San Francisco. The ELS Strategy 1 is defined below.

Strategy 1: Streamline multiple local funding programs into one funding agreement.

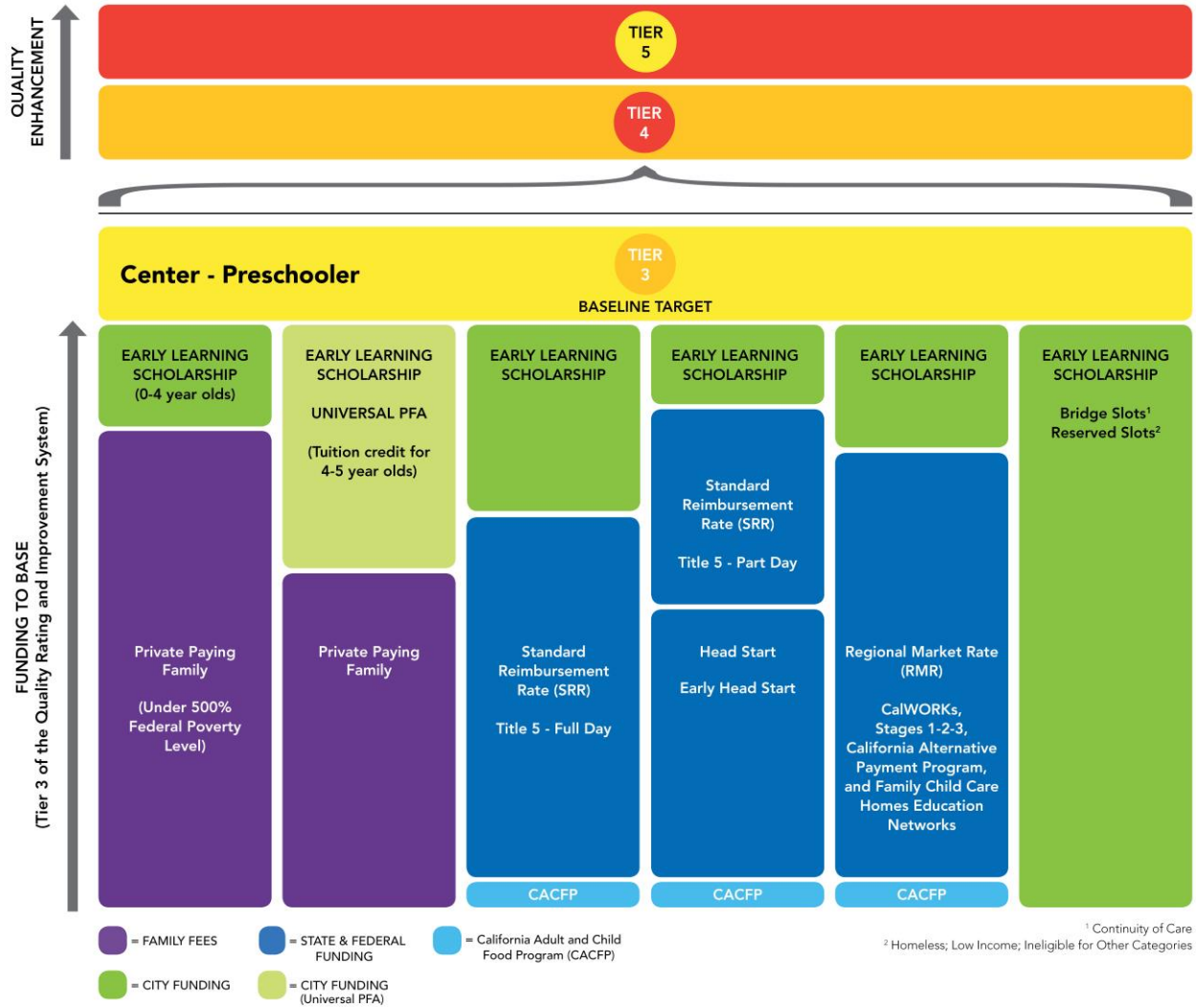
The ELS will use City funds by consolidating the multiple local funding streams into one central agreement. Strategy 1 is intended to ensure that available federal and state funding is fully utilized so that the various City funding sources can be directed where they will do the most good—supporting providers in reaching and/or maintaining Tier 3 quality and increasing kindergarten-readiness for targeted populations. The graphic shown as Figure 3 illustrates the streamlining effect.

Figure 3: Strategy 1—Streamline Multiple Local Funding Programs



The graphic shown as Figure 4 was developed to identify the various rates and subsidy programs and the relative size of funding gaps, so that the ELS framework can be understood at a glance.

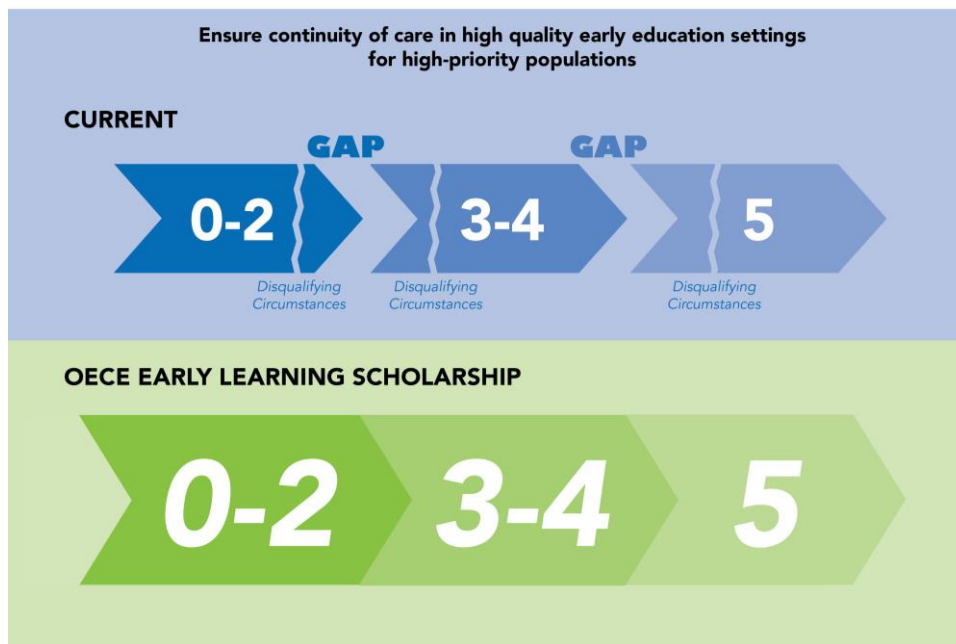
Figure 4: Strategy 1—Early Learning Scholarship



Strategy 2: Ensure continuity of care in high quality early education settings for high-priority populations.

Currently, due to the complexities of the system and varying circumstances among families, some children receive inconsistent provider services—or fall through the cracks altogether. Changing circumstances, such as a family’s income or residential neighborhood, can impact a child’s eligibility for certain ECE settings. OECE seeks to reduce the gaps in access to quality ECE by implementing the ELS Strategy 2 as defined above and represented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Strategy 2— Ensure Continuity of Care



Connections Strategies

Improving Provider Experience

Strategy 3: Streamline multiple local funding programs into one funding agreement and reduce administrative reporting.

The intention of Strategy 3 is to improve the ECE provider experience by consolidating reporting requirements and data systems to reduce administrative time. Many providers have shared that reducing the administrative burden would free up staff to spend more time focusing on the children in their care. Strategy 3 will accomplish this by focusing on the following objectives:

- Reduce reporting related to City funding.
- Streamline and improve the data systems providers are required to use.
- Explore ways to streamline need and eligibility screening.

Figure 6: Strategy 3—Reduce Redundant Paperwork and Reporting



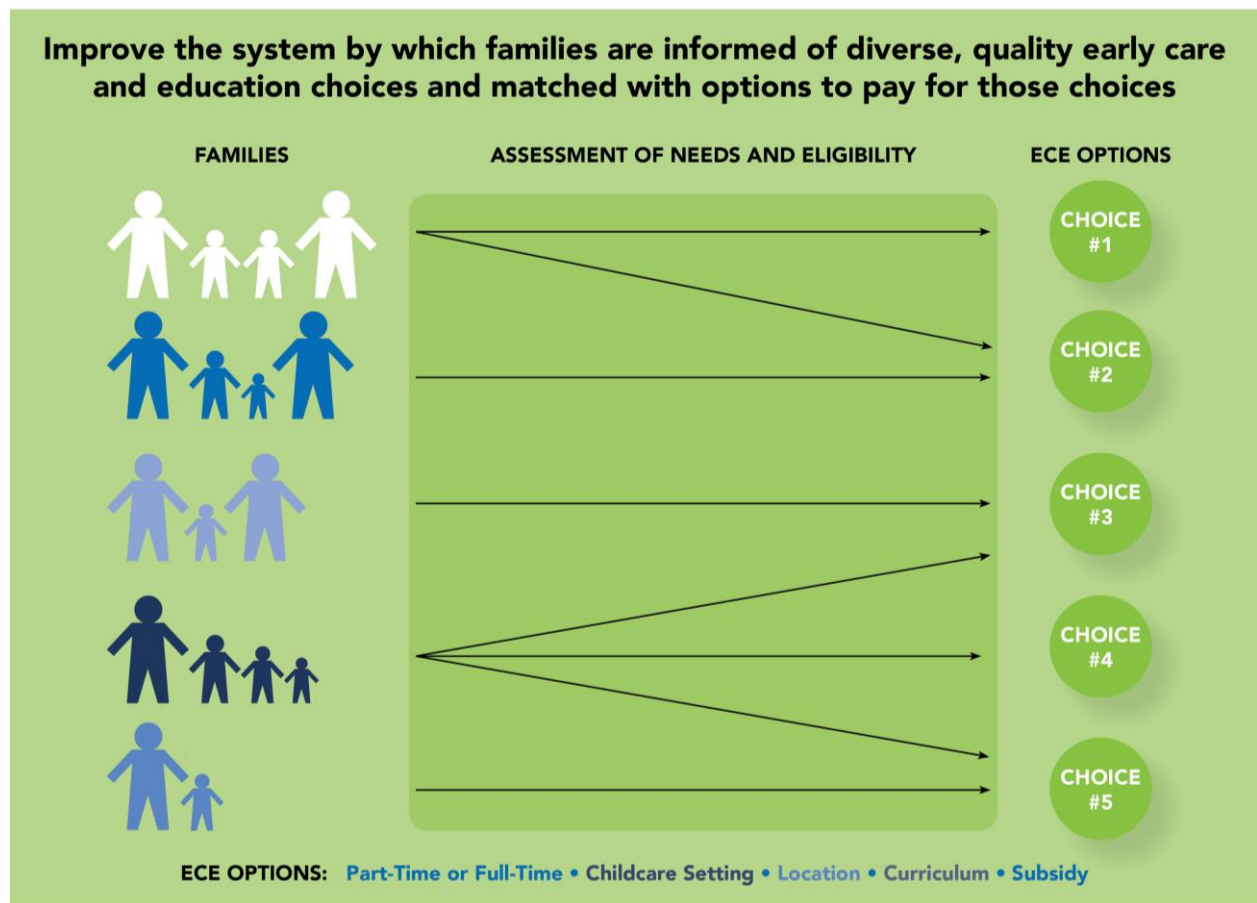
Improving Family Experience

Strategy 4: Improve the system by which families are informed of diverse, quality early care and education choices and matched with options to pay for those choices.

In the past, available subsidized child care slots have largely been filled via a “top-down” approach, starting with the opening available and then consulting the SF3C waiting list or other sources to find children who qualify.

Strategy 4 aims to transform the current approach by creating a “bottom-up” system which begins with identifying a family’s needs, preferences, and eligibility. Next, representatives will locate and inform parents of the ECE options for which they qualify. This will entail enhanced family outreach and engagement and better technology. Figure 7, below, provides a graphic representation of how this will look:

Figure 7: Strategy 4—Improve Family Outreach and Matching System



Key Elements of OECE's Implementation Approach

Implementation efforts require a focus on six key elements that, over time, will result in a more integrated, expanded, and higher-quality early childhood system:

- A **birth-to-five approach**, with a commitment to continuity of care and data-driven results.
- An increased **focus on racial equity and diversity** with the adoption of a new kindergarten-readiness goal across the City's ECE programs, targeting currently underserved populations.
- A commitment to raising the quality of ECE programs by **building upon the statewide Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) to meet local needs** by:
 - Requiring providers to meet minimum quality standards.
 - Assisting providers who do not meet those standards in order to improve their services for children.
 - Encouraging continuous quality improvement.
- A **more family-centric approach**, by adopting new family engagement strategies that incorporate families as vital partners in their children's early care and education.
- **Quality improvement of the ECE workforce** by supporting compensation parity with the K-3 workforce and by developing a more intentional professional development system that supports ongoing training.
- An **aligned and seamless financing model** that both increases the overall resources available and restructures the current funding system to maximize resources.

III. Partner Outreach and Engagement Overview

Throughout August-December 2016, OECE staff attended and conducted a variety of stakeholder meetings to present and receive input on the proposed strategies. OECE scheduled input sessions with partners, providers of all types and with parents' groups to ensure that diverse viewpoints and experiences were represented. The following partners were engaged during the Implementation Plan process:

- ECE Providers
- Child Care Planning & Advisory Council
- Citizen's Advisory Committee of OECE
- Family Child Care Association Conference
- Family Child Care Association of San Francisco Board
- Family Child Care Quality Network
- Preschool for All (PFA) Roundtables
- Parent Voices Meeting
- Quality Partners/SFQRIS
- San Francisco Child Care Providers Association

Each meeting included a presentation detailing the emerging strategies and implementation approach. Content varied depending on the needs and focus of each stakeholder group, and was updated on an ongoing basis to reflect feedback received. The presentations also changed as OECE honed in on specific details of implementation. For an example of Partner Input Session presentations, see *Appendix B: Partner Input Session PowerPoint*.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings

The OECE CAC—consisting of representatives from a broad spectrum of ECE facilities, educational institutions, childcare and workforce support organizations, funding programs and a parent representative—meets once every two months to advise the OECE on accomplishing their mission. During the Implementation Plan development process, several CAC meetings were dedicated to detailed discussion and refinement of the emerging system improvement strategies. Many of these CAC meetings focused on policy trade-offs and decisions, allocation and funding scenarios, as well as planning for the NOFA process.

Partner Input Sessions

OECE staff joined regular meetings and scheduled "partner input sessions" with a range of stakeholder constituencies to present the proposed strategies, answer questions, and receive feedback. These sessions were designed to explore how to best align the strategies with specific programs and processes. Presentations varied depending on each group's focus, with probing

questions and exercises geared to solicit detailed input on the relevant elements of strategy implementation.

The San Francisco Child Care Planning and Advisory Council (CPAC), the state-mandated Local Planning Council appointed by the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors and Board of Education, were also consulted on all aspects of the emerging strategies. In addition to the scheduled meetings, OECE pursued opportunities for ongoing, ad hoc discussions with stakeholders.

The feedback received from these sessions was incorporated into the refined concepts and strategies. For more details on CAC meetings and partner input sessions, see *Appendix A: Partner Input Session Summaries*.

Partner Survey

To gather input from key stakeholders, particularly teaching staff who were unable to attend input sessions, OECE conducted an online partner survey to collect stakeholder feedback regarding the four initial proposed strategies. The survey queried participants' role in the ECE field, whether they have attended a partner input session, and their level of support for and detailed feedback on the strategies. The survey was provided in three different languages (English, Spanish and Chinese) to reflect the linguistic diversity of the ECE field in San Francisco. A variety of outreach channels were used to promote and distribute the survey, including targeted emails and announcements at input sessions and partner meetings.

Between November 4 and December 7, 2016, 222 survey responses were submitted. Survey respondents represented a wide variety of stakeholder types, as shown in Figures 8 and 9:

Figure 8: Survey Respondents' Role in the ECE Field

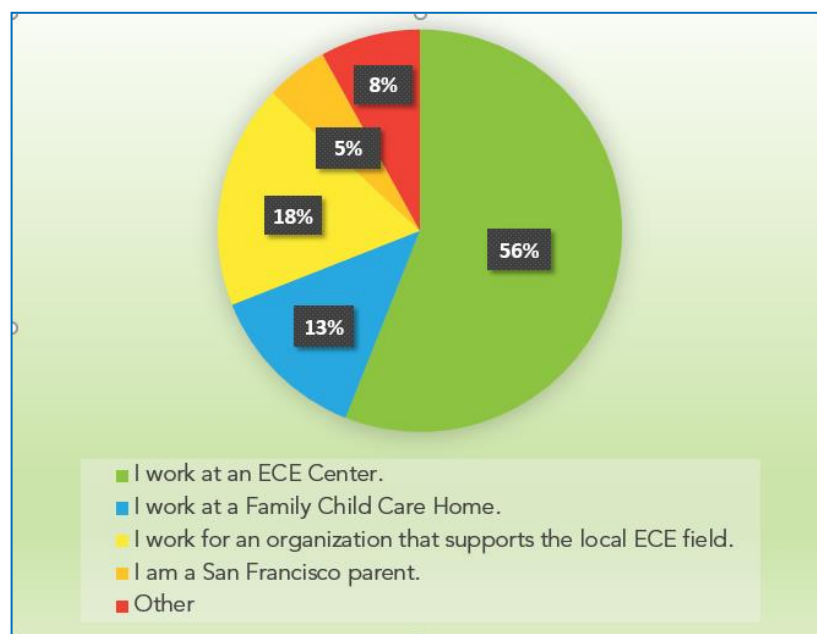
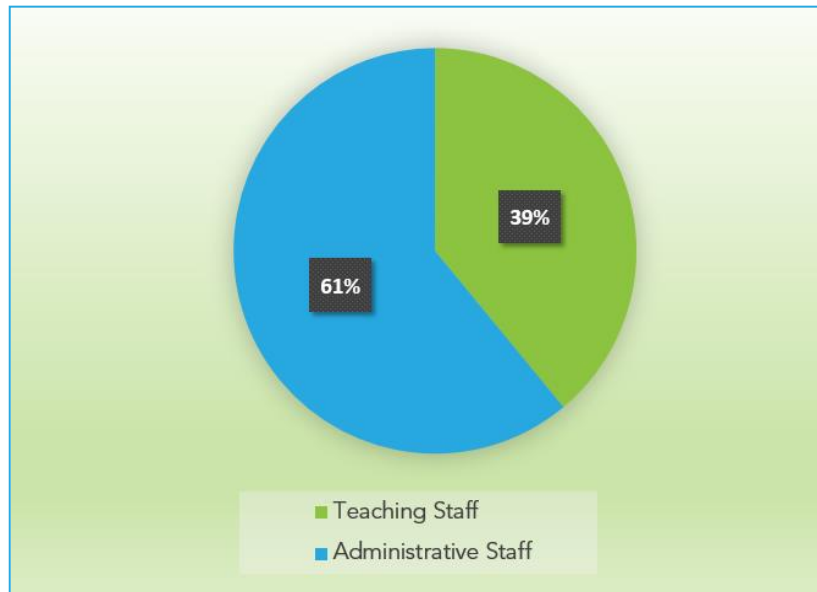


Figure 9: Survey Respondents' Role within ECE Center



Responses regarding the strategies are incorporated into the summary of key themes below. For more information, see *Appendix C: Survey Tool*.

IV. Key Themes from Partner Input

The vast majority of stakeholders who provided feedback were largely in support of the system improvement strategies. Some partners shared questions, ideas and issues for OECE's consideration. Common themes across all input methods are summarized below.

Positive Aspects of the Proposed Strategies

- Many partners agreed that San Francisco's ECE system could use improvement and streamlining, and that there is strong support for OECE's efforts at this time.
- Stakeholders indicated that the strategies seemed thoughtfully conceived, driven by partner input and effective in addressing the highest priority needs for the ECE field in San Francisco.
- Some participants appreciated that the strategies keep equity at the forefront of the system improvements. Partners encouraged OECE to make certain that the simplified system does not create or perpetuate inequities.
- Frequently mentioned elements of the strategies that resonated with stakeholders include:
 - Focusing on continuity of care as a top priority.
 - Factoring quality into funding.
 - Offering funding that matches the cost of quality care.
 - Streamlining systems and reporting, allowing more time to be spent with children.
 - Simplifying and linking databases to improve tracking and reporting.
 - Covering all children from ages 0-5.
 - Incentivizing ECE services for low-income children.
 - Raising wages for teachers.
 - Allowing options for a transitional phase.
 - Expanding provider options for families.
 - Engaging families early and proactively.
- Many stakeholders pointed out that many aspects of the current system are working well, in spite of its complexity and existing barriers. They encouraged OECE to retain these elements and integrate them with the proposed system changes.

Fair Rates to Providers

Stakeholders emphatically supported the idea of paying more equitable rates to providers, noting that this is essential to support the cost of providing quality care. Increased rates will help providers attract and retain qualified teachers, enrich curriculum and cover operational costs. Several partners highlighted that ECE centers and FCCs have different needs, costs and financial models. Partners also expressed questions and issues with the tradeoffs associated with the proposed strategies.

Development of Provider Rates

- Confirm how cost of care will be determined and how often rates will be adjusted.
- Determine whether funding will be tiered and on what basis providers will be eligible for funding.
- Explore how to offset or build in family fees.
- Confirm the provider supports that ELS funding will cover (e.g., administrative costs, staff salaries and workforce support costs).
- Consider how to balance paying enough to bring programs in need up to Tier 3 with incentivizing higher quality for those providers who are already at Tier 3 on the QRIS.
- Consider the supports available for providers at Tiers 4 and 5.
- Ensure that varying costs of serving different ages (i.e., infants, toddlers and preschoolers) in different kinds of facilities are accurately assessed.
- Explore strategies to ensure voucher profitability.

ECE Workforce Support

- Increase teacher compensation.
- Expand opportunities for continued education and training of the ECE workforce.

Incentives

- Explore provider incentives to increase participation in ELS and to expand access to high quality early education for diverse families.

Emerging Questions on New Funding Approach and Impacts on Current Grantees

- Some partners expressed concerns regarding how tradeoffs with the new funding approach would impact funding amounts for current OECE grantees, particularly providers that do not serve low-income families.
- Many stakeholders shared questions about their eligibility for funding under the new system, the basis for awarding funding and which existing funding streams will change or remain the same.

Reducing Administrative Burden for Providers

Stakeholders were enthusiastic about the idea of reducing administrative time and paperwork for providers. They expressed that the amount of required reporting is overwhelming, and interferes with running quality programs. Partners also raised questions and concerns about the mechanics of implementing Strategy 3, including how contracts will be structured and the types of reporting and accountability measures that will be implemented. Stakeholder feedback on this strategy is summarized below.

Integrated Data Systems

- Stakeholders shared positive feedback on the concept of integrating data systems already in place.
 - A few stakeholders cautioned OECE to build in enough flexibility with the data and reporting systems to account for differences in programs and families.
 - Partners also highlighted situations that vary from the norm, such as weekend caregivers and rates for part-day or part-time hours of care.
- There is a need for shared information and linkages to multiple data systems but a single, “one-stop-shop” point of contact for families.
- Partners encouraged OECE to consider adding other program elements, such as: tracking health assessment for children for multiple years, uploading electronic signatures from parents, adding the food program.

Challenges with Third-Party Certification

- OECE’s suggestion that third parties be funded to assist with eligibility certification and income verification was met with some stakeholder support.
- Stakeholders also raised questions and potential issues with this approach related to the impact on CDE and other contracts, how the funding will be monitored and how to ensure quality of work.

Family Engagement and Support

Stakeholders agreed that the best interests of children and families are the highest priority. Many partners appreciated that the strategies focus on ensuring continuity of care, prioritizing the needs of targeted families and providers, and expanding provider options for families. Their comments and questions on this theme included the following:

Family Eligibility

- Partners voiced support that the new financing approach encourages providers to serve low-income children. They would like clarification on the definition of low-income.
- Eligibility is currently based on employment. Partners inquired about what options exist for disabled or incapacitated parents who have barriers to full-time employment.
- Many families with incomes just above the cutoff and even those with stable middle incomes still struggle to afford quality childcare in San Francisco. Several stakeholders asked how OECE and its partners will support those families.
- OECE should consider providing 24-month eligibility.

Building Capacity of Families to Navigate the System

- Develop a communication and outreach strategy to ensure that families are aware of ELS and the eligibility criteria.
- Strengthen the capacity of parents to interact with and navigate the new system.

Improved Eligibility List and Family Matching System

- Stakeholders appreciated that the new eligibility list will be inclusive, based on families' needs and focused on intentional matching to available slots.
- Improving the data on openings and enrollments is critical. In particular, providers must track families' needs and progress through the system so that those who have been served and selected are removed, and others are served in an equitable fashion.
- Broader outreach to and communication with families is needed, as well as improved parent information that is simple and easy to understand.

Additional Considerations

- Consider how to handle exceptions such as exempt care providers and the fact that many families find that seeking unlicensed care from family, friends, or neighbors works better for them.

V. First Phase of Implementation of the Citywide Plan

The chief mechanism for paying fairer rates to providers and ensuring continuity of care for families is the Early Learning Scholarship (ELS). The ELS framework uses an equity lens to fund and promote school readiness among target populations demonstrating less preparedness for Kindergarten. OECE began developing the core elements and criteria of the ELS during the initial phase of the planning process, and continued to review and revise the framework with community partners.

Given the extant funding shortfalls, OECE informed its partners that some tradeoffs would be necessary. The CAC members were instrumental in resolving key policy questions that enabled OECE to clarify the ELS rates and criteria. Their unanimous endorsements, as given at their November 17, 2016 meeting, included:

- Bring all payments up to Tier 3 cost of quality as a year one priority.
- Provide an annual quality incentive for all low-income enrolled children in programs achieving Tier 4 QRIS based on the State QRIS Block Grant, and pay 10% more for all programs achieving at Tier 5.
- Build family fees into the model up to 110% of Area Median Income.
- Expand access to low-income infants and toddlers from target populations to the extent budget resources allow.
- Provide continuity of care through kindergarten for enrolled children from target populations.
- Explore a differential rate for target populations receiving ELS funding, subject to fund availability

The matrix included below outlines the type, purpose, rate, eligibility, enrollment priorities and eligibility certification for Early Learning Scholarships.

Figure 10: ELS Criteria



OECE CITYWIDE PLAN - EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS

Using an equity lens to fund and promote school readiness for target populations demonstrating less preparedness for Kindergarten.

Target Populations

- Homeless
- Involved in the child welfare system
- Children w/ Special Needs
- Low-income African American
- Low-income Latino
- Low-income English Language Learners

Note: Either the state contractor or the ECE Integrated Services grantee will serve as the certifying agency for each of the above ELS funding types.

** Tier 3 rate with 5% differential for infants and toddlers in Centers serving 0-5 year olds*


*** A 3 year "grace period" will be established for family child care providers not rated or with a QRIS score below Tier 3 to provide time for T&TA supports to help the provider achieve a Tier 3 or higher rating.*

ELS TYPE	PURPOSE	ELS RATE	ELIGIBILITY	ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES	NEED & ELIGIBILITY RECERTIFICATION
 ELS Gap	Fills the gap between state/federal funding and the cost of quality ECE services. Ensures all providers are paid a fair rate, which the state has failed to do.	Depends on the amount of the underlying subsidy. This rate will be calculated by the following: Tier 3 rate minus SRR/RMR and food program = ELS Gap rate.*	Low-income families who meet state "Need & Eligibility" requirements and select a Tier 3-5** rated provider.	Follows state/federal enrollment requirements of underlying subsidy.	State/federal enrollment recertification requirements.
 ELS City	ELS City (Voucher) and ELS City (Reserved) target resources to promote a birth-to-5 ECE system. Provides local vouchers and anchored slots with select ECE providers that cover the full cost of quality ECE services.	Tier 3 rate*	Low-income families with at least one child under 4 years of age who select a Tier 3-5** rated provider.	1) Homeless families 2) Target Populations 3) Low-income families	Annually
	ELS City (Moderate) is for low/moderate income families with children under the age of 4 who need ECE services but are not eligible for state/federal subsidies and cannot afford the whole cost of care.	To be determined	Low/moderate income families between 70% SMI and 110% AMI	Low/moderate-income families	Annually
 ELS Bridge	Provides continuity of care for local, state and/or federal subsidized families who lose their eligibility. Ensures local families can maintain their child's ECE services for a minimum of one program year.	Same as previous.	Subsidized families who lose their local, state and/or federal eligibility and continue receiving care with a Tier 3-5** rated provider.	Continuity Priorities: 1) Homeless families - Entry to Kindergarten 2) Other target populations - Entry to Kindergarten 3) Low-income/low-middle income families - Program Year.	Annually

In this model, quality is defined minimally as meeting the requirements of Tier 3 of the Bay Area Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

Figures 11 and 12 below show the rates set for the ELS Centers and FCCs.

Figure 11: ELS Center Rates



EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP (ELS) CENTER RATES




	ELS Center FULL DAY FULL YEAR Rates	ELS Center FULL DAY PART YEAR Rates	ELS Center PART DAY FULL YEAR Rates	ELS Center PART DAY PART YEAR Rates
 Infants	\$27,496	\$19,560	\$15,123	\$10,758
 Toddlers	\$20,935	\$14,893	\$11,514	\$8,191
 Preschoolers	\$17,069	\$12,143	\$9,388	\$6,678
	HOURS DAYS	HOURS DAYS	HOURS DAYS	HOURS DAYS
	6.5-10.5 at least 246	6.5-10.5 at least 175	3.5-6.4 at least 246	3.5-6.4 at least 175

Figure 12: ELS FCC Rates



EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP (ELS) FCC RATES

	FCC FULL DAY FULL YEAR Rates	FCC FULL DAY PART YEAR Rates	FCC PART DAY FULL YEAR Rates	FCC PART DAY PART YEAR Rates
Infants	\$20,707	\$14,731	\$11,389	\$8,102
Toddlers	\$20,707	\$14,731	\$11,389	\$8,102
Preschoolers	\$19,494	\$13,868	\$10,722	\$7,627
	HOURS DAYS	HOURS DAYS	HOURS DAYS	HOURS DAYS
	6.5-10.5 at least 246	6.5-10.5 at least 175	3.5-6.4 at least 246	3.5-6.4 at least 175

VI. Reflections and Lessons Learned

The Stakeholder Engagement process was successful in soliciting input from a wide variety of partners. Stakeholder input helped to guide OECE in building the Implementation Plan by providing varied perspectives and asking informed and penetrating questions. Their thoughtful and constructive feedback was invaluable to the process.

In turn, stakeholders were appreciative that OECE invited their input early in the process. OECE staff made presentations at the beginning of the planning phase to receive initial feedback and to secure partner support before moving forward with the strategies. Stakeholders appreciated the presentations and background information that clearly explained the process and how OECE arrived at the proposed strategies.

This section includes reflections on the positive elements of the partner outreach process and opportunities for OECE to improve its external engagement efforts in the future.

Positive Aspects of the Partner Outreach Approach

- Using an iterative process, OECE was able to build on the partner feedback and incorporate stakeholder suggestions into internal OECE planning.
- As noted above, partners appreciated the opportunity to provide early feedback on the emerging system improvement strategies and to assist OECE in refining the strategies throughout the planning process.
- OECE was successful at leveraging existing ECE community meetings (e.g., CPAC, Parent Voices, provider associations) to present the strategies and collect feedback from key constituencies.
- The online partner survey substantially supplemented the feedback received at the CAC meetings and partner input sessions. The survey provided a convenient opportunity for stakeholders to give feedback, particularly teaching staff and others who were not able to attend the partner input sessions.
- Engaging the support of MIG, Inc. (Consultant Team) to facilitate the partner input sessions, document community input and assist with presentation materials was very useful to OECE.

Strategies to Improve Future Community Engagement Efforts

- Maintain transparency. Keep the communication channels open and continue to attend meetings of parents and providers.
- Ensure that all stakeholders are at the table where decisions are made, including ECE teachers who are directly impacted.
- Tap into all perspectives and make sure there is grassroots buy-in before rolling out a new system.

- To the extent possible, support informed feedback by clearly delineating the strategies and describing how they will be funded, implemented and sequenced. If these details are not yet fully established, share the current thinking that is taking place to lead toward distinct strategies.
- Simplify messaging and presentation of the strategies so the information is fully accessible to a wide range of families, providers and other partners.
- Make the system less daunting and more open to ECE workers who are learning English to ensure receiving their perspective.
- Do not expect absolute consensus on all details; there is too much variety in programs and families who use subsidized ECE services.
- There are challenges associated with early partner engagement, such as raising expectations and dealing with partner dissatisfaction as the strategies evolved during the process. OECE will keep this in mind during the next phase of implementation.
- OECE will continue seeking methods to effectively broaden their family and parent engagement to ensure that input from these constituents is incorporated in future planning.

OECE is currently examining how to increase staff capacity for outreach and engagement. They are incorporating advice given by constituent groups regarding additional organizations to tap for feedback, particularly in the area of family engagement. They will prioritize keeping all engagement channels open throughout the current planning process and into the future.

VII. Next Steps

As of February 2017, OECE and its supporting organizations are focusing on the following actions:

- Refining and finalizing internal implementation plans and budget for Year One.
- Finalizing Requests for Proposals.

Two separate versions of the NOFA—one each for Child Care Centers and for FCCs—were released on January 27, 2017 on the sfoece.org website. OECE has engaged in substantial outreach efforts to ensure that all eligible providers know they must apply in order to be considered to receive funding for fiscal years 2017-2018 through 2019-2020. In early February 2017, OECE hosted information sessions regarding the NOFAs, which will also be conducted in different languages.

The Office is committed to an implementation process that is collaborative, transparent and accountable to families and providers. OECE will continue to seek the input and ideas of community partners throughout the implementation of these system improvement strategies.