



## FACT SHEET

### **Urgent Need and Call to Action at Virtual Town Hall for Early Childhood Education & Child Care in Crisis**

- California's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Coalition hosted a virtual town hall on Tuesday, April 13 for advocates and concerned parents to learn more about current issues facing child care programs, and the urgent need for support statewide.
- The essential infrastructure of child care continues to navigate through unprecedented circumstances as the COVID-19 pandemic carries into 2021.
- The town hall brought together thought leaders and advocates in the ECE space, as well as concerned parents, for an interactive discussion around the current state of child care in California, and what everyone can do to help ensure a robust child care system for thousands of families.
- As of January 2021, 8,330 of 33,540 licensed centers and family child care programs in California have closed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- That loss equates to approximately 25% of licensed child care programs closing in the last year, further impacting an industry that was already on shaky ground before the pandemic.
- If this figure wasn't staggering enough, the loss of more than 150,000 child care jobs signals a harsh reality for families needing child care to be able to work.
- As a result, many families, especially women, are having to choose between keeping their employment or reducing their hours to ensure their young children receive care.

*According to data from the EDD Labor Market Information Division (LMID), the unemployment rate among women in the state increased more than two and a half times, from 4.1% in December 2019 to 11.0% in December 2020. In comparison, the unemployment rate for men increased from 4.1% to 9.5% during the same time.*

- As the state begins to reopen businesses and millions of people return to work, this much-reduced child care workforce means there are only approximately 116,000 licensed child care professionals available to provide services to more than 2.8 million children in California – from birth to five years of age.
- Moreover, the state's child care system has for decades functioned in survival mode, barely able to make it from year-to-year, and for many during the pandemic, it's been month-to-month.
- The operational costs have soared with increased costs for cleaning/disinfecting supplies and PPEs for staff, administrators and students. Of those that have remained open, many are at risk of financial collapse.

- This model is not sustainable. Child care providers cannot survive with such low enrollment and still be expected to provide high-quality, personal attention with reduced staff or staff hours.
- As the state grapples with the after effects of the pandemic, it is clear that child care providers are on the front lines of the recovery, without them California workers cannot return in full-force to fuel the state's economic engine.
- Therefore, it is imperative that the child care system is supported in the immediate, and long-term, through adequate allocations in the state's budget and state legislation to support and protect child care providers.
- You can view the Town Hall here: [FACEBOOK STREAM](#)

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*The ECE Coalition is a partnership of organizations fighting for access to quality early care and education for all of California's low-income kids and families.*

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