



## 2005 Public Policy Agenda

### *“Working to meet child care needs throughout California”*

This Public Policy Agenda is dedicated to our core commitment of providing information and access to quality, safe child care for ALL families in California by working to maintain the integrity of the existing child care delivery system, addressing unmet child care needs and improving access to services.

#### 2005 Overview

The Network’s policy work in the coming year will be responsive to budget and legislative issues put forward by the Governor and Legislature. However, as an organization with responsibilities to all families regardless of income and all providers regardless of type of care offered, we are committed to taking a leadership role with member support in three specific areas of our agenda as noted below:

### **Priorities:**

#### **1. Protect the Health & Safety of All Children in Child Care:**

- Advocate for a fully funded child care licensing system with standards that ensure safe and healthy environments for all children in California.
- Restore the child care licensing program for family child care and center-based programs to ensure safe & healthy environments for children and peace of mind for parents: 1) restore site visits by Community Care Licensing to the pre-2003/04 budget level 2) restore the licensing advocate program 3) ensure a maximum group size for license-exempt care not to exceed the capacity for a small licensed family child care home and 4) maintain a distinct division for child care licensing at the State level.
- Expand Trustline coverage to all license-exempt providers receiving public subsidies.

#### **2. Restore Funding to Increase Child Care Capacity for Children with Special Needs:**

- Seek continued funding (as established in SB 1703) for support, technical assistance, and equipment through R&R for increased access to child care for families of children with disabilities (per ADA).

#### **3. Ensure that Child Care Funding Remains a Priority in the State Budget**

## **I. Preserve and Protect a State Child Care System within the Department of Education Recognizing that Child Care for all Families is an Integral Component of the Education System**

*This section addresses the urgent concern to maintain existing funding and support for child development services.*

### **A. Resource & Referral Services:**

1. Sustain all existing R&R funding while maintaining a mix of state and federal funding, emphasize the integral role of resource & referral services in the child care system.

### **B. Access & Affordability:**

1. Maintain child care subsidies for low-income working families.
2. Maintain and support the contracted child care center-based system (including Family Child Care Education Networks) working toward a more rational, adequate reimbursement system.

### **C. Revenue & Budget:**

1. Promote timely passage of a state budget.
2. Support increased revenue-generating options to meet any budget shortfall.

## **II. Ensure Access to Quality, Safe Child Care for All Families**

*This section addresses the need to improve and expand quality child care services for all children and families in California.*

### **A. Resource & Referral Services:**

1. Support innovative strategies for consumer education that foster awareness of all available child care resources, increase parental understanding of the regulatory process and increase understanding of the importance of quality child care in all settings.
2. Continue to cultivate a relationship with the State and Federal level administrations to define the pivotal role R&R plays in promoting quality, accessible and affordable child care for all families.
3. Develop strategy for expanded R&R funding highlighting the unique role R&R's play in the delivery of services to all families, all types of child care providers and all areas of the community.
4. Develop strategies and support the ability of R&R programs to enhance services for children with special needs and the providers who serve those children, through the use of quality child care funds and other funding sources.
5. Promote the continued utilization of R&R data in public policy discussions and planning.
6. Identify partners in media and technical fields that can help us identify and create new means to communicate with working families that we may not currently be serving.

**B. Access & Affordability:**

1. Promote increased utilization of tax credits and incentives.
2. Promote expansion of subsidies to fully fund all eligible families up to 75% of the SMI.
3. Promote the use of a State Median Income that reflects accurate and up-to-date California income.
4. Promote funding for a standardized statewide Central Eligibility List system administered at the local level through resource & referral programs.
5. Maintain a diverse child care delivery system that respects the culture, language and working patterns of all California families regardless of income.
6. Improve access to child care for families with parents and/or children who have disabilities.

**C. Preschool for All:**

1. Promote development of a *Preschool for All* system that: 1) provides equitable access for all children; 2) addresses the developmental needs of preschool children; 3) honors the needs and input of parents; and 4) is inclusive of and builds on the strengths of the existing child care system, including full day/full year services.
2. Promote the role of R&R in *Preschool for All* by enhancing the role of R&R in: 1) data collection on child care supply, 2) facility needs and availability; 3) parental engagement and awareness of *Preschool for All* options; and 4) coordination of staff training opportunities.
3. Advocate and partner with State, Regional and Local School Readiness programs to promote the inclusion of the greater child care community in training and implementation around *Preschool for All* standards & curriculum.

**D. Regulation:**

1. Promote increased effectiveness and efficiency of the Trustline Registry system by 1) decreasing the time an individual with a criminal history can be paid; 2) improving the sharing of information between CDSS and the Network and 3) increasing monitoring of nanny agencies.

**E. Child Care Systems:**

1. Ensure a continuum of basic health & safety protection, training and technical assistance opportunities for all types of child care providers including license-exempt, family child care and child care centers.
2. Promote a system that rewards higher quality child care; increases family access to quality providers and is supported with a well developed infrastructure to manage the system.
3. Seek, establish, and strengthen strategic partnerships and identify new partners including employers who understand the needs of fulltime working families.
4. Support development of a Child Care Master Plan for a fair and equitable child care system in California that incorporates an inclusive planning process and focuses on all age groups including infants, toddlers and school age children.
5. Work to expand the supply of quality infant toddler care in a variety of settings in response to the documented acute shortage of these services.

**F. Quality Improvements:**

1. Advocate for changes to the child development permit matrix to broaden the acceptable training options.
2. Advocate for continued use of CCDBG funding to improve quality child care and development services and the development of a timely state plan that is responsive to California's child care needs.
3. Improve access to quality school age child care in local communities.
4. Work toward improved compensation and benefits for child care staff and licensed family child care providers including continued and increased funding for C.A.R.E.S. and similar programs.

**G. Federal Funding:**

1. Support efforts to reauthorize and improve CCDBG, TANF and Head Start.