



February 10, 2022

Following Governor Newsom's signing of the Early Action Budget, Tamika Farr, the CEO of Pathways LA, released the following statement:

"Pathways LA applauds the state Legislature and Governor Newsom for taking immediate action on producing an Early Action Budget to address the persistent impacts of the coronavirus. As the pandemic continues to ravage the state, Californians need auxiliary programs to help them maneuver through the harsh effects of this global pandemic. Particularly, our early care educators and the communities they serve, which often are low-income households, are disproportionately impacted by the virus.

The Early Action Budget Package outlines welcome provisions for most workers, providing up to 80 hours of COVID-related supplemental paid leave. Workers can now care for a sick family member, recover from exposure from COVID, and critically for our families, take care of a child who cannot attend school for COVID-related issues. We are also encouraged to see an additional \$1.9 billion in state budget funds to address testing, vaccinations, and hospital surges, and \$6.1 billion in tax relief or stipends for small businesses.

Although the expedited budget is good policy for all Californians, leaders failed to address the needs of our essential workers in the early education sector. The pandemic has highlighted the indispensable need for child care in the state, and direct funds are desperately needed to provide our essential workers with the support they need during this crisis. Early care educators are currently facing devastating economic hardships as they continue to endure the volatility and disruptions caused by COVID-19. California specifically is down child care workers by 8% since the start of the pandemic. Much of this is reflected in the lack of support for our early educators in the form of respectable wages and funding for the additional cost of operating during a pandemic, such as securing cleaning supplies to properly sterilize classrooms, purchasing PPE equipment for children and staff, and acquiring testing kits.

Leaders missed a crucial opportunity to provide our early care educators with urgent funds they need to keep serving our community's most vulnerable. Despite this, Pathways LA remains hopeful that state leaders and the Governor will focus on substantive investments for early education during the May revision, and ultimately see the changes take effect in the final 2022-2023 state budget."

About Pathways LA

Pathways LA is committed to the healthy development and school readiness of young children from disadvantaged communities. Driven by data and innovation, our experts support the continuum of care that includes parents, childcare providers, community partners, and policymakers. Learn more at:

<https://pathwaysla.org/>