

May 18, 2022

I welcome the added provisions that Governor Newsom outlined in the May revision to the state budget. Specifically, the Inflation Relief Package would aid countless families in combating the crushing expenses of everyday essentials. I'm pleased that the Governor prioritized relief to help California's neediest families with rental assistance, utility bills, and transportation cost. Most noticeably - for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field, which received funding to waive child care fees for low-income families for an additional year.

As the nation continues to grapple with the economic hardships brought upon by the global COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the raising price of everyday needs, families in need of child care are acutely impacted by this economic turmoil and are most in need of relief. Waving family fees is critical for countless families that cannot afford to take on added expenses to their already tight budget. However, extending the fees for just one year will not suffice. I'm hopeful that the Governor will consider waving the fees indefinitely – as family fees add yet another burdensome cost to our already needy families.

Moreover, I encourage the Governor to include reimbursement rates for our child care providers in the final budget agreement. Child care providers have advocated for equitable reimbursement rates for over a decade with no significant success. Now they face the hardships of paying excessive fees for essential goods on meager wages. As a result, the child care sector is losing qualified, experienced providers to employees that offer better pay. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic more providers are permanently closing their programs than ever before. Providers value their work producing a nurturing and loving venue for children in our communities, but several simply can't manage the rising cost of providing an essential service on such low wages.

I applaud the Governor for introducing provisions that would help several families in this difficult time, but I urge him to continue to work with state leaders to pass ongoing, substantive investments for child care providers and the ECE sector.

Sincerely,

