



## 10 Key Recommendations to Deliver on the Child Care Promise For California's CCDF State Plan

The Child Care Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (the Act) represents the biggest change in the child care legal landscape in almost twenty years. The Act includes significant new directives that, when implemented, will make our child care programs more child-focused, family friendly, and fair to providers.

The draft Plan by the California Department of Education (CDE) largely *reports on* the current provision of services, without indicating how CDE, as the lead agency, *plans* to provide services over the next three years, and as importantly, how it plans to comply with the Act's new requirements.

It is not too late. CDE can still amend the draft Plan to create a robust, forward-looking Plan that complies with the Act, ensures working families' access to stable child care, and enhances the health, safety and quality of child care over the next three years.

The draft state Plan should:

1. Leverage the California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan and stakeholder proposals for implementation of the Act.
2. Implement a 12-month income eligibility standard for working families that will comply with the law; identify needed regulatory changes and recommend needed legislative action.
3. Indicate that CDE will urge the Legislature to prioritize increasing provider rates in compliance with federal equal access requirements.
4. Update the initial income eligibility guidelines, and establish a phase-out through a higher exiting income threshold, using the *current* State Median Income (SMI). State that CDE will ask the Legislature to conform income thresholds to the requirements of the Act.
5. Improve access for children with special needs by ensuring referral for early intervention and special education services that includes child care itself as a service.
6. Ensure access to child care for children in foster care by describing coordination with the Department of Social Services and child welfare agencies to; clarify the definition of "children in need of protective services."
7. Improve access for homeless children by adequately describing the protections for child care services for families seeking permanent housing.
8. Adopt a plan for coordinating health and safety trainings for child care providers without decreasing access to child care, and for implementing a system of annual inspections for licensed child care facilities.
9. Propose expanding the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry to further professional development efforts, and creating a coordinated infrastructure for child care professional development and quality improvement.
10. Promote a user-friendly statewide website that incorporates parent and provider education information, an on-line child care application portal, and the automation of cross-program benefit referrals.

CDE must submit the final Plan to the federal government by March 1, 2016. We urge CDE to use this opportunity to create a detailed Plan to strengthen California's existing child care system, toward more child-oriented, stable, higher quality, professionalized child care programs.

The Child Care Law Center's full, submitted [comments](#) on the draft state Plan are available at [www.childcarelaw.org](http://www.childcarelaw.org).