



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**
Celebrating 31 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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Executive Director

March 9, 2016

The Honorable Mark Leno, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Shirley Weber, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Leno and Assembly Member Weber:

CHILD CARE BRIDGE PROGRAM FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

The Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families respectfully requests your earnest consideration of a budget proposal which would establish the Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children. This program would increase access to early care education services for abused or neglected children across the State.

County child welfare agencies rely on the commitment of countless resource families to provide children with safe, loving homes during times of crisis. However, like many other counties, Los Angeles is experiencing a shortage of foster parents and many have reported that the lack of access to child care services is one of the top barriers. As Los Angeles prepares to implement Assembly Bill 403: *Continuum of Care Reform*, there will be an ever increasing need to recruit, retain and support more resource families and we believe that access to bridge funding to support their immediate child care needs will continue to be an essential support for these families. In addition, we know that, for all the benefits that high quality child care has on children ages 0 to 5, the impact can be far more dramatic for children who have experienced the trauma of abuse, neglect and removal from their homes.

The Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children would provide resource families who are caring for foster children ages 0 through 3, as well as parenting foster youth, with an emergency child care voucher for up to six months. With the enhanced support of child care navigators, these vouchers would help families transition to long-term, high quality early education programs. The program also includes a professional development component in trauma-informed care, ensuring that child care providers have the training they need to care for the youngest of our abused and neglected children. Los Angeles child care providers, child welfare workers and stakeholders in both systems have expressed their support for this program, and we agree that expanding child care resources available to resource families and parenting youth will enrich the lives of children and provide needed support for their caregivers.

The Commission for Children and Families supports this proposal in light of the essential support it will provide to our State's most vulnerable children. Please contact Executive Director, Tamara Hunter at (213) 974-8108 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sunny Kang, Chair
Los Angeles County Commission for
Children and Families

- c: Each Member, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Education
- Each Member, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and Human Services
- Each Member, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
- Each Member, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education
- Los Angeles County Delegation
- Each Member, California Legislative Women's Caucus
- Board of Supervisors
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- County Counsel