

## 2024 POLICY AGENDA

*For nearly 50 years, Child Care Resource & Referral (R&R) agencies have served as trusted partners in communities throughout California. Through economic and political instability, increasing economic inequality, natural disasters, and public health crises, R&R agencies remain vital in supporting families and child care providers to ensure families can work or attend school.*

- **Promote a robust, equitable, mixed delivery child care system.**  
Children thrive in environments where they are nurtured, safe, healthy, stimulated, and have adequate nutrition and space to grow. Families may also have children of varying ages, and various work schedules. A mixed delivery early care and learning system ensures that families have diverse options to meet their needs, whether that be care at home, with a caregiver, a publicly or privately funded child care provider, family member, school setting, or in their community. The success of such a system requires investment in the child care workforce and addressing barriers that prevent home based providers from engaging in and accessing the support systems.
- **Support a whole child and family approach to the early childhood system.**  
The health and well being of the family and caregivers of children have a tremendous impact on their growth and development. We support policies that are informed by families that help build their assets and economic security, emotional and physical well being, agency and civic engagement potential, and social connections in their communities. To address systemic barriers to equitable outcomes, families and children experiencing the greatest need must be prioritized.
- **Make child care accessible and affordable for families.**  
Society benefits when families are economically self-sufficient and able to participate in their communities. We support expanding income eligibility for subsidies and increasing slots. We also support other strategies and efforts to reduce the cost of care for families. Families need a range of child care options that match their unique needs. Attention must be paid to sustain, expand, and/or stabilize child care providers to satisfy demand.
- **A unified R&R system is necessary to have equitable and consistent services across the state.**  
All R&R contractors working in coordination are necessary to deliver consistent services across the state and to ensure data collection is clear and meaningful. A funded structure to support contracting agencies ensures effective and timely two-way communication between the state and local communities, aiding in quick emergency response, pinpointing gaps in services, and assisting in identifying adaptable service solutions. A statewide coordinating entity with reach across every county provides the necessary structure to efficiently offer support to all partners, assists the state to better understand and respond to their equity service goals among California's unique and ever changing demographics, and offers a more organized way to demonstrably impact services to families and the child care providers that serve them.
- **Integrate research & policy in a holistic framework.**  
Amplify both in-house and third party research in order to influence policy and narratives that advance a more equitable and effective system for child care providers, children, and parents.