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Submitted by email to statepln@dss.ca.gov

Subject: Public Comment from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network on the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan For California FFY 2025-2027

The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Network), which represents resource & referral agencies across the state, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Child Care and Development Fund Plan Preprint for States and Territories for FFY 2025-2027.

We also support the comments submitted by the Child Care Law Center, and echo concerns regarding the need for issues of race and equity to be more intentionally addressed.

Below, you will find our comments on certain sections of the draft State Plan, organized by section number. We provide both general recommendations and specific feedback.

Section Comments

Section	Suggested Position (support, oppose/recommend change/concern)	Reasoning	Recommendation / Recommended Language
1.2.5	Concern	<p>Lead Agencies must have in effect policies to govern the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds (98.15(b)(13)). Certify by describing the Lead Agency's policies related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information. CDSS only allows access to personally identifiable information (PII) when required/allowed by law. Further, all policies, procedures, and methods for sharing PII to fulfill mandated requirements (e.g., federal reporting) must be approved by CDSS' Executive and Legal Offices. To ensure awareness of and compliance with state and federal laws, CDSS requires all employees to take a mandatory annual self-guided digital Data and Privacy Security Training.</p>	<p>Because the Lead Agency holds its contractors accountable for the security of personally identifiable information of children, families and child care providers served, the CDSS should allow access to the annual self-guided digital Data and Privacy Security Training that has been developed by the state to all contractors. Currently, contractors do not have access and bear the burden of locating security training independently which can be costly and there is no way of identifying if the training is consistent with the state developed training.</p>
1.4.1	Support with change	1.4.1 b.iii. Uses the incorrect link for the consumer education website.	Please change MyChildCarePlan.gov to MyChildCarePlan.org.

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1.7.1	Support	Describes the overall system well.	
1.8.1	Support, but update	<p>There is not a clear system to keep R&Rs posted on their duties during an emergency. 2023 is not accessible (see link on 1.8.3).</p> <p>In the second section, “During = Communication Plan, the plan describes in detail the roles and responsibilities of local and state-level child care entities during a state of emergency...” This is important for entities to know, but it is unclear if they know their responsibilities and how they are supported to fulfill these responsibilities.</p>	<p>This section should include review to gather information about how well the plan is working, and where updates need to be made. For example, from the user perspective (ex. Child care providers), how is the Everbridge system working? Are they using it to communicate to the state their status and immediate needs?</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic there were times when the local R&Rs were tapped into for the dissemination of PPE, vaccine access and COVID test kits. An analysis of how well the coordination between the state and local health response agencies would be beneficial in learning the effectiveness and possible barriers or challenges. Additionally, the CDSS should ensure that sufficient funding was available for the expected responses, for example, were R&R agencies able to handle the shipments and dissemination of supplies as expected or were there storage and staff capacity challenges that arise, was there sufficient funding to support the activities at the local level, did the providers received the support they needed. Did R&R staff receive the information necessary to support the child care providers and staff locally to help ensure accurate information related to PINs and</p>

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			waivers was available. An analysis of what we all learned from the recent pandemic could help to improve communications and support at all levels.
1.8.3	Change	Link doesn't work	
2.1.2	Not sure	The section is regarding outreach and services to eligible families (CCDF) with a person with a disability. Under Other the state describes the Emergency Child Care Bridge TIC training and support. Perhaps there is data that indicates families in ECCB have a disability? Is there a section in the modules for working with persons with a disability?	
2.2.2.b,d	Concern	Describes the Lead Agency process for license-exempt programs run by the LEA and the requirement for the LEA to follow the Uniform Complaint Process (UCP). The process lacks a method for families to have easy access to complaints and resolutions. It also lacks a process to inform the CCR&Rs and statewide database Mychildcareplan.org of serious complaints and instances when referrals may need to cease.	Further work is needed to expand the process to ensure families understand the complaint process for unlicensed sites operated by LEAs and include the sites on the transparency website. Expand the process to include the public child care resource and referral system as well as the state's consumer education website.

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2.2.3	Concern	Similar to above	Further work is needed to expand the process to ensure families understand the complaint process for unlicensed sites operated by LEAs and include the sites on the transparency website. Expand the process to include the public child care resource and referral system as well as the state's consumer education website.
2.2.4	Concern	Similar to above	Further work is needed to expand the process to ensure families understand the complaint process and include the sites on the transparency website. Expand the process to include the public child care resource and referral system as well as the state's consumer education website.
2.3.1	Support	Describes MCCP as user friendly, simple to navigate and written in plain language and easy to understand.	
2.3.2	Support		
2.3.3	Support		
2.3.4	Support with change	Describes resources on the CDSS CCLD website but does not include information on MCCP, consumer education website in all sections.	Additionally, the Mychildcareplan.org consumer education website includes information for families and the public in easy to read language with links to the CDSS

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		2.3.4 b contains two links that need to be updated.	<p>CCLD website. Includes: Licensing and Safety, License Exempt Centers, Background checks, complaints to Community Care Licensing, and Licensing and Monitoring in California. Each section is easy to read and includes links to the state licensing website for more information.</p> <p>2.3.2a. https://mychildcareplan.org/resource/becoming-a-family-child-care-provider/</p> <p>2.3.4b. https://mychildcareplan.org/resource/license-exempt-child-care-centers/ https://mychildcareplan.org/resource/licensing-and-monitoring-for-child-care-facilities/</p>
2.3.7	Support		
2.3.10 - 2.3.10 b.	Support with addition	Missing website for Consumer Education R&R Zip Code search on Network website.	<p>Additionally, the CDSS website provides a link to the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network where the user can enter their ZIP code to find their nearest R&R Agency and contact information. The link to the website can be found on the home page of the R&R Network: https://rrnetwork.org/</p> <p>Additionally, consumers can find the information under the pages Resources for Parents on the CDSS website (https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing/resources-for-parents)</p>

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			https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing/resources-for-parents) and Resources for Providers ((https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing/resources-for-providers) (https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing/resources-for-providers)) 2.3.10.b https://rrnetwork.org/
2.3.11 a.	Change	The last sentence in the response is unclear as there is no texting available related to the Consumer Ed 800 # or Chat Service associated with the 800#.	Modify the last sentence: “The <u>California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCCR&RN)</u> provides callers or <u>those using the chat service (texting is not available)</u> with basic child care information and referrals to their local CCR&R Program...”
2.4.2 a - g	Support	Describes the R&R Counselor modules and role of R&R in assisting providers and parents to access the information.	Needs to be reviewed and updated, but we may not need to include this.
2.6.1 a.	Change	The section indicates the R&R specialists are sending the family to the consumer education website, but it is the CDSS transparency site that they are sharing.	The CDSS CCLD website and the mychildcareplan.org website are used throughout the document and both are referred to as the consumer education website. Consider clarifying the state uses both to meet the consumer education requirements or that mychildcareplan.org is the consumer education website and the CDSS Child Care Licensing site is the Lead

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			Agency website that hosts licensing, complaint and regulatory information.
4.1.3 Child care services available through grants or contracts.	Change	<p>This doesn't answer the rates question for contracted slots.</p> <p>Additionally, in response to the answer written (indicated in blue font above), it is hard to know the level of a zip code's priority when compared across the state. For example, one county may have a relatively large concentration of subsidies and their priority need of a zip code in their county might be minor in comparison to another county that might have relatively few existing resources to use for that same priority. The second county would otherwise show a greater need comparatively than the first county though it shows up as the first county's priority. "Need" might include other factors, such as transportation, facilities, zoning laws, child population density, etc. that contribute to making it harder for supply to exist in one county compared to another. It is hard to know this when looking at LPC priority data discreetly, that may each have different interpretations of need when the state</p>	We recommend the state focus funding to reach the communities with the greatest need by having a broader set of indicators that are consistent across the state to pinpoint resources to address need. Identification of the data and indicators to look across the state should be sought through using the Data Equity Tool and the Advisory Group that will lead the usage of the tool. AB 2832

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		is looking to prioritize zip codes based on limited data across the state.	
4.1.6 Supply and Demand	Support, and for consideration	Consider: Vacancy numbers looked solely on license capacity might overstate vacancy. A more true indicator of vacancy might be a provider's desired capacity, as those may be lower than licensed capacity and thus will be unfilled.	The statewide Consumer Education website (MyChildCarePlan.org) utilizes statewide data from local R&Rs that have a record of providers' desired capacity if less than their licensed capacity. This might adjust for a portion of a regular vacancy factor.
5.1.2 c. ii.	Correction needed	TrustLine is not a component of Guardian. TrustLine as well as Community Care Licensing uses the database called Guardian but TrustLine is a statutorily defined program separate from any database used to store data.	Delete "...a component of CDSS' new Guardian system," from the following sentence. "The TrustLine Registry background check process is required for license-exempt providers except grandparents, aunts and uncles..."
5.1.2 c. ii.	Clarification needed	The language states that parents need to self-certify that they are aware that the child care they are choosing is exempt from licensure and does not have state oversight. It is not clear where that statement needs to be included or is included. It is not included in any of the TrustLine paperwork.	Add language to clarify where this parent self-certification statement must be included or is it already included on one of the state forms? If it is included on a CDSS form, add in a reference to that form in this section.

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5.2.4 a	The Network supports continued implementation of CCIP, which provides training and support to license-exempt providers, as well as an on-ramp for providers electing to become a licensed family child care home provider.	Supports that are intentionally designed for license-exempt, home-based child care providers are critical to engage informal caregivers with formal systems of support, such as those provided through the local R&R and community partners.	
5.3 (and 6.2.2.b.iv.)	The Network supports the department's efforts to conduct a full analysis of how to best meet the health and safety requirements for license-exempt family, friend, neighbor (FFN) caregivers and recommends incorporating best practices through existing infrastructures of support, such as local R&Rs/ CCIP.	R&Rs have effectively demonstrated their capacity to engage informal caregivers with formal supports through CCIP and health and safety funding. Through CCIP, the Network has developed and trained on health and safety curricula that was developed to meet these requirements and align with the web-based CECO modules. Facilitator's guides are available in nine languages.	The Network also recommends expanding health and safety funding from regional hubs to statewide - all local R&Rs, to meet the need for license-exempt providers and increase access.
5.4		The Health and Safety section 5.4 is weak and does not recognize the Health and Safety trainings offered by R&Rs or the CHST program very well. They do cover H&S in 6.2.	

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5.5	The Network supports CDSS's input process on the standards from providers and recommends implementing monitoring practices that are supportive and include supportive strategies that utilize the state's infrastructure to engage license-exempt providers.	Utilizing the existing infrastructure and programs with a history of engaging license-exempt home-based child care providers, such as CCIP and CHST, will allow CA to provide training, home visiting, technical assistance, and materials more efficiently.	
5.6.3 d. ii.	The information in this section is incomplete in reference to the background check conducted.	CPMB at CDSS checks the Community Care Licensing database and other state agency databases i.e. EMSA, Department of Public Health, etc. prior to clearing someone's background check. These checks are in addition to the DOJ checks and should be referenced in this section.	Please reach out to CPMB - Brenda Barner - to obtain the correct language to add this information to the State Plan.
5.6.3 d. ii.	The information in this section is incomplete in reference to the other agencies that are statutorily required to assist in the administration of the TrustLine background check.	Both the CA Child Care R&R Network and the local Child Care Resource and Referral Programs are also involved per statute in administering the TrustLine Registry.	Add to the response for this section the following: <u>The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network per Health and Safety Code Sections 1596.64, 1596.643, 1596.645 and Child Care Resource and Referral Programs per Health and Safety Code Section 1596.655 assist in administering the TrustLine background check statewide.</u>

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5.6.3 d.ii	The statement “The CDSS regional offices monitor compliance with these requirements, policies, and procedures.” Does not apply to TrustLine and license-exempt care providers.	CDSS has no authority currently to monitor license-exempt care for compliance with TrustLine.	Add to this section: <u>For license-exempt providers required to go through the TrustLine background check, Per Health and Safety Code Section 1595.66 (a) Each license-exempt child care provider, as defined pursuant to Section 1596.60, who is compensated, in whole or in part, with funds provided pursuant to the Alternative Payment Program, Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 10225) of Part 1.8 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code or pursuant to the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, except a provider who is, by marriage, blood, or court decree, the grandparent, aunt, or uncle of the child in care, shall be registered pursuant to Sections 1596.603 and 1596.605 in order to be eligible to receive this compensation.</u>
5.6.4 b.	Correction to the definition of the CACI check is not correct.	The California Department of Justice doesn't use the terminology “California’s Child Abuse and Severe Neglect Registry.”	Delete reference to “California’s Child Abuse and Severe Neglect Registry.” The statement should read: Additionally, the individual submits <u>personally identifying</u> information for a name-based check of the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) <u>housed at the California Department of Justice.</u>
5.6.4 d. i.	Reference to the role that the Network plays in the TrustLine background check is missing.	The CA Child Care R&R Network is involved in the TrustLine process per statute and contract with CDSS.	Add the following to this Section after “...the CA DOJ sends the clearance notification to the CDSS and then the CDSS notifies the

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			<p>TrustLine applicant that she/he is on the Registry.”: <u>CDSS contracts with the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network to notify child care resource and referral and payment programs proactively of the status of TrustLine applicants associated with their agency.</u> The statute related to this is Health and Safety Code 1596.66 (3) (and 1596.67 for Stage 1) The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network shall notify the applicable local childcare resource and referral agencies, alternative payment programs, and county welfare departments of the status of the Trustline applicants and registered Trustline childcare providers. The network shall maintain a toll-free telephone line to provide information to the local resource and referral agencies, the alternative payment programs, and the childcare recipients of the status of providers. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&sectionNum=1596.66.</p> <p>Further on in this response, clarify that the CDSS regional offices only monitor licensees. “The CDSS regional offices monitor compliance with these requirements, policies and procedures <u>for licensees</u>.”</p>

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5.6.9 - Paragraph 1	Clarification of the process for TrustLine is needed.	The CA Child Care R&R Network has a role in TrustLine per statute and contract with CDSS.	Add the following statement to the end of the first paragraph. <u>CDSS transmits via API TrustLine background check data to the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network and the Network notifies Child Care Resource and Referral and Alternative Payment Program agencies of the registered (clearances) status of TrustLine applicants making them eligible to be paid.</u>
5.6.9 Paragraph 2	The criminal history process description here does not include reference to family child care providers or license-exempt caregivers applying to TrustLine.	The criminal history process applies to licensed family child care providers and license-exempt providers in addition to employees of licensed facilities.	<p>Add the following language: “Prior to prohibiting an individual’s presence or employment at a licensed child care facility, <u>or prohibiting an individual from receiving a license to be a family child care provider or an individual from being registered on TrustLine,</u> based on criminal history information, CDSS provides the subject of the background check with notice of any criminal history received....”</p> <p>Add TrustLine Applicant to the last sentence of the paragraph: “A notice of eligibility is sent by the Lead Agency to the <u>TrustLine applicant,</u> the child care staff member, or prospective child care staff member and associated child care facility.”</p>
5.6.9 Paragraph 3	Clarification needed on who is responsible for the oversight of	This response mentions CDSS regional offices monitoring the	Add a statement that says: <u>“The Child Care and Development Division monitors Alternative Payment Programs for compliance</u>

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	the determination of eligibility for license-exempt providers.	requirements but they only have oversight for licensees.	<u>with these requirements related to license-exempt providers.</u>
		The reference to the statute in this response is incomplete. It isn't only non-exemptible crimes that disqualify someone. This is only part of the statute that details the background check done and what disqualifies someone from having a FCC license, working in a license facility or being registered on TrustLine. Add the full information.	Add the following reference to H&S Code 1596.871 for licensees: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&sectionNum=1596.871 Add the following statute to the response for TrustLine Applicants Health & Safety Code 1596.607 https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&sectionNum=1596.607 .
5.7.1	We believe the answer to this question is incorrect.	The question is asking how the lead agency defines relative providers - those that can be exempt from CCDF regulations. The question is not asking how California generally defines relative exemptions. In statute, California only exempts grandparents, aunts and uncles from CCDF requirements per statute. Other relatives i.e. great grandparents and siblings in California are not exempt from CCDF requirements and must go	Add reference to Section 1596.66 which clearly lists exempted relatives: (a) Each license-exempt childcare provider, as defined pursuant to Section 1596.60, who is compensated, in whole or in part, with funds provided pursuant to the Alternative Payment Program, Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 10225) of Part 1.8 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code or pursuant to the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, <u>except a provider who is, by marriage, blood, or court decree, the grandparent, aunt, or uncle of the child in</u>

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		through TrustLine and meet Health and Safety requirements.	care, shall be registered pursuant to Sections <u>1596.603 and 1596.605 in order to be eligible to receive this compensation.</u> Registration under this chapter shall be required for providers who receive funds under Section 9858 and following of Title 42 of the United States Code only to the extent permitted by that law and the regulations adopted pursuant thereto. Registration under this chapter shall be required for providers who receive funds under the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Program only to the extent permitted by that program and the regulations adopted pursuant thereto.
6.1.1.a.v. (Page 217)	Data Correction		CCIP Technical Assistance Instances was 237,687
6.2.7.b	The Network supports continued implementation of CCIP.		
All of 7.5.2 in one change.	Change/concern	Some areas could use clarification.	California utilizes a statewide system or network of Resource and Referral agencies that are under contract with the CDSS and are subject to periodic monitoring to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. In addition to quarterly reports on the number of referrals and supply of care, CDSS evaluates resource and referral services (R&Rs) for equitable access to

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			<p>information about child care options. This may involve soliciting ongoing feedback from parents seeking child care and providers listed with R&Rs to understand the knowledge of, accessibility, and effectiveness of R&R services to connect families with child care that meets their needs. CDSS may leverage the state's new parent portal, mandated by legislation (AB 2960), to understand families' child care and other early learning referral needs to inform future policies and practices. R&R agencies across the State of California provide information to parents about the full range of child care options available in their service area. R&Rs provide assistance and information to families so they can select child care that best meets their family's needs. Reports are submitted quarterly through the Resource & Referral Program Service Data Report (RRAS) online application. RRAS information includes the number of requests for referrals, age category information, time of child care request for referrals, and the reason for care. Contractors implement an annual self-evaluation utilizing the Lead Agency's Program Review Instrument that supports compliance, identifies technical assistance needs and areas for contractors to set goals and develop plans for the coming year. The self-evaluation process aids in the monitoring</p>

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			<p>of community-level coordination of child care and development programs, support information for families raising children, and services offered by CCR&Rs. The statewide R&R system supports the recruitment and retention of child care providers by providing information, training and TA to licensed and license-exempt child care providers. Through the CHST program, contractors provide training or scholarships to child care providers and staff to ensure access to the required 16 hours of health and safety training. CHST reporting is submitted to the Lead agency on a regular basis.</p>
7.6.2	Support	Advances health and safety.	