

2026 Joint Annual Conference

Partnering for Impact: Strengthening Families, Supporting Communities



OCTOBER 7 - 9, 2026

**Thriving
Families**
CA FOUNDATION

California Child Care Resource & Referral
NETWORK

***Partnering for Impact:
Strengthening Families, Supporting
Communities***



California Child Care Resource & Referral



**Preliminary Program for the
Joint Conference**

October 7-9, 2026

Welcome to the 2026 Joint CA Child Care R&R Network/ TFC Foundation Conference

General Conference Information

We hope that you will be able to join us for this year's Joint Conference and that you will find the conference offerings informative, that you will have an opportunity to network with colleagues from around the state, and that you discover some new ideas to implement and share with others upon your return. We also hope that you leave with renewed enthusiasm for the important work you do.

Registration

Complete registration by Friday, September 25th. Your registration includes all conference materials, access to the Wednesday evening Welcome Reception, breakfast and lunch on Thursday, and breakfast on Friday. We look forward to connecting, learning, and celebrating with you throughout the event!

Payments

Conference fees may be paid by check or credit card. Credit Cards will be processed during online registration. Make checks payable to: Thriving Families CA Foundation. Mail checks to: 2026 Joint Annual Conference, Thriving Families CA Foundation, 1435 River Park Drive, Suite 406, Sacramento, CA, 95815.

Cancellation Policy

There will be no refunds issued for cancellations. Refunds will not be made for no-shows and unpaid registration fees will be invoiced. This includes presenters. However, **substitutions will be allowed until Wednesday, September 30th.** Should TFC/R&R Network cancel, a full registration fee refund will be issued.

For more information, contact:

Danielle Metzger, TFC
(916) 567-6797 or danielle@thrivingfamilies-ca.org

Heather Lang-Heaven, CA Child Care R&R Network
(415) 494-4649 or hlangheaven@rrnetwork.org

Networking Opportunities

Join colleagues from around the state on Wednesday, October 7th at 5:30 pm for our Welcome Reception.

Thursday, October 8th after the workshops end at 4:45 pm you and your peers can create your own experiences. We hope it will be an opportunity for agency staff to spend time together or for staff from a variety of agencies to renew friendships and/or get to know each other. You can also use the networking ideas below to create your own evening experience.

Thursday 7:30am-8:15am

Playful Regulation: Laughter, Breath, and Connection

Patsy Partida, Child Development Resources Ventura County, Inc.

This workshop is intended for any attendee who would like to pause, breathe, laugh, and engage in playful self-care. No prior experience or professional skill is required; participants are invited to join at their own comfort level. This is a low-impact, comfortable activity, so attendees can participate without needing to change clothes or prepare in advance. You can go straight from the workshop to breakfast!

Networking On Your Own

Create your Own Evening: individuals and/or groups can create their own evening plans by heading out into Sacramento to experience what it has to offer.

Visit Sacramento has information about restaurants, events and things to do that can help you plan your trip!

Old Sacramento Waterfront Unmatched views of the river, locally-owned shops, one-of-a-kind collectables, nightclubs and a buzzing nightlife. Bustling with activity, the waterfront is alive with shopping, dining, entertainment, historical attractions, world-renowned museums, horse carriage and cobblestone!

Arden Fair Mall is within walking distance and is home to the restaurants Johnny Rockets, BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse, Gen Korean BBQ House, and Seasons 52; The Cheesecake Factory, movie theaters; and department stores including Apple, Coach, lululemon athletica, Macy's and Quay Australia.

Museums: There are 32 museums and destinations in the Sacramento region to check out if you have time before or after the conference.

Visit the State Capitol before or after the conference.

2026 Joint Conference Schedule

Wednesday, October 7th

Location

11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Registration	Grand Ballroom Foyer
12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Welcome and Conference Kick-Off	Grand Ballroom
2:15 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Workshops	See program
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Workshops	See program
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Welcome and Networking Reception (optional)	Outdoor Pavilion

Thursday, October 8th

8:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Breakfast and Keynote	Grand Ballroom
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	Grand Ballroom Foyer
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Workshops	See Program
12:00 noon - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch	Grand Ballroom
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open	Grand Ballroom/Foyer
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Workshops	See Program
3:15 pm - 4:45 p.m.	Workshops	See Program
4:45 p.m.	Dinner and Evening on your own	N/A

Friday, October 9th

8:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	Breakfast and Raffles	Grand Ballroom
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Workshops	See Program
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Closing Activity	Grand Ballroom

Wednesday, October 7, 2026
Conference Kick-Off
12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Grand Ballroom

Welcome!

Remarks by Denyne Micheletti, Thriving Families CA (TFC) Foundation and Kelly Graesch, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Opening Keynote: TBD

Executives:

How Are the Children? A 100-Year-Long Vision of Family Well-Being Systems Navigation that Calls for Action Today

Dr. LaWanda Wesley, Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) and other presenters TBD

Federal and state-funded family well-being systems and community partners continue to experience resource ebbs and flows and families are on the receiving end. The charge to family-well-being serving organizations is how to best maximize funding and service delivery for the greatest impact.

Workforce Compensation Grant Administration: Supporting Educator Wages

Jonathan Mar & Kara Marshall, Children's Council of San Francisco

Children's Council of San Francisco administers workforce compensation grants that help providers meet reporting and compliance requirements while supplementing wages to a living standard in San Francisco. This session will share our administrative approach and how our partnership with providers stabilizes the ECE workforce.

Executive Session: Topic TBD

Facilitated by Denyne Micheletti, Thriving Families CA Foundation; Panelists TBD

Description TBD

Partnering for Impact: How Agencies Fund Safety Training & Tools to Strengthen Providers and Communities

Nick Bello & Lana Frisby, Lionheart Safety, and other presenters TBD

This session brings together leaders from R&Rs, LPCs, and County Offices of Education to share how they have successfully used funding to support provider safety training and tools. Panelists will share examples of funding streams, initiatives aligned with county and state priorities, and sustainable cross-agency partnerships.

Success Against Fraud Events (SAFE): Protecting Your Organization from Today's Fraud Threats

Jon Stockton & Rudy Alcala, Columbia Bank and Jeff Okrepkie, George Petersen Insurance

Fraud continues to evolve, putting organizations of all sizes at risk. Join a panel of experts from banking, law enforcement, insurance, and fraud prevention as they discuss today's most common fraud schemes, emerging threats, and practical strategies organizations can implement to reduce risk. Through real-world examples and interactive discussion, panelists will share insights on business email compromise, check fraud, social engineering, payment fraud, cybersecurity trends, and incident response. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to help protect their organizations, employees, clients, and financial resources. Whether you oversee finance, operations, administration, or executive leadership, this session will provide valuable tools and perspectives to strengthen your organization's fraud awareness and prevention efforts.

Executive Session: Topic TBD

Facilitated by Kelly Graesch, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network;

Panelists TBD

Description TBD

Managers:

From Open Door to Intentional Connection: Rethinking Leadership Access: From Always Available to Intentionally Present

Joy Damico & Amy Emerson, Elevate & Sustain LLC

This workshop challenges the traditional “open door policy” and explores how scheduled, protected time helps leaders build trust, improve communication, and stay connected to staff before concerns become crises. Participants will learn how intentional one-on-one time supports staff reflection, strengthens relationships, and contributes to retention and staff wellness. Leaders will leave with practical strategies for creating protected time that helps staff feel heard, supported, and accountable.

Creating High-Impact Mission-Driven Events: Strategy, Sponsorships, and Community Engagement

Adrienne Duncan, BANANAS

Events do more than bring people together—they can strengthen partnerships, increase visibility, engage stakeholders, and advance organizational goals. Drawing from 2 major BANANAS events, this interactive workshop will share practical lessons on sponsorships, community engagement, and event strategy. Participants will leave with actionable tools and a framework for planning impactful events in their own organizations.

Hive on Wheels: Partnering for Impact Through Mobile Family Resource Access

Liz Coyle & Ryan Huo, Hively

The Hive on Wheels, a mobile family resource center, hosted 70+ events in its first year

by partnering with churches, libraries, food pantries, community colleges, public safety agencies, and other community organizations to bring resources directly into underserved neighborhoods in Alameda County. The objective of this workshop is to share how mobile outreach and cross-sector partnerships can leverage existing infrastructure, expand equitable access to services, and support children, families, and child care providers. Presenters will also share practical lessons learned from funding, procuring, outfitting, and operating a mobile resource van.

Your Data. Your Story. - How Integrated Data Helps Child Care Leaders Make Better Decisions, Reduce Administrative Burden, and Demonstrate Community ImpactHub

Norbert Haupt, KinderSystems

Child care organizations collect enormous amounts of data, yet much of it lives in separate systems, creating administrative burdens, duplicate work, and missed opportunities. This session explores why data silos exist, how information moves between systems, and how connected data can improve operations, decision-making, and stakeholder communication. Participants will leave with practical strategies for reducing workload, improving visibility, and telling the story of their program's impact through data.

From Referrals to a Comprehensive Childcare Hub: New Opportunities in Childcare Infrastructure

Shelby Gomez & Laurie Han, YMCA Childcare Resource Service & Whitney Leathers, Mayor's Fund for Long Beach

Taking some pages from the Mayor's Fund for Long Beach's playbook, San Diego County's R&R is launching a new childcare hub featuring an updated R&R interface, an eligibility screening tool that integrates all funded childcare options and subsidies, an application wizard, referral connections for social workers, and connections to additional resources supported by real-life caring, helpful humans. Come hear from the Long Beach Early Learning Hub and YMCA Childcare Resource Service about how we are integrating supports, resources, information, and relationships to better meet the needs of families and providers.

Promoting Self-Care, Wellness & Resilience:

The Resilient You

Ashley Marie Aguilar, Anabell Aguilar & Nita Navarro, Child Development Resources Ventura County, Inc.

This self-care workshop for staff is a practical session focused on supporting employee well-being and reducing workplace stress. It introduces simple, effective strategies that staff can use during and after the workday to maintain balance, improve resilience, and prevent burnout. Through short activities and reflection, participants will gain tools to manage stress, set healthy boundaries, and build sustainable self-care habits that enhance both personal wellness and professional performance.

Strengthening Provider Engagement Through Self-Care, Connection & Resiliency

Consuelo Valencia, Glenn County Office of Education

This interactive session explores how provider engagement is strengthened through resilience, trauma-informed practices, and self-care. Participants will examine the effects of burnout, compassion fatigue, and chronic stress while learning practical strategies to build stronger relationships and healthier workplace cultures. The session includes self-reflection, mindfulness techniques, and a guided chair yoga practice that participants can immediately apply to support personal wellness and professional effectiveness.

A Mindfulness Approach to Staff-Team Relationships

Laura Bridges-Newhouse, Bridges Transformation Training Services

Connected Staff-Team Relationships. A Mindfulness Approach to Safe, Authentic Work Teams. Explore principles of mindfulness, reflective communication, non-violent communication, and Interaction Safety that nurture rewarding staff-team relationships. Healthy, positive relationships in the physical or virtual workspace enhance our ability to thrive and achieve our goals, leading to greater outcomes for children & families and the providers that serve them.

Staff-Inspired Leadership: Strengthening Educational Communities Through Wellness, Reflection, and Connection

Dr. Cynthia Skyers-Gordon, SILWELL-C

This workshop explores how wellness-centered leadership can strengthen staff relationships, workplace culture, and educational communities. Participants will learn practical strategies to support emotional safety, reflective practice, and staff well-being through the Staff-Inspired Leadership framework. Objectives include reducing burnout, strengthening collaboration, and creating more sustainable and connected learning environments.

Seeing Behavior as Communication

Rainbow Markell, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Based on the newly released Bridge program training "Understanding Behavior as Communication" for providers working with children, we will take these concepts and apply them to our work with adults, co-workers, supervisors and working with the public. We will focus on communication and what we take from interactions, apply trauma-informed concepts to understand what might be underneath what the person you are trying to communicate with or help is saying or doing, while practicing some self care and reframing techniques to be the best we can be in any situation.

Nurturing Resilient Families: Building Vitality Through the Six Pillars of Health

Dr. Keyvan Eghbali, Corporate Wellness Solutions

In this engaging session, participants will explore the Six Pillars of Health and discover practical ways to boost vitality for themselves and the families they serve. Designed for caregivers and educators, the talk provides actionable strategies for resilience and

well-being through nutrition, movement, quality sleep, stress management, and meaningful social connections.

AP Administration:

Written Program Policies/ Information for Parents (CDSS)

Presenters from CDSS TBD

Description TBD

CCDF State Plan (CDSS)

Presenters from CDSS TBD

Description TBD

CDSS Meet and Greet (CDSS)

Program Quality and Improvement Branch Staff at CDSS

Join us for an engaging session with new and current Consultants and Analysts from the Program Quality and Improvement Branch (PQIB). This is a great opportunity to connect, share updates, and strengthen collaboration.

Determining Eligibility (CDSS)

Presenters from CDSS TBD

Description TBD

Income Calculations (CDSS)

Presenters from CDSS TBD

This workshop is designed to walk participants through calculating family income, specifically

examples of less common situations. Presenters from CDSS will provide an overview of policy as well as specific examples. The intent of this workshop is to provide attendees with information that will bring down the high error rates continually seen in this area.

Funding Terms and Conditions (CDSS)

Presenters from CDSS TBD

The team from the Policy Office within the Child Care and Development Division will be presenting on the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Funding Terms and Conditions and the Program Requirements. They will be highlighting the changes to the organization of the documents and applicable policy changes.

Beyond Eligibility: Building Stronger Partnerships Through Assessment, Support, and Quality Assurance

Cecilia Rubio, Nelly Hernandez, Jason Reyes, Lupe Aguirre, Antonia Lopez & Claudia

Jones, YMCA of San Diego

Explore how assessment tools support family recertifications by identifying needs, guiding meaningful conversations, and helping families maintain access to services. Highlighting the use of pre- and post-verification processes for family certifications, recertifications, and childcare provider enrollments to ensure accuracy, consistency, and program integrity. Together, these practices strengthen partnerships with families and childcare providers by connecting them to valuable resources and support systems that contribute to positive outcomes for children, families, and the broader community.

Optimizing Quality Control Operations: Infrastructure, Evaluation, and Team Structure

Karen Ramirez & Oscar Robledo, Hively

This workshop explores best practices for onboarding and supporting Family Support Specialists (FSS) to ensure high-quality file compliance and service delivery. Participants will learn how to leverage evaluation matrices, hybrid scheduling, and centralized SOPs (Standard Operational Procedures) to boost staff efficiency.

Strengthening Case Management Through Shared Learning: The In-Person Roundtable Experience

Facilitated by: Joie Owen, Valley Oak Children's Services, Trish Murillo, Davis Street Community Center and others TBD

Since launching this year, the Thriving Families CA Foundation virtual roundtables have created a valuable forum for case management professionals to exchange ideas, discuss emerging challenges, and share promising practices. This session expands on that momentum by providing an opportunity to deepen connections through face-to-face collaboration and offers a welcoming space to share experiences, explore practical solutions, and discuss innovative approaches to strengthening case management services. Whether you have participated in our quarterly virtual roundtables or are joining for the first time, you'll be part of a collaborative learning experience that continues to build a strong statewide network of case management professionals dedicated to improving outcomes for California families.

Supporting Child Care Providers Through Digital Attendance Systems and Effective Service Tracking

Melissa Oceguera, Hively

Learn how Hively leverages CareConnect and Zendesk to streamline attendance reporting, improve provider engagement, and enhance payment accuracy. This session offers practical examples of provider onboarding, troubleshooting, and ticket management that ensure positive experiences.

Connecting the Dots: From Case Management to Family Empowerment

Trish Murillo & Kaylianna Cadena, The Davis Street Community Center, Inc., and Yvonne Raya, Child Development Resources, Inc. of Ventura County

Transforming everyday case management into meaningful support, strong family connections, and long-term self-sufficiency through strength-based engagement and effective resource navigation. This interactive workshop explores how agencies can strengthen traditional case management by integrating family support, resource navigation, data-informed practices, and strength-based engagement. Presenters from Davis Street Community Center and Child Development Resources, Inc. of Ventura County will share practical strategies for identifying family needs, building trusted partnerships, and connecting families with meaningful resources. Participants will engage in a collaborative activity designed to mapping/promoting family choice, self-advocacy, and long-term empowerment.

Managing Change Without Staff Burnout: Strategies for APP Teams

Staff from Go Kids, Inc

Description TBD

Supporting & Working With Child Care Providers

Supporting Infants, Children with Limited Mobility and Children with Sensory Processing Challenges during Emergencies

Lana Frisby, Lionheart Safety and Soyla Madrigal, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

This training equips early childhood professionals with trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate skills to safely evacuate vulnerable children. Participants will learn to create inclusive emergency plans and practice low-fear evacuation procedures. Respond to children's nervous systems with co-regulation techniques to reduce stress during crises. Attendees will have the opportunity to apply these strategies through hands-on emergency scenarios.

Housing Rights for Child Care Providers

Naomi Gemmell, Child Care Law Center

Child care providers have a right to earn a living and should not face unjust barriers when opening and operating child care in their homes. Come learn about the history of housing discrimination child care providers have faced, state laws that protect family child care providers in their homes, and how you can support family child care providers in asserting their housing rights.

Title 22 Simplified: Understanding Regulations & Licensing Forms

Lila Chavez, Kings Community Action Organization

This training provides a comprehensive overview of Title 22 licensing regulations and the essential forms required for child care operations. Participants will gain a clear understanding of key licensing requirements, how regulations apply in daily practice, and the purpose behind commonly used licensing forms.

California Department of Social Services Quality Initiatives: Professional Development Resources and Support

Heather McClellan-Brandusa, Lisa Sullivan, & Sandra Gonzales-Pabon, California Department of Social Services

Join representatives from the California Department of Social Services, Child Care and Development Division, who will share state funded quality initiatives to support the child care workforce. Current professional development, resources, and supports will be shared, with a focus on exploring new and upcoming resources and how to use them in your current work.

Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) Hot Topics

Disa Lindgren, Rachel Cook & Carolina Castillo-Quintero, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Gather with your colleagues from around the state in this interactive session. Bring hot topics that have been on your mind, share and learn strategies, discuss challenges, and have fun! We will create a supportive environment to think together and reimagine CCIP's capacity building and quality improvement work.

TrustLine/Guardian 101

Nick O'Dowd, Nova Nevraumont & Valerie Alfaro, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network and Kim Griffith, Sherri Crandley, Henry Galan, Yasaira Wilkins, Aubrey Biscoe, CDSS

This workshop is an introduction and overview of the TrustLine Registry program. It includes information on the history of TrustLine, the application and background check processes, CDSS' Guardian database, how to access results, and tips to promote TrustLine locally.

Strengthening Families/Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/TIC

Support for Building an Anti-Bias Community

Lola Cornish, Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities & Wilma Gold, Pacific Oaks College, Adjunct Faculty/Retired

Explore the use of the Anti-Bias Goals for Education and how they can create more equitable spaces in child care settings. Participants will: 1. Gain knowledge of the Anti-Bias Goals for Education; 2. Explore how to apply these goals in a child care setting.

De-Escalation for Family Support: Strength-Based Language, Repair, and Follow-Through

Yao Tyus, Steppingstones Management Services, LLC

When conversations with families or providers get tense, progress stalls and trust erodes. This interactive workshop teaches strength-based, trauma-aware de-escalation tools plus simple scripts for active listening, empathy, and repair that keep conversations

focused on next steps in R and R, AP, and family support settings. Objectives: spot early escalation cues, use a pause and reframe process, and practice language that restores clarity, partnership, and follow-through.

From Correction to Connection: Reflective Coaching Practices that Affirm Black Language and Strengthen Early Literacy

Lisa Wilson & Ashley Williams & Samantha Thompson, Black Californians United for ECE

Black children's home language practices are often misunderstood in early learning settings, leading to correction-based interactions that can affect belonging, identity, communication confidence, and literacy engagement. This interactive workshop shares emerging lessons from BlackECE's early-stage Ancestral Coaching Model™ pilot, a reflective coaching and professional learning approach designed to support linguistically affirming, relationship-centered early learning environments. Participants will explore how language affirmation, reflective coaching, and family partnership can help educators, coaches, and leaders honor Black children's home language as an asset and bridge to early literacy.

Disrupting Inequities in Early Learning: Building Communities of Practice to Support Black Boy Joy

Priya Jagannathan, Oakland Starting Smart & Strong, LaWanda Wesley, Child Care Resource Center & Tasha Henneman, Positive Resource Center, and TBD

This session explores how collaborative learning spaces can advance educational equity for young Black boys. It examines how early learning systems often overlook the strengths and holistic needs of children of color, and the need to address institutional racism to improve outcomes. Participants will engage with the "10 Promising Practices" resource to identify strategies for dismantling inequitable systems and building more inclusive approaches. The session supports reflection on bias, culturally responsive practice, strengthening relationships with fathers and families, and building communities of practice to improve outcomes for boys of color.

Boys to Men: Supporting the Development of Male Teachers in ECE

C. Joaquin Flores, Los Angeles Education Partnership

Center the group on the positive impacts of Male representation in early childhood: school, family, community. The socio-cultural implications and barriers. Bring in lived experiences to brainstorm how we develop recruitment and retention to support males in ECE.

ROCKing Resilience: Centering Trauma-Responsive Practices in Early Childhood Environments

Page Tomblin, Oakland Starting Smart & Strong, Melissa Luc, Early Learning Consultant & Susan Mueller, Oakland Unified School District

Research shows that trauma can significantly impact young children's development, learning, and well-being, and that strong partnerships among families, educators, and community organizations are essential to fostering resilience. Participants will explore

how Oakland Starting Smart and Strong's ROCK (Resilient Oakland Communities and Kids) trauma-responsive framework strengthens relationships, supports professional learning communities, and builds culturally responsive environments where children and families can thrive. Through real-world examples, interactive activities, and practical tools, participants will gain strategies to create healing-centered communities that promote belonging, equity, and resilience.

Building Knowledge in the Child Care Field/Emerging Issues

Golden Dataset: Best Practices for Maintaining Comprehensive and Timely Provider Data

Gretchen Howard, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, and Ariana Steck & Tanya Lora, YMCA San Diego, Miyah Farley, Crystal Stairs and Demi Madrigal, Child Development Resources Ventura County, Inc.

When your organization has robust and timely data about child care supply, you play an essential role in local planning, advocacy, and data-driven decision making. But how do you maintain that data without burning out your staff or providers? Our panel of experienced R&R staff will share their best practices for maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date provider data. You will walk away with tips and resources for requesting provider updates, reviewing data for accuracy, and using this data to inform your organization's work.

Immigration and California's Early Educators

Megan Son, Anna Powell & Dr. Yoonjeon Kim, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, UC Berkeley

Immigrants are central to the California ECE workforce. In our session, we will share data on their strengths and challenges, including how enforcement is impacting ECE programs. We will share resources to support parents and educators navigating these trying times and discuss long-term policy solutions.

Community Care Licensing Updates

Danielle Cinder & Carla Fernandes-Goes, Community Care Licensing/CDSS

Stay informed and prepared with the latest updates from Community Care Licensing. This session will share the most commonly cited deficiencies, recent licensing updates, new laws, and Provider Information Notices (PINs), along with practical guidance on how to remain in compliance.

Children's Personal Rights

Danielle Cinder & Carla Fernandes-Goes, Community Care Licensing/CDSS

Discover how children's personal rights shape safe, respectful, and high-quality care in licensed child care settings. This will explore California Community Care Licensing requirements through real-world scenarios, practical strategies, and meaningful discussion.

Surviving TK Expansion: Issues and Solutions

Anna Powell & Wanzi Muruvi, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, UC Berkeley and Shelly Masur, Low-Income Investment Fund

Universal TK has upended the rest of the California ECE sector. In this session, we present data on how programs are struggling to pivot, including the challenges serving greater numbers of children under three. We will discuss state- and local-level policy recommendations.

Bias in FFN Child Care: Reflections, Findings, and Tools for Practice / El Prejuicio en el Cuidado FFN: Reflexiones, Hallazgos y Herramientas para la Práctica

Carolina Castillo Quintero, Soyla Madrigal & Stephany Delaney, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

En esta sesión interactiva, los participantes conocerán de cerca Examining Bias in FFN Child Care: Reflection, Respect, and Responsive Practice (Examinando el prejuicio en el cuidado infantil FFN: reflexión, respeto y práctica receptiva). Un entrenamiento piloto diseñado para examinar los sesgos explícitos e implícitos que influyen en cómo se percibe, apoya y regula el cuidado Familiares, Amigos y Vecinos (conocido como FFN en inglés), incluyendo cómo estos sesgos afectan a las familias cuyo idioma en el hogar no es el inglés. Compartiremos el contexto detrás del desarrollo del entrenamiento, lo que aprendimos del piloto, y una muestra del contenido y los momentos de reflexión que surgieron. Los participantes se llevarán recursos concretos tomados directamente del piloto como punto de partida para avanzar hacia alianzas más equitativas y basadas en las fortalezas con los cuidadores FFN en su propio trabajo.

California Resource and Referral Contract Monitoring: Resources and Support

Lakisha Sipple, Brandon Montgomery & Brittany Sheffield, California Department of Social Services

The purpose of this workshop is to discuss the topic of California Resource and Referral Contract Monitoring. It will also discuss Resources and Support to attendees.

Resource and Referral Fiscal Plan/Annual Budget for California R&R Programs, Child Care Initiative Programs, and California Health and Safety Programs: Resources and Support

Lakisha Sipple, Brandon Montgomery & Brittany Sheffield, California Department of Social Services

The purpose of this workshop is to present on Resource and Referral Fiscal Plan and Annual Budget matters for California Resource and Referral Programs. This will go over Fiscal matters and how it applies to Resource and Referral Programs. Budget topics will also be discussed.

Zoom Out: The Science of Emotional Regulation for Children, Families, and Professionals

Michelle Graham & Jacquilyn Banta, Children's Resource & Referral of Santa Barbara County

Big behaviors often communicate unmet needs rather than intentional defiance. Drawing from neuroscience, trauma-informed care, and developmental research, participants will learn practical tools to support emotional regulation, strengthen relationships, and respond effectively during challenging moments with children, families, and colleagues.

UPK-Building Partnerships to Ready, Set, 4!

Nicole Fassold, Ariana Diaz De Leon & Alexandra Rios , 4Cs of Sonoma County

Learn how we built in Sonoma County the foundational infrastructure necessary to integrate Transitional Kindergarten (TK) information into our Resource & Referral programs. This included establishing relationships with school districts, gathering and maintaining TK program information, and incorporating TK options into MyChildCarePlan (MCCP) to ensure families could access information about TK alongside other early learning options. We will share how and what we are implementing in year 2, expanding our efforts to support families, providers, school districts, and community partners in understanding and utilizing the full mixed-delivery early learning system.

From Burnout to BRAVE: Courageous Leadership for Stronger Teams, Families and Communities

Michelle Graham & Jacquilyn Banta, Children's Resource & Referral of Santa Barbara County

The early childhood and family services workforce is carrying extraordinary responsibility in increasingly complex environments. Organizations face workforce shortages, burnout, turnover, and shifting community needs, while employees look for more than a paycheck. They want purpose, belonging, trust, and leadership they can believe in. Retention is not an HR problem. It is a leadership issue, a culture issue, and ultimately a family and community impact issue. Using the BRAVE framework of Resilience, Authenticity, Vulnerability, and Empowerment, participants will examine how courageous leadership creates the conditions for people to stay connected to purpose, navigate adversity, communicate honestly, contribute their strengths, and know they belong.

Affirming Home Languages in ECE: Supporting the Needs of Multilingual Learners and Their Families

Alexis Ford, CocoKids

In California, over 60% of children under 5 are growing up in homes where languages other than English are spoken. CocoKids partners with the Board of Supervisors, Black ECE and other multilingualism experts to ensure all providers regardless of their own language, are equipped to support and affirm the languages of children and families in our community.

Training & Tools for Today's Workforce (New Strand in 2026!)

From Chaos to Clarity: Practical Brand and Communication Strategies Every ECE Professional Can Use to Build Family and Community Trust

Mercedes Thomas, BANANAS, Inc.

How ECE organizations communicate directly impacts whether families access services they need. Through live demonstrations, hands-on activities, and real-world examples, every ECE professional will gain practical brand, messaging, and visual identity strategies including accessible AI tools to build consistent, culturally responsive communications regardless of role or budget.

Beyond Traditional Training: Building Sustainable Connections with Child Care Providers Through Art Journaling and Book Clubs

Perla Davis, Kern County Superintendent of Schools-Community Connection for Child Care

Child care providers play a critical role in supporting children and families. Traditional professional development methods may not always create meaningful engagement or opportunities for reflection and connection. This presentation explores innovative and relationship-centered approaches to engaging child care providers through art journaling and book clubs. Participants will learn how creative expression and reflective discussion can foster emotional wellness, strengthen peer relationships, encourage professional growth, and build resilient child care communities.

From Good to Great: Upgrading Your Training Methods

Sadie Whiteside, Joni Ohm & Paula Herrera Family Resource Center San Joaquin County

Learn how Family Resource Center Workforce Development programs and community partnerships support family child care providers through effective training, coaching, and equity-centered professional development. This interactive session highlights adult learning principles and how to apply them to training; techniques that increase engagement and retention; and practical tools for trainers and coaches that create meaningful learning experiences - while increasing provider confidence and improving quality care for children and families.

Creating Neuro-Affirming Trainings for Adult Learners

Grace Hartman and Bianca Soto Alarcon, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

R&Rs are ahead of the game when it comes to training with all learners in mind. Join us to explore new strategies for making your content, environment and communication accessible for all types of brains. Get ready for hands-on fun while we demonstrate a “coffee and chat” workshop format. Participants will learn ways to make physical and digital learning environments accessible for learners with neurodivergent traits, gain strategies for strength-based training, and explore a new format to present information.

Systems and Processes for Successful Training Collaborations

Carrie Rohrbach & Lindsey Bedford, Child Action

This workshop will share best practices from the Department of Training and Enhanced Learning's first year of providing internal training to Child Action. We will share how

developing systems and processes for cross-departmental collaboration streamlined requests and improved deliverables. We will also provide guided prompts to help participants brainstorm ways this training model might be incorporated into their organizations.

Your 1,000-Click Problem: Practical AI That Gives R&R and AP Staff Their Time Back

Oscar Tang, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

This hands-on session shows real, replicable ways everyday AI can take a painful task from a thousand clicks to three, safely, across the work we all share: drafting messages, making sense of data, research, and admin.

Public Policy/Advocacy

Child Care State Budget and Legislative Roundup 2026

Julia Forte Frudden, Child Care Law Center & Dubrea Sanders, Black Californians United for ECE

This training will cover what is included in the 2026-27 California state budget and this year's policy bills for child care. You will learn how child care providers and parents play a central role in creating policies that work for them through legislative advocacy. With your peers, you will also receive an overview of the state budget process and how your advocacy can impact new laws.

Policy is Complicated, Advocacy Doesn't Have To Be

Mia Huss, Karen Frazier & Sheri Noble, The Resource Connection

Policy and advocacy can feel overwhelming, but this workshop breaks down just how easy it can be with a practical, easy-to-understand guide. We'll cover the legislative process, the state budget, key dates and deadlines, how to understand bills without needing a political science degree, finding your representatives at every level, and use simple tools to track and engage in advocacy that truly makes a difference. Whether you're new to advocacy or looking to build confidence for the capitol, you'll leave with practical strategies to make advocacy easier for you.

Creating Safe ECE Spaces Under AB 495: What ECE Advocates Need to Know

Oscar Sandoval, The Children's Partnership, Giovanni Zuniga, Pathways LA, Lily Stewart & Candy Duperrior, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

AB 495 is a California law that requires certain ECE providers to adopt and enforce policies that protect the rights and safety of children in immigrant families. The California Attorney General published a guidance document with model policies to help ECE providers understand and comply with the requirements of AB 495.

Seizing the Moment: Advocacy Strategies and Easy-to-Use Tools that Work

Alex Maykowski & Maria Luz Torre, Children's Council of San Francisco

Our team advocates passionately, regularly and successfully for child care at the city, county and state levels. We will share tested best practices so that participants feel confident and comfortable advocating for a high-quality, accessible, affordable, and equitable child care system.

Building Bridges: Leveraging SB 271 to Increase Child Care Access for Student Parents

Candy DuPerroir & Lily Stewart, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network and Amanda Hsu, Connections for Children, Alex Maykowski, Children's Council of San Francisco, and Andrew Avila, Early Edge California, and Basic Needs Coordinator Rep TBD

In 2025, California passed SB 271 to bolster student-parent access to child care by requiring on-campus basic needs centers at CSU, UCs, and CCs to provide information about local child care resource and referral agencies. Participants will learn what SB 271 requires and how R&Rs have built partnerships with local community colleges. Participants will walk away with tangible resources, examples of existing partnership models, and outreach materials to begin their own partnership journey.

Advocacy Workshop TBD

McKenzie Richardson, Thriving Families CA Foundation and others TBD
Description TBD

Friday, October 9, 2026
Conference Closing
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Grand Ballroom

Closing Remarks by Denyne Micheletti, Thriving Families CA (TFC) Foundation and Kelly Graesch, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Sharing Gratitude, Knowledge Gained & Actionable Steps:

An Interactive & Fun Conference Wrap-Up Experience