



2027 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Aspirational Outcome: Reimagine California's family-support infrastructure around families rather than programs—creating a community-based No Wrong Door system where families can access child care and connect to the broader supports they need to achieve economic stability, while strengthening the providers and community organizations that make parental choice possible.

For nearly five decades, California's community-based Alternative Payment Programs (APPs) and Resource & Referral (R&R) agencies have served as trusted access points for families and child care providers. Their roles have evolved significantly as California's child care system, workforce, economy, and the needs of families have changed.

Yet the state continues to administer many services through separate contracts, eligibility processes, funding streams, data systems, and program rules. Families experience their needs very differently. A parent seeking child care may also be navigating housing instability, transportation, food insecurity, health or developmental needs, employment, education, or other challenges affecting the stability of the entire family.

California should organize services around the family—not require families to organize themselves around government programs.

In 2027, TFC will pursue policies that build upon California's existing community-based infrastructure, expand the capacity of APPs and R&Rs, strengthen the child care provider market, reduce administrative barriers, and move California toward a true No Wrong Door system of family support.

1. FAMILY ACCESS • Build a statewide No Wrong Door framework so families can enter through a trusted community organization, tell their story once, and receive meaningful assistance. • Expand APP capacity as the primary subsidized family-facing infrastructure for child care eligibility, need determination, enrollment, subsidy administration, and warm handoffs. • Strengthen and adequately fund R&Rs as California's child care resource for all families, regardless of income, helping them understand and locate child care options and providing individualized navigation and warm handoffs. • Move toward one common application and one verified eligibility determination across compatible child care programs; expand categorical, presumptive, automated, and consent-based eligibility. • Preserve parental choice and ensure technology supports - not replaces - human-centered assistance.	2. PROVIDER CAPACITY • Strengthen and adequately fund R&Rs as California's provider-facing infrastructure for child care supply, recruitment, retention, training, technical assistance, licensing navigation, and business supports. • Expand support for family, friend and neighbor caregivers, including voluntary training, coaching, health and safety resources, and pathways to licensure when desired. • Use R&R data and local knowledge to identify supply gaps, support nontraditional-hour care, strengthen disaster response, and grow sustainable child care capacity. • Advance rates and workforce policies that reflect the actual cost of care and support provider stability.
3. SYSTEM MODERNIZATION • Break down legacy contract silos and reimagine APP and R&R contracts around distinct and complementary roles of R&Rs as family-facing resources for all families and APPs as family-facing specialists for subsidized families. • Provide greater funding and administrative flexibility so community-based organizations can maximize resources, reduce unspent dollars, and respond to changing family needs. • Modernize technology, data sharing, electronic attendance/signatures, and reporting while protecting privacy and program integrity. • Review whether functions such as needs assessments and capacity reporting should be aligned with existing R&R infrastructure.	4. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE • Invest in trusted community-based organizations as essential public infrastructure - with adequate funding for staff, technology, facilities, training, and administration. • Create formal partnerships among APPs, R&Rs, Family Resource Centers, county welfare departments, schools, health, developmental services, housing, transportation, 211, tribal partners, and other local systems. • Prioritize warm handoffs over passive referrals and preserve local flexibility for rural, urban, tribal, agricultural, migrant, and other communities. • Engage employers, chambers, philanthropy, and industry partners in sustainable public-private solutions for families and providers.

2027 NORTH STAR: *Does this policy make it easier for a family to get what they need, strengthen the providers and community organizations serving them, and reduce unnecessary barriers created by government systems?*