CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Sacramento, CA 94244-2720

Bill Honig
Superintendent
of Public Instruction

May 29, 1991

Chairperson, County Board of Supervisors
Superintendent, County Board of Education

Enclosed is a notice of new Federal funding to expand child care and development service to children from low-income families. California proposes to identify priorities for federal funding through a local planning process. This process will include the establishment of a local Child Care and Development Planning Council and identification of local priorities to expand child care services.

Accompanying this notice is a general profile of needs data for your county. Detailed guidelines on the establishment of local Child Care and Development Planning Councils, and instructions for transmitting needs and priorities will follow under separate cover.

We are excited about the availability of these federal funds, and the role the local Child Care and Development Planning Councils play in meeting local needs. A single state agency has yet to be named in California. In the interim, you may address questions regarding this notice to the Child Development Division, California Department of Education, at (916) 322-6233, Office of Child Development and Education at (916) 323-0611, or the Health and Welfare Agency at (916) 445-6951.

Sincerely,

BILL HONIG
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

MAUREEN DIMARCO
Secretary
Child Development and
Education

RUSSELL S. GOULD
Secretary
Health and Welfare Agency

Introduction

This notice announces new federal funding for child care and development services and provides preliminary information on local planning processes to distribute federal funds within counties. Counties are being requested to form local Child Care and Development Planning Councils for the purpose of establishing service priorities. More detailed information will be contained in Guidelines On Local Child Care And Development Coordination which will be sent to you in the near future.

Information contained herein is preliminary and subject to change. Once the federal regulations have been issued, more definitive information will be made available.

The Congress recently passed legislation to fund additional child care services for low-income families and to improve the quality of care. California will receive approximately $78 million from the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act. Federal distribution of funds to California for federal fiscal year (FFY) 1990-91 is expected by September 7, 1991. Subsequent federal funding for FFY 1991-92 will be the same. Funding for FFY 1992-93 is unknown at present. Additionally, California has received $36 million in federal Title IV-A funds to serve children of families at-risk of going on AFDC. The purposes and eligibility for Title IV-A funds are specific and therefore not subject to local priority setting. More information on Title IV-A priorities and funding will be contained in the Guidelines On Local Child Care And Development Coordination.

Local planning to establish child care and development program service priorities in counties is strictly voluntary. Although no funding for planning is available, counties choosing to participate will have the advantages of establishing a process for child care planning, identifying gaps in existing services, and establishing priorities which will be used by the state lead agency in making grants for new child care services in the counties.

In order for funding decisions to reflect local priorities, interested counties should start the local plannning process immediately.

Notification of Participation

Within 30 calendar days of receiving this letter, the County Board of Supervisors and the County Superintendent of Schools should jointly notify the state lead agency of their decision to participate in local planning efforts. It is recommended that the two entities work together. However, if either one does not wish to participate, the other may take sole responsibility for the effort. Until such time as the Governor has named the lead agency,

the notice should be submitted to the California Department of Education and should consist of a letter jointly signed by both entities or their designees. The mailing address is:

CDE/Child Development Division
560 J Street, Suite 220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Establishment of Child Care and Development Planning Councils

As soon as possible, the boards should form or designate a county wide Child Care and Development Planning Council. The formation of the Council should be publicized. The Council should include, but need not be limited to, representatives from the following:

- County and city government officials knowledgeable about local planning, child care, recreation, child and family services
- Representative(s) of Greater Avenues for Independence, Transitional Child Care, Community Care Licensing, and Children's Protective Services
- County Office of Education and School Districts
- Educational training institutions such as community colleges offering child care and educational coursework
- Local child care resource and referral agency
- Local government (city/county) child care coordinators
- Child care and Head Start providers and child development experts, including those currently serving children with exceptional needs
- Parents of varying income levels who use child care and early education services
- Employers, unions, and community organizations knowledgeable about child care.

Efforts should be made to ensure that the racial and cultural composition of the Child Care and Development Planning Council is reflective of the persons and families within the community.

The unique circumstances in each county will determine the appropriate composition of the planning body. Many counties already have child care or children's services councils that may be designated as the Child Care and Development Planning Council, providing they can achieve the broad representation needed. Size of the Council will also vary.

Development of Local Priorities

Most of the federal child care and development block grant funds will be directed toward meeting local needs for child care services, with the remainder reserved for quality enhancement activities. The allocation of funding amounts for each county will be determined by a formula established in statute. The formula is based on indicators of both need for care and existing supply in addition to other county demographic data. Each county will be notified of the amount of its proportional share of available funds in order to prioritize and plan as realistically as possible. Funds will subsequently be awarded to child care providers by the state lead agency.

If a county elects to participate in local planning, the distribution of funds within counties by the state lead agency will be governed by the priorities developed by local Child Care and Development Planning Councils.

If a county chooses not to develop priorities, federal funding within the county will be determined by the state lead agency in accordance with available needs data.

By August 28, 1991, local Child Care and Development Planning Councils should submit to the lead state agency a list of local needs priorities for federal funding and documentation to support these priorities. Procedures and format for submittal of priorities will be contained in Guidelines On Local Child Care And Development Coordination to be issued in the near future.

Priorities should specify needs within geographic areas within the county, age groups of children, and/or families' special circumstances (e.g., teen parents, children with disabilities, parents in education or training programs, farmworker families, and children at risk of abuse and neglect).

To assist in determining these priorities, local Child Care and Development Planning Councils should review the enclosed demographic and needs information compiled by the Department of Education, Child Development Division. In addition, existing data on supply of care within the county can be obtained from local state-funded child care resource and referral agencies. Use of other data and reports from health, social services, and planning departments is also encouraged.

Child Care and Development Planning Councils should also provide input to the state regarding state and local activities they consider most needed to improve the quality of child care and development services in California.

Before submitting funding priorities, the Child Care and Development Planning Councils should publicize proposed priorities and gather public input.

The lead state agency will review the report of local priorities using an independent review panel, paying particular attention to integrity of the local process, consistency with federal requirements, the composition of the Council, the openness of its meetings, as well as the opportunities for public review and response.

The agency will also certify that the priorities submitted are supported by documentation; it is not the lead agency's intent, however, to impose its judgment on priorities established by local Child Care and Development Planning Councils.

Funding

Provided that local child care priorities meet the requirements of federal and state eligibility and are arrived at via public input and broad Council representation, the lead agency will utilize local priorities when making funding awards. All eligible local agencies can apply to the lead state agency for Federal Block Grant funds. Local funding awards will be determined by a competitive application process. Specific funding procedures information will be available at a later date.

County-wide Community Plans

Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils are encouraged to develop funding priorities within the context of broader efforts to develop community child care plans which address the gaps in child care and development services for all children within the county.

For More Information

More detailed guidelines regarding the formation of local Child Care and Development Planning Councils, the establishment of needs and priorities, and reporting information will be forthcoming. This advance information is intended to provide you with as much lead time as possible to convene local planning and coordination councils.

Pending designation of a state lead agency, staff will be available to answer questions at the following agencies: Child Development Division, Department of Education at (916) 322-6233, Office of Child Development and Education at (916) 323-0611, or the Health and Welfare Agency at (916) 445-6951.