



October 25, 2018

<p><b>SUBJECT</b></p> <p><b>STATE AND FEDERAL BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Priority Area 3. Public Will and Investment:</b> Build public engagement in, investment in, and support of the optimal well-being and development of children prenatal through age 5, their families, and communities.</p> <p><b>Goal 3.2. Legislative Engagement and Leadership:</b> Advocate for and influence policy change, both directly and in partnership with First 5 county commissions and other allies, from the local to federal levels that increase investments to improve conditions for children prenatal through age 5 and their families.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information</p>
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## **SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE**

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First 5 California (F5CA) staff will provide a 2018 state legislative overview, including an update on the final outcomes of F5CA “Level 1” priority bills. Staff also will provide a federal policy update, supply information on the initiatives underway to develop 2019 policy recommendations, and offer an update on F5CA’s 2019 policy agenda planning.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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F5CA staff is not requesting action at this time.

## **BACKGROUND OF KEY ISSUES**

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### **2018 State Legislative Overview**

With the bill-signing deadline on September 30, the 2018 state legislative season is over. Aided by the strong support of the Legislative Women’s Caucus, 2018 was an active year for policies impacting young children, including the successful passage of AB 2960 (Thurmond), legislation F5CA was actively engaged in; the passage of the

State Superintendent of Public Instruction's sponsor bill, AB 2626 (Mullin); and a number of other pieces of legislation intended to support young children and their families.

F5CA took positions and submitted formal letters of support on 22 pieces of legislation, and monitored 52 bills in the 2018 regular session. Attachment A is an Executive Summary and Detailed Report identifying the status of each of those bills at the end of the two-year legislative cycle. Highlighted below are the final outcomes for seven bills of high importance to F5CA.

### *Strong and Engaged Families*

- **AB 992 (Arambula): CalWORKs: Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program** – The 2018–19 final Budget Act enacted the policy provisions of AB 992, which establishes the Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program that requires the State Department of Social Services to allocate funds to counties for the purpose of implementing or contracting with early home visiting programs to provide voluntary home visiting programs for CalWORKs parents.  
**Governor Action:** Included in 2018–19 Final Budget Act
- **AB 2960 (Thurmond): Child Care and Development Services: Online Portal** – This bill requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a consumer education database for parents to access child care information and referral tools online, and convene a stakeholder workgroup for the purposes of evolving the database into a comprehensive online portal for early education and expanded learning programs.  
**Governor Action:** Chaptered
- **SB 982 (Mitchell): CalWORKs: Maximum Grant Amount** – The 2018–19 final Budget Act enacted the policy provisions of SB 982, which aims to end deep poverty in the CalWORKs program by increasing the maximum grant to ensure no CalWORKs grant falls below 50 percent of the federal poverty line, and reinstating an annual cost-of-living adjustment to the maximum grant.  
**Governor Action:** Included in 2018–19 Final Budget Act

### *Child Health*

- **SB 1004 (Wiener): Mental Health Services Act: Prevention and Early Intervention** – This bill establishes a strategic, statewide focus for how counties utilize funds generated by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) for prevention and intervention to address the origins of mental health needs.  
**Governor Action:** Chaptered

### *Early Learning*

- **AB 605 (Mullin): Child Day Care Facilities: Infant to Schoolage License** – This bill creates an Integrated Child Care Center License for child care centers serving children from birth through Kindergarten entrance.  
**Governor Action:** Chaptered

- AB 2292 (Aguiar-Curry): Child Care: Reimbursement Rates: Startup Costs: Grants** – The 2018–19 final Budget Act enacted almost all of the policy provisions of AB 2292, which develops crucial infrastructure for California’s child care system by: 1) increasing state funding rates for infant and toddler care; 2) creating a grant program to fund implementation and startup costs for new or expanded child care facilities in local education agencies (LEAs); and 3) expanding a fund to recruit a new generation of licensed family child care providers. The original bill goal NOT included in the Final Budget Act was the inclusion of non-LEAs in the start-up fund eligibility.

**Governor Action:** Included in 2018–19 Final Budget Act
- AB 2626 (Mullin): Child Care Services** – This bill extends key flexibilities and efficiencies, already provided to 13 counties, statewide to all applicable early learning contracts. Specifically, AB 2626 expands age eligibility and removes restrictions for children who can be served in a California State Preschool Program, increases the State Median Income (SMI) eligibility to an 85% SMI threshold in order to expand the number of working families who are eligible for services, increases the eligibility timeframe in order to allow stability and continuity of services for children and families, increases the utilization of available funding by allowing providers stability and continuity of services of enrollment of children and families, offers better workforce stability and quality by providing two staff development opportunities, and provides flexibility in funding adjustments to allow contractors to better utilize available funding.

**Governor Action:** Chaptered

## Federal Policy Update

### *Public Charge*

On September 22, 2018, the Trump Administration released a new regulatory proposal that would have a devastating effect on communities across the United States by driving up hunger, poverty, and unmet health care needs. The Trump Administration’s proposed “public charge” rule would allow immigration officials to deny a green card to an immigrant if the individual is receiving public benefits that are intended to help individuals and families meet basic living requirements. The proposed rule could force immigrant families to forgo access to a wide array of public benefits, such as health care, food supports, and housing assistance, in fear that receiving such benefits will result in deportation for the parents.

First 5s throughout California are already hearing reports of immigrant families pulling their children out of preschool and refusing health services their children are legally eligible to receive, in anticipation and fear of this rule change. Under the change, parents may think twice about taking their child to the pediatrician when they are sick or accessing the healthy food that is so essential to young development, pregnant women may not receive the healthcare they need to ensure a healthy and full-term baby, and the housing assistance mothers and fathers need in order to ensure a safe environment for their children may be out of reach.

In California, we believe children and families attempting to access benefits from the following programs could be impacted by the proposed rule change:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Housing assistance such as Section 8 housing vouchers
- Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy
- Non-emergency benefits under Medicaid

The proposed changes to the “public charge” rule are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on October 10, at which point they will be subject to a 60-day public comment period. The Trump Administration will be required to review and assess the public comments before finalizing the rule. To comment on the proposed rule, visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

### *Appropriations*

On September 28, President Trump signed legislation appropriating increased funding for some key early childhood priorities for Fiscal Year 2019. Increased funding includes:

- \$50 million increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, for a total of \$5.3 billion
- \$200 million increase for Head Start and Early Head Start, for a total of \$10.1 billion
- \$10 million increase for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) special education preschool grants, for a total of \$391 million

Preschool Development Grants and IDEA Part C early intervention programs for infants and toddlers received level funding.

### **Initiatives to Develop 2019 Policy Recommendations**

A new Administration brings opportunity for new policy development. With a new Governor and State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) taking office in January, early childhood advocates have a real and unique opportunity to identify and rally behind specific policy recommendations, with the goal of informing the early childhood platforms of the candidates, and ultimately the platforms of those elected to these important positions. Here are some of the initiatives currently underway to develop 2019 early childhood education (ECE) policy recommendations:

- Stanford University’s *Getting Down to Facts II*, released this fall, serves as a “state of the state,” with the goal of providing a common set of facts to inform discussions around Pre-K to 12 education policy development in California. A summary of the ECE findings will be discussed in Item 7.

- The Berkeley Early Childhood Think Tank produced a brief on *Achieving Fair Access to Early Education* (Attachment B) as part of an anticipated four-part series.
- The Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education is continuing to convene on a regular basis in anticipation of a publication of principles in November 2018, with final recommendations slated for release in Spring 2019.
- The Lifting Children and Families out of Poverty Task Force, authorized by AB 1520 (Burke, 2017), of which Camille Maben is a member, is scheduled to release their poverty recommendations in November 2018.
- Early Edge California is slated to release ECE workforce recommendations this fall.
- The Silicon Valley Community Foundation is scheduled to release their Choose Children 2018 birth to five policy platform recommendations this fall.
- The rate reform workgroup F5CA is convening, co-chaired by Donna Sneeringer of the Child Care Resource Center and Nina Buthee of the California Child Development Administrators Association, is slated to release a rate reform proposal this fall.

### **2019 Policy Agenda Planning**

As the 2018 legislative season comes to a close, the Legislative Advisory Committee will meet over the fall to review the 2018 State Policy Agenda, F5CA's legislative achievements and partnerships, and examine proposed 2019 priorities in line with the Strategic Plan, evolving policy work, and capacity.

### **SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

The Legislative Update is a standing item for Commission discussion.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Executive Summary and Detailed Report of 2018 Legislative Bills of Interest
- B. Berkeley Early Childhood Think Tank Brief #1: *Achieving Fair Access to Early Education*
- C. 2018–19 Children's Policy Agenda



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DETAILED REPORT OF  
2018 LEGISLATIVE BILLS OF INTEREST**

<b>FINAL OUTCOMES FOR LEVEL 1 BILLS</b>			
<b>BILL # AUTHOR</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FIRST 5 POSITION</b>	<b>FINAL OUTCOME/STATUS</b>
AB 11 (McCarty)	Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program: Screening Services	Support	<b>VETOED</b>
AB 753 (Caballero)	Denti-Cal: Improved Access	Support	Failed Passage Assembly Health
AB 2005 (Santiago)	Child Abuse Central Index	None	<b>VETOED</b>
AB 2193 (Maienschein)	Maternal Mental Health	Watch	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 2698 (Rubio)	California State Preschool Programs: General Child Care and Development Programs: Mental Health Consultation Services: Adjustment Factors	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
SB 18 (Pan)	Bill of Rights for the Children and Youth of California: Joint Legislative Committee	Support	Failed Passage Senate Rules
SB 300 (Monning)	Sugar-Sweetened Beverages: Health Warnings	Support	Failed Passage Senate Health
SB 707 (Cannella)	Medi-Cal: Denti-Cal Advisory Group	Watch	<b>VETOED</b>
SB 900 (Wiener)	Electronic Benefits Transfer System: CalFresh Supplemental Benefits	Support	Failed Passage Assembly Human Services
SB 1004 (Wiener)	Mental Health Services Act: Prevention and Early Intervention	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>

**FINAL OUTCOMES FOR LEVEL 1 REGULAR SESSION BILLS (Cont'd)**

<b>BILL # AUTHOR</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FIRST 5 POSITION</b>	<b>FINAL OUTCOME/STATUS</b>
AB 60 (Santiago)	Subsidized Child Care and Development Services: Stages of Child Care: CalWORKs	None	<b>VETOED</b>
AB 231 (Chávez)	Subsidized Child Care: Eligibility	None	Failed Passage Assembly Human Services
AB 312 (O'Donnell)	School Finance: Special Education Funding	None	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
AB 540 (Mullin)	Child Care: Alternative Payment Programs: Reimbursement Rates	None	Failed Passage Assembly Human Services
AB 605 (Mullin)	Child Day Care Facilities: Infant to Schoolage License	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 1304 (Melendez)	Public Social Services: CalKIDS: Personal Income Taxes: Exclusion	None	Failed Passage Assembly Revenue and Taxation
AB 1754 (McCarty)	State Full-Day Preschool Program: Eligibility for Enrollment: Low Income Schools	Support if Amended	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 1883 (Weber)	Child Care and Development Services	Support	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 2001 (Reyes)	Family Child Care Home Education Networks	Support	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 2292 (Aguiar-Curry)	Child Care: Reimbursement Rates: Startup Costs: Grants	Support	<b>Funded in 2018–19 Budget</b>
AB 2514 (Thurmond)	Pupil Instruction: Dual Language Programs: Grant Program	None	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 2626 (Mullin)	Child Care Services	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 3039 (Holden)	Health Care Facilities: Criminal Background Checks	None	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations

**FINAL OUTCOMES FOR LEVEL 1 REGULAR SESSION BILLS (Cont'd)**

<b>BILL # AUTHOR</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FIRST 5 POSITION</b>	<b>FINAL OUTCOME/STATUS</b>
SB 837 (Dodd)	Transitional Kindergarten: Enrollment for 4-Year-Olds	Watch	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
SB 1214 (Portantino)	Personal Income Taxes: Deductions: Qualified Teacher: Professional Development Expenses	None	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
SB 1224 (Glazer)	Statewide Longitudinal Education and Workforce Data System	Support if Amended	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 43 (Thurmond)	Taxation: Prison Contracts: Goods and Services	Support	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
AB 230 (Chávez)	Personal Incomes Taxes: Credit: Dependent Care	None	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
AB 274 (Garcia)	Sales and Use Taxes: Exemption: Food Products	None	Failed Passage Assembly Revenue and Taxation
AB 963 (Gipson)	Taxation: Marijuana	None	Failed Passage Inactive File
AB 1744 (McCarty)	After School Programs: Substance Use Prevention: Funding: Cannabis Revenue	Watch	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 2157 (Oberholte)	Public Contracts: Noncompetitive Bid Contracts: Report	Watch	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
AB 2303 (Thurmond)	Education Finance: Instructional Materials and Teacher Recruitment: Computer Science	Support	Failed Passage Assembly Education
AB 2328 (Nazarian)	Youth Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Program Act of 2018	Watch	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
AB 2471 (Thurmond)	Pupil Health: School-Based Pupil Support Services Program Act	Watch	Failed Passage Assembly Appropriations
AB 2560 (Thurmond)	Taxation: Prison Contracts: Goods and Services	Support	Failed Passage Assembly Revenue and Taxation
ACA 22 (McCarty)	Middle Class Fiscal Relief Act	None	Failed Passage Assembly Print

**FINAL OUTCOMES FOR LEVEL 1 REGULAR SESSION BILLS (Cont'd)**

<b>BILL # AUTHOR</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FIRST 5 POSITION</b>	<b>FINAL OUTCOME/STATUS</b>
SB 275 (Portantino)	Alcohol and Drug Treatment: Youth	None	<b>VETOED</b>
AB 992 (Arambula)	CalWORKs: Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program	Support	<b>Funded in 2018–19 Budget</b>
AB 1785 (Nazarian)	Medi-Cal Eligibility: Assets	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 1976 (Limón)	Employment: Lactation Accommodation	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 2012 (Medina)	School and Community College Employees: Parental Leave	None	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 2023 (Caballero)	Personal Income Taxes: Working Families Child Care Tax Credit	Support	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 2289 (Weber)	Pupil Rights: Pregnant and Parenting Pupils	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 2481 (Voepel)	State Employees: Infant at Work Programs	Support	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
AB 2785 (Rubio)	Student Services: Lactation Accommodations	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
AB 2960 (Thurmond)	Child Care and Development Services: Online Portal	Support	<b>CHAPTERED</b>
SB 937 (Wiener)	Lactation Accommodation	Support	<b>VETOED</b>
SB 982 (Mitchell)	CalWORKs: Maximum Grant Amount	Support	<b>Funded in 2018–19 Budget</b>
SB 1176 (Nguyen)	Personal Income Taxes: Exemption Credit: Dependents	None	Failed Passage Senate Appropriations
SB 1359 (McGuire)	Child Care Services: CalWORKs: Stage 2	Watch	Failed Passage Senate Education

# designing options for California's young children

## Achieving Fair Access to Early Education FEWER CHILDREN, REGIONAL GAPS ACROSS CALIFORNIA



Karen Manship, Linda Jacobson and Bruce Fuller  
University of California, Berkeley and American Institutes of Research  
July 2018

### KEY FINDINGS

- Almost half of California families with a 3 or 4-year-old (48%) cannot find any preschool program with available slots, whether financed through parental fees or public dollars.
- California has made progress in widening pre-k access to 4-year-olds, reaching a 69% enrollment rate by 2016, while the quality of programs continues to vary sharply.
- Just one in eight families with an infant or toddler can find a licensed center to provide care, whether publicly subsidized or privately funded.
- Availability of early childhood programs varies dramatically across California counties.
- The number of young children, 0-5 years of age, is declining statewide. However, several counties will continue to experience steady growth in child population.
- Several counties face rising child populations and low pre-k supply.

Many young children and families benefit from early care and education (ECE) programs across California. Two-thirds of California's 4-year-olds attend a licensed program, a notable achievement for the nation's largest state.

However, the proportion of children served by these programs varies sharply across counties. Projected changes in the size and distribution of California's child population may exacerbate these disparities.

This brief details variation in ECE program enrollment across California's diverse counties. In 2016, for example, 77% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in either licensed center-based care or Transitional Kindergarten in Santa Clara County compared to just 42% in Tulare County. We document such disparities in various programs for differing age groups.

Evidence continues to accumulate detailing how California pre-k advances children's growth and preliteracy skills, at least in four counties.<sup>1</sup> But empirical findings also reveal wide variability in the quality of pre-k offerings, and wages paid to many preschool teachers and classroom aides remain low.

We examine recent and projected trends in child population growth across counties. From 2010 to 2016, for example, some counties experienced over 20% increases in the number of 3- and 4-year-olds, while others experienced equally large or greater decreases.

Lastly, we discuss implications for public policy aimed at improving the quality of and access to ECE programs. For example, declining child populations in higher-cost counties may render increases in per-child spending more affordable.



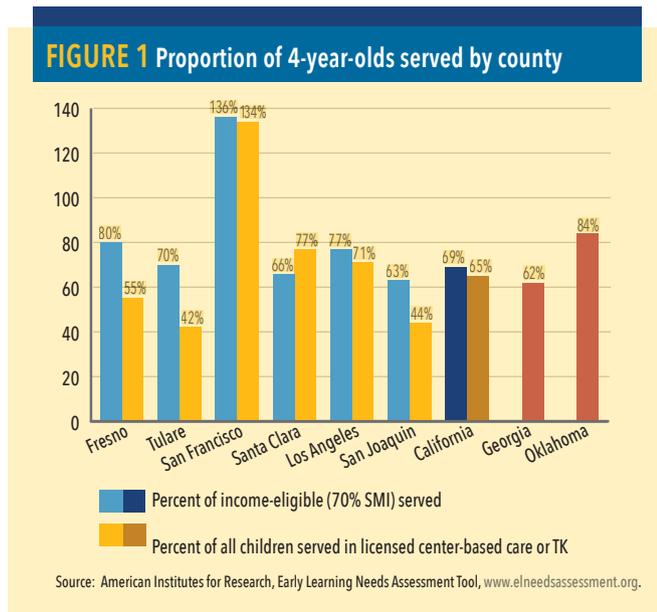
BERKELEY  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
THINK TANK



### ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS

We know that quality preschool can advance early learning and children’s social development, especially for youngsters raised in poverty. One recent study shows that eighth-graders who attended Oklahoma’s universal pre-k program displayed stronger achievement and were less likely to repeat a grade, compared with otherwise similar children who did not attend preschool.<sup>2</sup> Research from Berkeley details how preschool classrooms that offer cognitively challenging tasks similarly boost the early growth of many middle-class children.<sup>3</sup>

Good news for California is that fact that almost two-thirds (65%) of the state’s 4-year-olds attended a preschool at least part-day in 2016, according to data compiled by the American Institutes for Research. This access is made possible through both public funding and family spending on pre-k tuition. Even more – 69% – of subsidy-eligible children attend a publicly-funded ECE program (Figure 1).



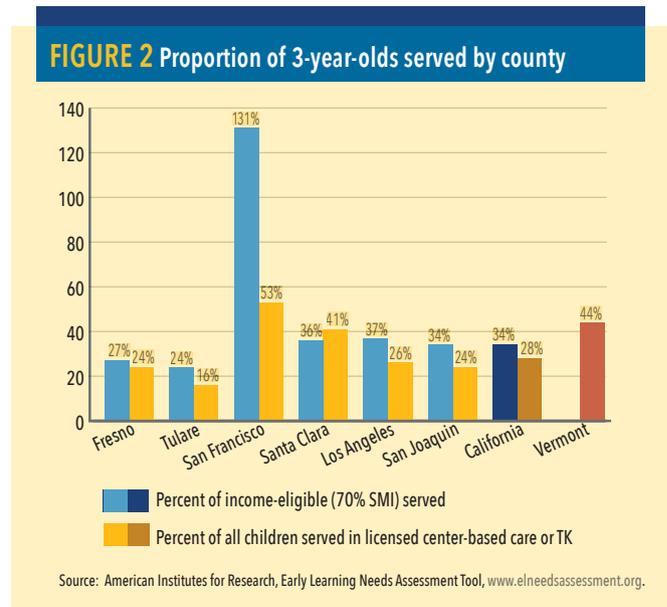
These enrollment rates for California are similar to those in other states that provide universal public preschool for 4-year-olds. Oklahoma exhibits the highest pre-k attendance rate of any state, enrolling 84% of their 4-year-olds in the state pre-k program or Head Start. Georgia enrolls 62% of the state’s 4-year-olds in publicly supported centers. Our counts for California combine child enrollments in both subsidized and fee-based centers.

Despite high enrollment statewide, ECE access varies dramatically among counties. In 2016, for example, 77% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in either licensed center-based care or Transitional Kindergarten in Santa Clara County, compared to just 42% in Tulare County.

Variations in household income and countywide financial conditions may contribute to enrollment disparities among counties. Santa Clara, a county with high family incomes and housing costs, on average, enrolls a higher proportion of all 4-year-olds in licensed centers than it does children from subsidy-eligible families. In contrast, some counties, including both high-income San Francisco and the Central Valley counties of Fresno and San Joaquin, display relatively high ECE enrollment rates for subsidy-eligible children.

### ACCESS FOR 3-YEAR-OLDS

Fewer than one-third of California’s three-year-olds (28%) attended a licensed center in 2016. The proportion enrolled from lower income families was just slightly higher, 34% in the same year (Figure 2).



Research shows greater long-term benefits for children attending two years of preschool, at least for preschoolers from lower-income families.<sup>4</sup> Several states are working hard to increase pre-k enrollment for 3-year-olds. Vermont, for instance, enrolls over 44% of their 3-year-olds in publicly supported centers.<sup>5</sup> Some of California’s better-resourced counties have achieved a level of center-based provision comparable to Vermont.

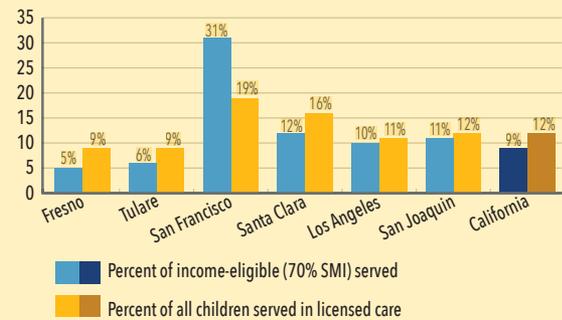
## ACCESS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Just 12% of California’s infants and toddlers (children from birth to age two) attend a licensed ECE program, including both centers and family child-care homes. This means that the majority of these children are either at home with a parent or cared for by other family members, friends, or neighbors (Figure 3). Most young children, then, are in unlicensed arrangements. The safety and quality of unlicensed arrangements varies widely, and these settings often fail to provide young children with the early language and learning experiences from which they will later benefit in school.<sup>6</sup>

**Just 12% of California’s infants and toddlers attend a licensed ECE program.**

Again, we see large disparities in access to licensed programs across counties. Just 9% of infants and toddlers in Fresno County are enrolled in licensed care, compared with 19% in San Francisco.

**FIGURE 3** Proportion of 0-2 year-olds served by county



Source: American Institutes for Research, Early Learning Needs Assessment Tool, [www.elneedsassessment.org](http://www.elneedsassessment.org).

## GROWTH AND DECLINE – COUNTIES VARY IN CHILD POPULATION TRENDS

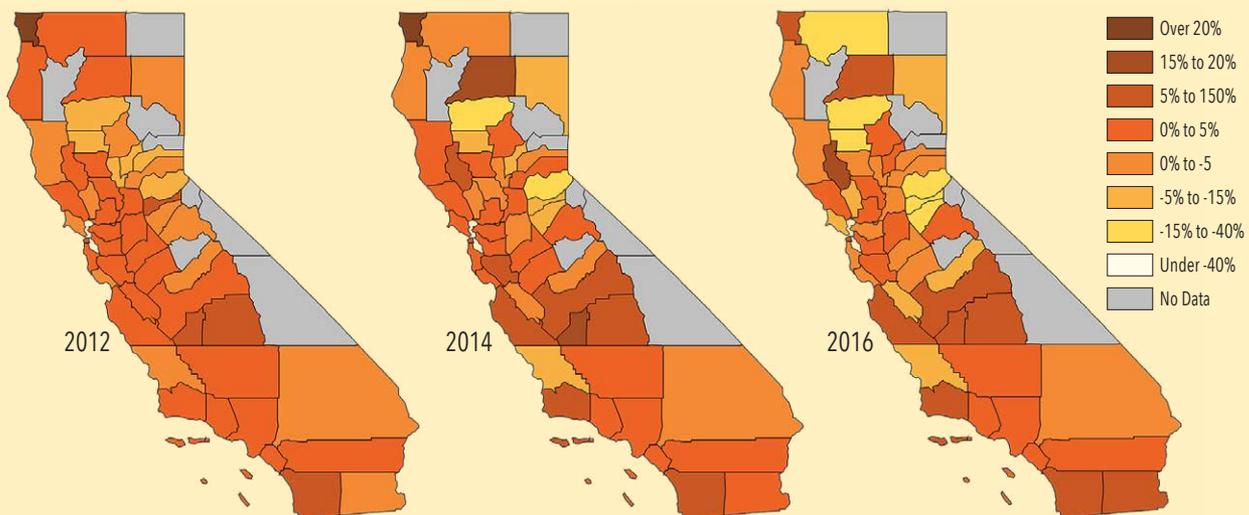
On top of access disparities, data point to another trend that may influence ECE policy and planning: child population decline.

The number of children entering kindergarten rose from about 500,000 in 2008 to almost 600,000 in 2016. But this trend recently reversed. California’s most recent apex of births occurred in 2010, when just over 559,000 children were born statewide. This number fell to 513,000 by 2016,

according to census data. However, recent rates of child population growth or decline have varied sharply among the state’s counties.

Figure 4 shows clear recent declines in counts of young children residing in higher-cost counties and ongoing growth in the number of preschoolers that populate new exurbs and lower-cost regions of the Central Valley. Several counties in the Central Valley, such as Fresno and Tulare,

**FIGURE 4** Child population growth, ages 3 and 4. Percentage change, 2010 base year



NOTE: Counties with fewer than 1,000 0 to 2 year olds or fewer than 1,000 3 and 4 year olds in 2018 omitted. Source: American Community Survey, Census Bureau.

have shown steady growth in numbers of 3 and 4-year-olds, between 5% and 15% since 2010. Just north, the count of preschool-age children has declined in Madera and San Benito counties. A handful of rural counties, where ECE center slots are scarce, have experienced growth in child populations.



This variability in birth rates among counties will likely continue through 2030, given local differences in fertility

rates and maternal education, shifting housing patterns and out-migration of many families from high-cost counties, especially in Silicon Valley and the Los Angeles region.<sup>7</sup>

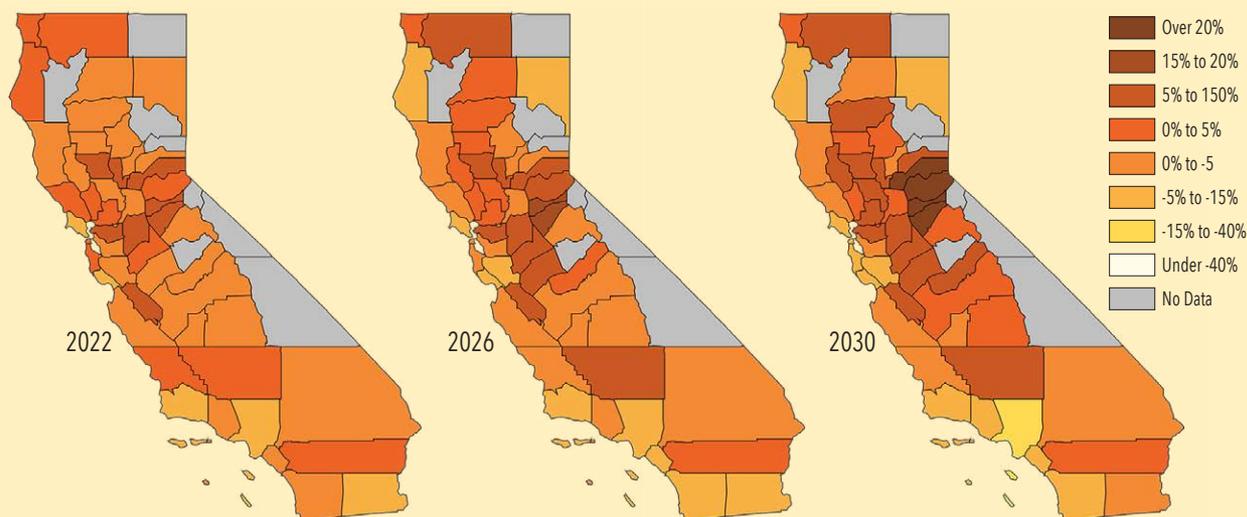
The count of infants and toddlers is expected to fall by 2% statewide between 2016 and 2022. But in San Joaquin and Fresno counties, for example, child populations are projected to climb by similar percentages.

Growth rates may increase in fast-growing suburbs as families flee expensive housing markets. The same is true in Central Valley counties through 2030 – where birth rates will remain comparatively high. While the child population in these counties is on the rise, the supply of public ECE programs is relatively low. In contrast, major urban counties that have fostered significant expansion of preschool will serve decreasing child populations for the foreseeable future.

### IMPLICATONS FOR STATE AND LOCAL POLICY

- California's population of young children is declining. This means that school enrollments will drift downward, a trend already being felt in several urban districts. Classroom space will open-up, although not in the counties where child populations will continue to grow.
- The state nears universal access to preschool among 4-year-olds, matching enrollment rates of leading states and cities. Parent fees finance many of these slots in California, while state and local governments fund a growing share.
- Wide disparities persist in the availability of ECE slots among counties. Spaces for 3-year-olds remain especially scarce. Licensed care for infants and toddlers remains even more difficult to find. How to balance the demands of work and family, equalize access to ECE programs, and enhance quality offers a daunting challenge for policy makers and local practitioners.
- Putting together trends in birth rates and pre-k supply, we discover that several counties experience a double-edged disparity: they have few existing ECE programs

**FIGURE 5** Child population growth, ages 3 and 4. Percentage change, 2018 base year



NOTE: Counties with fewer than 1,000 0 to 2 year olds or fewer than 1,000 3 and 4 year olds in 2018 omitted. Source: California Department of Finance

and will confront steadily growing child populations in coming decades.

What consequences for state policy do these demographic and evolving enrollment patterns suggest? And do these changing conditions open new windows for inventive policy action?

Declining school enrollments, for instance, may free-up facilities for new pre-k classrooms in some counties. Though this may not help counties where child populations will continue to grow and where preschool supply is most scarce. State and local resources saved from declining K-12 enrollments statewide could be redirected to expand and improve the quality of pre-k.

A second implication of this report is that how the state funds local ECE programs could become more responsive to diverse county contexts. The state currently contracts with thousands of local agencies, many situated in counties with comparatively high pre-k enrollment rates and, of late, shrinking child populations.

### Declining school enrollments may free-up facilities for new pre-k classrooms in some counties.

Funding streams could better flow to counties where family demand will grow. As policy makers rethink the state's role in supporting young families and children, bolstering the authority and management capacity of lead county agencies might be considered.

The state could then more keenly focus on reducing disparities in access to and the quality of ECE options among counties. In turn, counties might be awarded greater authority and technical capacity to plan where and how to equalize family access to early childhood

## THE EFFICACY OF LOCAL ACTION – SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco hosts a small population of children under age 5, relative to most California counties, along with a strong supply of pre-k slots. Still, gaps in services for families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers persist.

“Generally with preschool access, we’re doing really well,” in part because voters have backed a Children and Youth Fund through slightly higher property taxes, September Jarrett, executive director of the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education, told us.

But she adds that parents’ demand for high-quality child care remains strong, because “this is not a community where one wage earner can support a family.” Even with preschool slots, most families need full-day programs, not half-day offerings.

San Francisco also introduced a new voucher program last summer, the Early Learning Scholarship. The goal of the new effort, Jarrett says, is to move away from a state funding model where dollars are tied year after year to certain agencies. Now scholarship dollars, under the city’s “child enrollment model”, follows families who are choosing from among high-quality options.

The program focuses on the most disadvantaged children and incents providers to raise quality. So far, 320 centers and family child-care homes have opted to participate.

Still, Jarrett argues that “a free universal preschool [program] that has learning standards could serve the state so much better than what we have now.” It could provide the foundation on which portable vouchers cover parents working odd-hours, while encouraging higher quality among a diversity of providers.

## CHILD POPULATIONS STILL GROWING – SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

The count of young children is beginning to decline statewide. But that’s not the case in San Joaquin County. Between 2018 and 2022, the population of children from birth to age 2 is expected to increase by 2%, then jump another 5% to 10% by 2030. This county already suffers from scarce supply of pre-k slots and family supports for infants and toddlers.

Yet, how the state funds preschool slots does not flexibly meet the needs of families, Lani Schiff-Ross, First 5 director in San Joaquin County, told us. Local agencies recently sent back \$1.7 million to the state for budgeted slots that went unfilled. This stemmed from the

fact that many young parents work irregular or unpredictable hours, evenings, weekends, and even graveyard shifts. “We have some providers that aren’t full, but there are waitlists” for parents hoping to match odd-hour work schedules, Schiff-Ross reports.

She adds that program providers are seeing greater behavioral problems and other social-emotional issues among young children in this county marked by high rates of family poverty. “It’s not just that the population is going up, the needs are going up as well,” Schiff-Ross said.

Members of the Berkeley Panel include Catherine Atkin, Erin Gabel, Angie Garling, Rebecca Gomez, Ted Lempert, Scott Moore, Karla Pleitez Howell, Patricia Lozano, Hanna Melnick, Sarah Neville-Morgan, Michael Olenick, Kendra Rogers, Chris Steinhauer, Gerry Shelton, Deborah Stipek, Samantha Tran, Pete Weldy, and Lisa Wilkin. The authors are responsible for any errors or misinterpretations.

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programs. State decision makers may not have the best knowledge of which neighborhoods are most in need of new ECE centers, or where and how to best lift quality in local communities.

### ENSURING QUALITY PRESCHOOL FOR ALL CHILDREN

This analysis does not examine the quality of preschools statewide, which we know varies dramatically across local programs. Advancing wider access to mediocre pre-k would not be a wise public policy.

Future research briefs from the Berkeley Think Tank will review evidence on how to best lift preschool and child care quality. We are learning about what specific investments and program strategies most effectively lift developmental outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children. Stay tuned for these forthcoming reviews, along with policy options informed by these empirical findings.

Several counties in the Central Valley face a complicated problem in out years: They host scarce availability of pre-k slots while experiencing rising counts of young children.

### THE BERKELEY THINK TANK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY

Policy thinkers and sage practitioners have come together to compile evidence that informs promising options for equalizing access to quality pre-k and early childhood programs for California's diverse families. Scholars at Berkeley's Institute of Human Development facilitate deliberations of the 17-member Think Tank Panel.

Rather than draft a tidy blueprint, the Think Tank aims to first synthesize key pieces of evidence regarding demographic trends, enrollment in extant programs for youngsters, age 0-5 years, and dimensions of quality that elevate children's early growth and learning. Then, we put forward realistic policy options, estimate costs, and focus on trade-offs – based on core principles and always thinking long term. Broad consensus among stakeholders is required to boldly move forward. Our North Star shines bright: seeking to build an easily accessed set of quality early-childhood options for California's families.

More information: [b\\_fuller@berkeley.edu](mailto:b_fuller@berkeley.edu) and <https://choosechildren.org/>

### ENDNOTES

1 Evidence from Los Angeles: [http://child360.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/LAUP\\_CDSR\\_FULLLREPORT\\_REGDISC\\_rev20170112.pdf](http://child360.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/LAUP_CDSR_FULLLREPORT_REGDISC_rev20170112.pdf). San Francisco: <http://glenpricegroup.com/sites/laupresearch/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/05/Evaluating-PFA-Effectiveness-Research-Brief.pdf>. Santa Clara: [https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3696565.pdf?casa\\_token=2so6U00-wBsAAAAA:1lg-voXBLmSYQ2-WMAeuRinmxd87kP6ay1g6u1LoNoXJR7fO-JEz1xdalGoredc4doyPJq-HAo-rMIeRl3liqpm99NaXoTZ9kFl-da8i63kugrlzwWu](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3696565.pdf?casa_token=2so6U00-wBsAAAAA:1lg-voXBLmSYQ2-WMAeuRinmxd87kP6ay1g6u1LoNoXJR7fO-JEz1xdalGoredc4doyPJq-HAo-rMIeRl3liqpm99NaXoTZ9kFl-da8i63kugrlzwWu). San Mateo: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2131.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2131.html).

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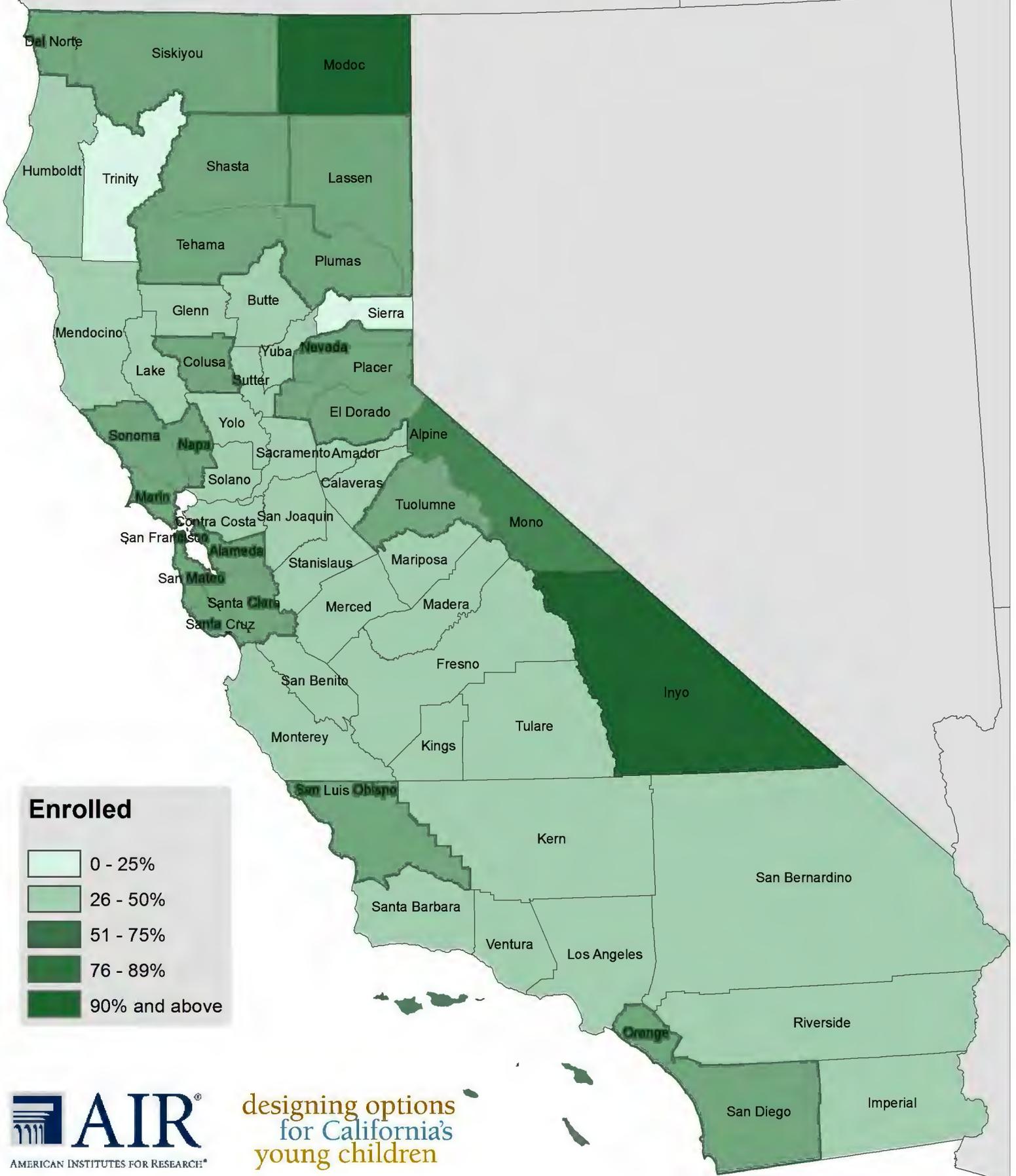
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7 For details on county-by-county birth rates, as reported by the state Department of Finance, see: [http://www.dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/projections/Historical\\_And\\_Projected\\_Births/](http://www.dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/projections/Historical_And_Projected_Births/).

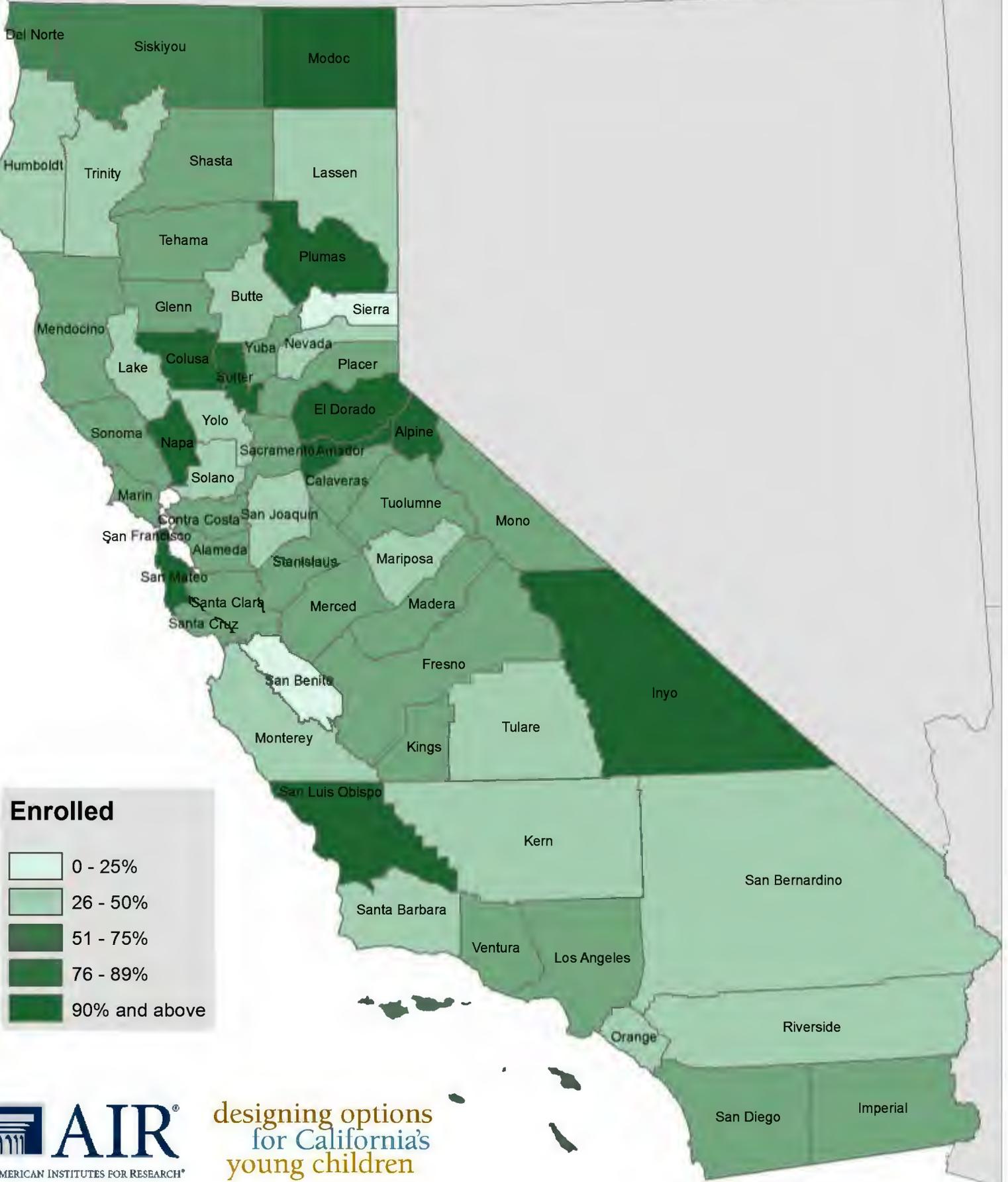
# Estimated Proportion of all 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Licensed Centers or Transitional Kindergarten, by County, 2016



## Enrolled

- 0 - 25%
- 26 - 50%
- 51 - 75%
- 76 - 89%
- 90% and above

# Estimated Proportion of Income-Eligible 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Subsidized Early Learning Programs, by County, 2016







*Vision: California's children receive the best possible start in life and thrive.*

## 2018–19 CHILDREN'S POLICY AGENDA

*First 5 California will advocate for the strong start all children deserve, with an emphasis on children prenatal through age 5 and their families, to optimize early childhood development and reduce childhood poverty.*

<b>STRONG AND ENGAGED FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES</b>
Support evidence-based parent education and engagement, including parent engagement on child brain development and Talk. Read. Sing.
Support sustainability of Family Resource Centers and other comprehensive community hubs for integrated services for children and families.
Increase supports for breastfeeding, family leave, and baby-friendly policies in all settings.
Expand voluntary home visit programs.
<b>CHILD HEALTH</b>
Protect children and families' access to health care, and support coordination across the health care system to ensure every pregnant mother and child ages 0 to 5 has affordable and comprehensive health insurance coverage.
Support and promote universal developmental screenings, assessment, referral, and treatment.
<b>EARLY LEARNING</b>
Expand access to quality early care and education programs for children ages 0 to 3.
Support implementation of high-quality universal preschool access for all low-income four-year-old children, and high-quality transitional kindergarten and kindergarten state-wide.
Support a high-quality early learning workforce through strengthened qualifications, compensation, stability, diversity, and robust professional development systems.
Promote statewide access to and participation in successful Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.
<b>REVENUE</b>
Promote inclusion of funding for children ages 0 to 5 and their families in existing and new revenue policy discussions.
Promote regulation of tobacco-related products, including electronic cigarettes, and sustainability of licensing and enforcement programs.