



December 17, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
 1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Budget Request Proposal to support Head Start agencies in TK transition**

Dear Governor Newsom:

We, the undersigned, write on behalf of the nearly 150 Head Start grantees in California, serving over 100,000 children and their families annually and employing over 25,000 teachers and staff statewide. Head Start programs in California operate over 1,700 sites across the state and serve the most at-risk children and families with a program that offers early learning, health, and wraparound services. We respectfully request support for a \$50 million appropriation in the 2022-23 budget to ensure these local programs can continue and reach more children in Early Head Start, Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and American Indian Head Start.

We support the vision of providing early learning free of charge to all four-year-olds in California. However, it is important to note that the expansion of TK has serious implications for Head Start programs. Four-year-olds account for a significant portion of Head Start funding in California. As more four-year-olds enroll in TK, Head Start will need to shift to serving a larger population of 0-3 year-olds. This age group requires lower student-teacher ratios, smaller class sizes, and specialized facilities that will significantly increase costs for Head Start. Further, programs whose age ranges have changed will need to re-apply for funding and receive approval from the federal Office of Head Start, which places new demands on staffing and facilities.

Without additional fiscal support that is equitable to the support provided to other parts of the mixed-delivery system, the ability of Head Start programs to accommodate this change will be jeopardized. Head Start programs are nationally recognized for providing a high quality, whole-child, whole-family approach, and a foundation of increasing racial and economic equity. California cannot afford to lose the \$1 billion in annual federal grants or the critical services for children and families most severely affected by the pandemic.

While the Build Back Better Plan would provide significant support to Head Start programs nationwide, it is not certain that the plan will pass, or on what timeline the funding would be made available. Even if

the additional federal funding materializes, Head Start will need all those funds **and more** to serve a greater number of infants and toddlers while paying competitive wages and benefits to educators. As California continues to address the impact of COVID-19 and implements TK expansion, it's critical that state policies support, and not inadvertently harm, programs designed to help the most vulnerable, including homeless children, children in foster care and children in deep poverty.

For these reasons, we request your strong consideration and inclusion of a \$50 million appropriation in the 2022-23 January Budget to invest in the capacity of Head Start programs. This support will build local program capacity for recruiting and retaining staff, making the transition to serve younger children, and identifying more Head Start eligible families.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact our Governmental Affairs Director, Anna Ioakimedes at [anna@headstartca.org](mailto:anna@headstartca.org) for additional information.

Sincerely,

*Christopher Maricle*

Christopher Maricle

**Executive Director**

**Head Start California**

**Organizations and Associations in Support**

Build Up California  
California Federation of Teachers  
Child 360  
Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles  
Child Care Resource Center  
Child Development Resources of Ventura County  
Child Start  
Children Now  
Children's Institute  
Community Action Partnership of Madera County  
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County  
Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County  
Council for a Strong America  
E Center  
Encompass Community Services- Head Start  
Fight Crime Invest in Kids  
Foundation for Early Childhood Education  
IZZIE Early Education  
Kidz Community  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)  
Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC)  
Neighborhood House Association  
Northern CA Child Development, Inc.  
Orange County Head Start  
Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE)  
Para los Niños

Ready Nation  
Region 9 Head Start Association  
Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities  
Unite LA  
Wu Yee Children's Services  
YMCA of the East Bay-Early Childhood Impact

**CC:**

**Office of the Governor**

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**State Board of Education and California Department of  
Education** Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

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