

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL**

February 18, 2025

**Los Angeles County Early Care and Education Child Care Windstorm and Wildfire Recovery Efforts**

The California wildfires that devastated Los Angeles County (County) earlier this year caused an unforeseen level of damage and trauma to the entire region. These wildfires collectively burned over 47,900 acres, and destroyed or damaged more than 16,250 structures, including homes, small businesses, schools and childcare settings. As recovery efforts continue, and we begin rebuilding and securing life necessities, the satisfaction of vital needs, such as early care and education and childcare, will help families return to a sense of normalcy.

Among those most profoundly impacted by the wildfires are childcare providers and families with young children who rely on their services. Childcare settings, including licensed childcare and subsidized family, friend and neighbor care, continue to be impacted by the emergency. Moreover, several childcare facilities and schools were either partially or fully destroyed, necessitating swift relocation for these facilities to minimize the impact to the youth and their families.

Childcare providers are governed by, and funded through, an array of federal, State and local agencies. For example, they are licensed by the California Community License Division, which is part of the California Department of Social Services. Subsidized funding for early childhood education (ECE) organizations and student

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enrollment comes from the California Department of Education and these organizations are licensed by the State. Head Start and Early Head Start childcare programs are federally funded. In the County, the Department of Public Health's Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) provides technical assistance to support these providers. OAECE engages stakeholders and convenes commissions, like the Child Care Planning Committee and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development. OAECE is also responsible for informing policy at a local and State level, in partnership with early education centers; Family Child Care Homes; Family, Friends and Neighbors; school districts; and County Employee Child Care Centers.

State and local agencies are stepping up to help childcare providers who have been impacted by the wildfire crisis. On February 11, 2025, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued an Executive Order for the California Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the California Employment Development Department, to individually contact childcare programs or providers whose facility has not reopened in the wake of the wildfires and make them aware of their potential eligibility for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. Governor Newsom also ordered state agencies to provide support in completing the application for those benefits. On February 4, 2025, the City of Los Angeles issued an Executive Order to streamline the procedures for relocation, co-location, and temporary operation of childcare facilities. These steps were extremely helpful, but much more needs to be done. 330 ECE(s) have been either destroyed, damaged or prevented from operating due to the wildfires. The County needs to take aggressive steps to support these 330 ECE(s) so they can continue to provide critical childcare services for County residents. OAECE has been responsive. For example, OAECE is working in partnership with the Departments of Public Works, Regional Planning and Fire to waive all fees for facilities in those areas impacted by the wildfires. Much more, however, needs to be done to meet the needs of the ECE(s) in this current crisis.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Direct the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) to work with the Directors of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), the Department of Consumer and

Business Affairs, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education, in coordination with the California Community Licensing Division, First 5 LA, and the childcare Resources and Referral agencies, to connect Los Angeles County childcare providers to the resources and streamlined processes they need to rebuild, and to reach out individually to every affected childcare provider, including schools, to inform them of their ability to apply for the State of California's Disaster Unemployment Assistance program.

2. Direct the Director of DPH, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and the Director of DEO to identify the short-term staffing needs of, and potential sources for additional resources and individuals in, workforce programs to more fully support childcare providers through the current crisis caused by the wildfires.
3. Direct the Director of the Department of Regional Planning to allow the temporary use of other facilities for childcare programs; schools, grades TK-12, accredited by the State of California (excluding trade or commercial schools); and churches, temples, or other places used exclusively for religious worship in communities impacted by the Eaton Fire. This should be in effect for three years (with two one-year extensions, as needed) following the emergency declaration for the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events.
4. Direct the Fire Department to work with the State Fire Marshal and local affected municipalities to prioritize emergency fire permits for childcare providers who are seeking to re-open an existing facility or establish a new facility with an emergency childcare license.
5. Direct the CEO, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Division, to support State budget proposals, legislation and other administrative efforts to meet the needs of childcare providers affected by the wildfires, including but not limited to health and safety assessments and remediation for childcare facilities.
6. Direct the County departments in directives 1 through 3 above to report back in 30 days at an appropriate cluster meeting on their progress, including actions already taken or planned; the numbers of childcare providers who have been served, have applied for relief, have been granted emergency childcare licenses, have applied

for Disaster Unemployment Assistance; and/or have re-opened or relocated and/or who are seeking to re-open.

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(ME/LH/YV/CT/IG)