

# State Early Childhood Governance Structures Landscape Analysis: Recommendations for California

By: Ashley Long, PhD

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## THE NEED FOR STREAMLINED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

California is at an exciting time in history for the potential of early childhood education (ECE) systems to be strengthened. Not only has new funding been committed to early childhood supports but there are advocates in the capital and at the governor's office open to supporting quality efforts. As Governor Newsom works to build a State Master Plan to guide the implementation of a comprehensive Statewide early learning and care system, quality information about evidence-based and tested strategies and models are needed to inform the developing plan.

From 2013 to 2017 California continued to increase funding to the ECE system; however, this funding is delivered through multiple state departments to a variety of local entities that providers must navigate.<sup>1</sup> As recent reports have identified, there is need for the state to ensure a cohesive and streamlined system for parents and providers to navigate.<sup>2,3</sup> The fragmentation of the existing State structures can be felt from the state level down to families.

*"We must build coherent ECE administration system that includes inclusive governance structure, integrated funding streams and accountable coordination of all programs, with effective linked county or regional level bodies."*

CA Assembly Blue Ribbon  
Commission on Early Childhood  
Education. 2019. Pg. 12.

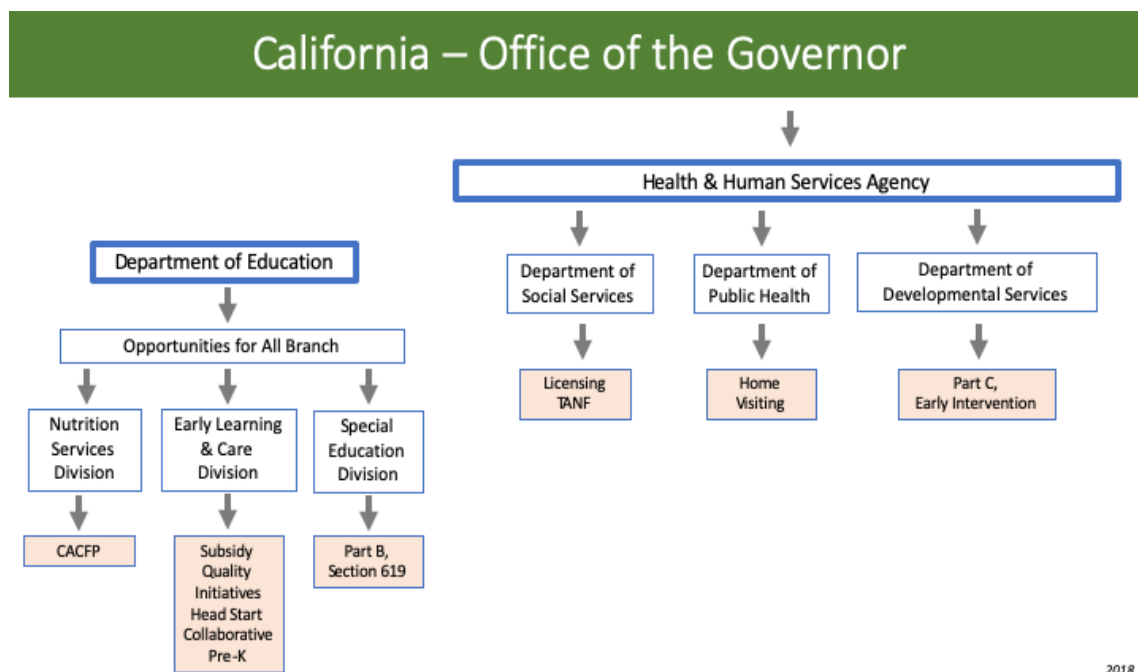
Research shows that there is a large missed opportunity of foundational learning and financial incentives when ECE systems are not cohesive.<sup>4</sup> Every state agency and department has its own system for administering funding streams, ensuring outcomes, communication, and managing data. Given the wide range of funding streams supporting ECE services, there are varying requirements for eligibility, criteria, programmatic, and workforce needs. The complexity of ECE systems therefore is compounded when spread across multiple state departments. Aligned ECE systems allow for the potential of programs to better work together and learn from each other. They may also result in financial incentives of staffing alignment and programmatic savings from reducing the number of systems to navigate. Importantly, aligned governance supports integrated data systems.<sup>5</sup>

## CALIFORNIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Acknowledging the benefits and efficiencies of more a more aligned ECE governance structure in California, Governor Newsom's proposed 2020-21 budget establishes a new Department of Early Childhood Development under the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) to improve the delivery of services for young children, families, and providers through a high-quality, integrated early learning and care system.<sup>6</sup> Under this proposal, childcare, Head Start, quality improvement projects, and an integrated early childhood data system would be overseen by the new Department, and state pre-K would remain under the California Department of Education (CDE).<sup>7</sup> Governor Newsom's proposal is a great step towards addressing some of the governance recommendations discussed below from ECE experts over the last decade.

Creating a new Department of Early Childhood Development under CHHS supports the whole child approach. California needs a more coherent, efficient, and streamlined system to better support our children and their families to access the childcare, early learning, and health services they need.<sup>8</sup> As seen below, California currently has ECE funding spread out across three different departments and several divisions.

### California's Current Flow of State ECE Funding<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Throughout this report a simplified visual of state governance structures flowing out of State Governor's Offices are included. A more in-depth overview of California's Governance Structure is included in Appendix A. An overview of its administration of major funding streams is also included in Appendix B. The U.S. Administration for Children and Families<sup>a</sup> utilizes eight different funding categories to examine state's structures. These funding sources as well as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) have been included.

Over the last decade, multiple groups have invested in analyzing and providing recommendations to improve the existing early childhood governance structures within California. In its 2018 report, the Bipartisan Policy Center ranked California #12 out of 50 for the integration and efficiency of its ECE system, and highlighted the state's past efforts to better streamline distribution of funds as a strength.<sup>9</sup> However, the Learning Policy Institute report on *Building an Early Learning System that Works* shows that there is still much work to be done.<sup>10</sup> The report highlights four key areas for improvement: (1) need for a state-level governing body to coordinate programs, streamline administration, and simplify access for parents, (2) making ECE affordable for all children, (3) building a well-qualified ECE workforce, and (4) improving overall quality of all ECE programs.

The Bipartisan Policy Center, Learning Policy Institute, and recent Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education (BRC)<sup>11</sup> also provide recommendations for California to improve its early childhood governance structures. Some of the key recommendations across these reports are:

- Establish a "coherent ECE administration system that includes inclusive governance structure, integrated funding streams and accountable coordination of all programs, with effective linked county or regional level bodies."<sup>12</sup>
- Establish a state-level governing body to advise Legislature committees, the Governor, and Superintendent of Public Instruction.<sup>13,14</sup>
- Establish a single Department for Early Childhood Education with the authority and expertise to coordinate all ECE programs and sufficient resources to perform assigned tasks.<sup>15,16</sup> Potential duties of this Department should include:
  - Monitoring and oversight of multiple funding streams to simplify and streamline reporting requirements
  - Ensure program quality and implementation of State Quality Improvement System
  - Coordination with other state agencies serving children and families
  - Creation of streamlined system for parents and providers
  - Development of integrated data system across state services to better inform policy decisions and create efficiencies with providers.

## **BEST PRACTICES IN STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

Many factors influence how ECE governance structures in different states have evolved over time. As focus has been placed on the value of quality early learning and investments have been put into ECE systems, states have had to consider their existing structures, political dynamics, capacity restrictions, the needs of their children and families, and other influences.

Organizations like the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes,<sup>17</sup> Center for American Progress,<sup>18</sup> and Education Commission of the States,<sup>19</sup> as well as the Build Initiative<sup>20</sup> and U.S. Administration for Children and Families<sup>21</sup> have put out reports and information on potential ECE governance structures. All emphasize the need to align state resources and funding streams. Systems change has typically occurred in a format of either coordination, consolidation or creation of a new agency.

Governance Models			
Model	Coordinated	Consolidated	New Independent Agency
Creation Method	Collaboration and coordination across different agencies	Consolidation of existing programs and divisions into one state agency	Creation of a dedicated early childhood agency
Structures	Formal agreements across agencies, a governor's coordinating office, and/or a children's cabinet	Focused on bringing primary funding sources into one agency – e.g. bringing multiple existing funding streams under the department of education or human services	Authority over and accountability for many services and programs – typically an executive branch entity or new department with a board or commissioner reporting to governor
Identified State Examples	Colorado Delaware Illinois New Mexico Pennsylvania Wisconsin	<b>California</b> Florida Maryland Michigan	Alabama Connecticut Georgia Massachusetts Washington

**States have taken different governance approaches.** Given the complexity of the many different components of ECE systems, many states have looked at their existing structures to determine best alignment steps. As can be seen from examples across the country, modifying existing state governance structures requires a variety of strategies and time for change to occur. Given that each state's governance model has evolved from different places, it is not surprising to find that states have identified different areas to focus their efforts on.

Some states have started their governance alignment work by finding ways to better align state pre-k, childcare, and Head Start. These are critical components of the ECE system; however, if states are not intentional, they might leave out other important early childhood factors such as health, child welfare, or workforce needs.

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While everyone now acknowledges the importance of integrated data, some states have put more resources behind the creation and development of data systems than others. States have seen increased efficiencies, ability to better track outcomes, and/or improved capacity to make informed decisions through their

integrated data efforts. Many states face challenges of historical and complex data

systems that need to be completely transformed in order to be compatible with more integrated systems. Other challenges with building integrated data systems include the continued demand for technical supports and costs of maintaining growing databases.

Beyond determining where to focus governance alignment work, states may approach the efforts from multiple philosophies. States have to determine what supports fall under early childhood and the best way to manage their resources. States may also consider political, historical, and public will factors when determining if and how to restructure the administration of funding. **Some states have placed ECE services and programs under Departments of Education. This alignment typically has built upon traditional pre-k funding falling under the Department of Education and building out services from there. Others have placed ECE services and programs under Departments of Public Health in alignment with prevention initiatives or under Departments of Human Services where childcare has historically been funded.**

Additionally, there is limited information on the full impact of State Policy or Advisory Councils (SAC). The Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 mandates that states have a council in place and defines several coordinating roles of the councils.<sup>22</sup> While each state has implemented and utilized their SAC differently, it is clear that there is potential for existing SACs to be leaders in any reform that states embark upon.

## **STATE MODELS**

Looking at ECE alignment work happening across the United States, four different states are highlighted below. Factors such as state's Bipartisan Policy Center's rankings, level of funding for pre-k services, efforts toward data integration, and similarities and differences between their governance structures and California's structure were used to determine which comparative states to include. Rather than using any one of them as a sole model for potential change, California should consider identified promising practices in a variety of areas that could accumulatively enhance its ECE systems.

While implementation of a new independent Early Childhood Education and Care Department is still to be seen, New Mexico is moving towards a more integrated model for providing services across the state. In March of 2019, Senate Bill 22<sup>23</sup> was passed to create a New Early Childhood Education and Care Department by July of 2020.<sup>24</sup> In July of 2019, New Mexico announced the appointment of a Secretary to lead the development of the department. Further, the governor is supporting legislation that would establish a dedicated investment fund towards supporting ECE initiatives.<sup>25</sup>

The new department will bring together services previously under three different departments (Public Education/Children, Youth, and Families/Health), aligning funding from home visiting, IDEA, Part C, childcare, pre-k, Head Start, and part of IDEA Part B 619.

New Mexico has previously been known for its investment into high quality state pre-k efforts<sup>26</sup> but other efforts toward aligned ECE systems can be seen. The [New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership](#) is a private-public partnership established to build public awareness and will for ECE efforts. Their [2016 Early Childhood Governance report](#) lays out the history of New Mexico's efforts and evidence supporting the passing of SB22.<sup>27</sup> As seen in other states, this private-public partnership is an instrumental part of ECE work happening in New Mexico and is helping to support the work of the newly forming department.

The new department will also be charged with oversight of the state's early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS). Initial work on the data system began in 2015 using Race to the Top funding with a focus on creating unique identifiers for all children.<sup>28</sup> However, not unlike other state's efforts, development of a robust data system has been hampered by complexities of integrating systems and the existing disconnected systems.<sup>29</sup>

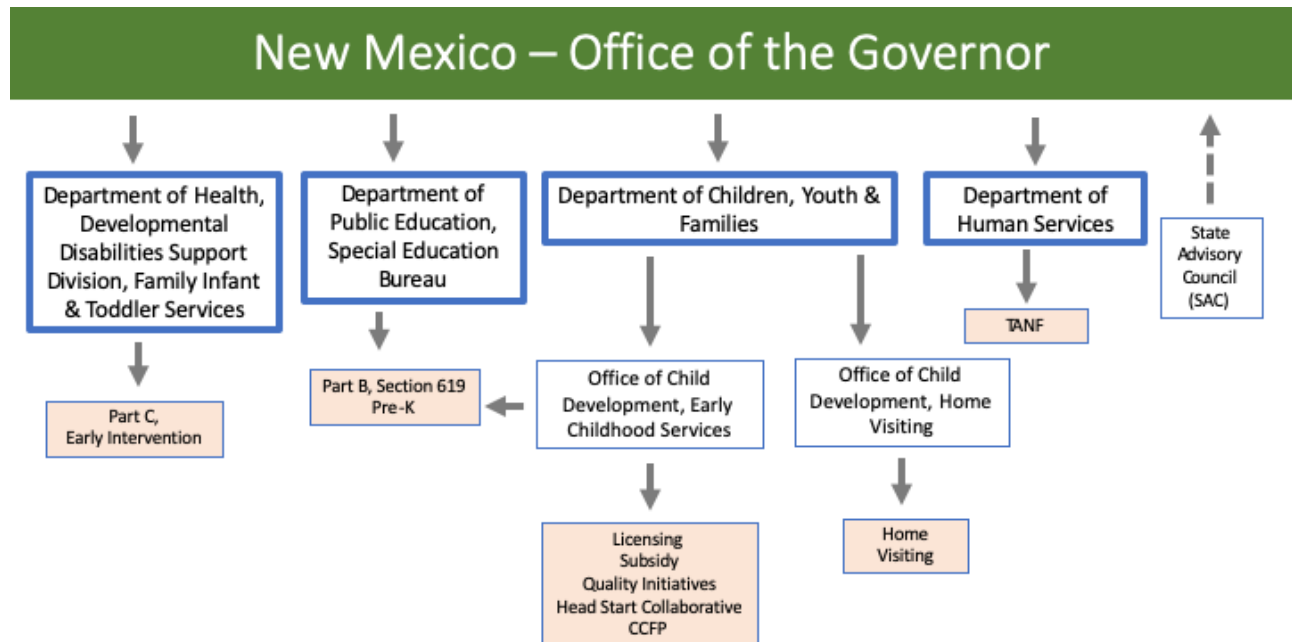
Bipartisan Policy Center  
**State Early Childhood  
 Administration Ranking**  
**#3**

*Strengths*

- New Mexico administers the Child and Adult Food Care Program, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), and state Pre-K under one agency, which improves efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight.
- New Mexico's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) is mandatory for providers receiving subsidy, which ensures quality care for all children.

**#3 New Mexico Fact Sheet**

Previous attempts to create an independent Early Childhood Education and Care Department had been opposed by state agencies not wanting to lose oversight of ECE funding streams as well as prior governors not being interested in efforts to restructure. Support was built for the change through the realization that New Mexico had been returning millions of dollars in unexpended funds and the streamlining of services would better help in the management of resources. The previous Governor Morales was able to raise public awareness and some supporting funds to get SB22 to pass.<sup>30</sup>



2018

***While the success of this new department is still to be seen, California can learn from New Mexico’s strategies of building support for the alignment of ECE services. As California moves toward a new structure, the State’s Master Plan should investigate existing financial and programmatic inefficiencies and make recommendations to ensure that these are rectified during the transition to a new structure. Additionally, efforts to establish public-private support for ECE initiatives is a critical tool for establishing backing for the importance of ECE and alignment of ECE services.***



North Carolina has focused its early childhood alignment efforts into an [Early Childhood Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#). ECAP itself was initiated through an executive order from the governor. Like California, the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is an elected official position and does not report to the governor. The majority of NC's ECE services are operated through their [Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\)](#). While North Carolina does not have a specific office of early learning under DHHS, the executive order allowed for ECAP to have two designated staff members within DHHS to oversee the development and implementation of ECAP.

There also are multiple advisory groups helping inform work happening in ECE and connecting public-private partnerships.

The [B-3 Interagency Council](#), which is jointly overseen by DHHS and DPI, has multiple legislators serving on it to help inform legislation reform and other efforts. In 1993, legislation established the NC Partnership for Children (NCPC), charged with long-range, strategic planning for child development. The public-private partnership oversees the [Smart Start](#) initiative which directs funding to the county level to improve quality childcare. Smart Start plays an active role today in the development and implementation of ECAP. Starting in 2001, state pre-k funding through DPI complimented Smart Start funding. However, in 2012, legislative action was taken to move state pre-k programming from DPI to DHHS. This change brought together components of subsidy, licensing, quality, and pre-k.<sup>31</sup>

ECAP has established a holistic approach with ten goals for the state to work towards. With a focus on using data to better identify and address issues, ECAP is working to have aligned goals within departments and divisions across the state. Instead of a separate Early Learning Office, efforts focus on inter-departmental collaboration structures and improvements that can be made both with and without legislative action.

Bipartisan Policy Center  
**State Early Childhood  
Administration Ranking  
#7**

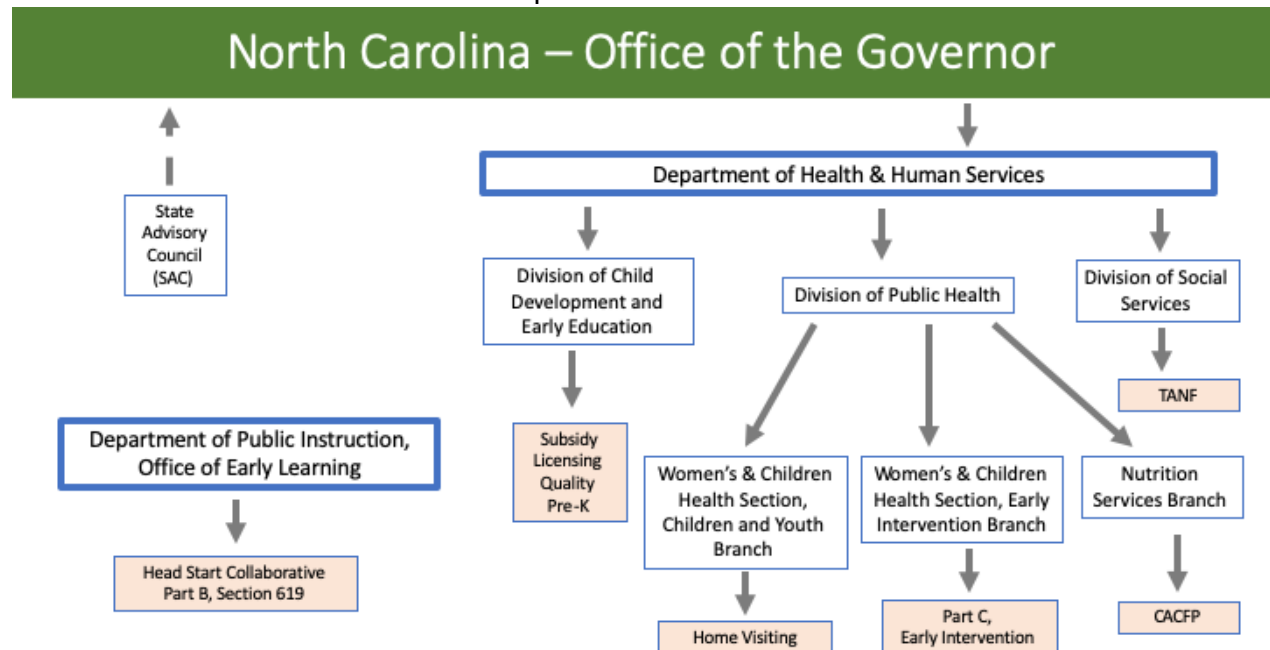
*Strengths*

- North Carolina administers the Child and Adult Care Food program, CCDF, and state Pre-K under one agency, which improves efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight.
- North Carolina includes licensing as the entry level for its QRIS, which ensures quality for all programs serving children.

**[#7 North Carolina Fact Sheet](#)**



Lastly, in 2016, NC launched their [Early Childhood Integrated Data System \(ECIDS\)](#). ECIDS is not directly connected to ECAP data; however, they are working to better connect data usage to the plan. ECIDS has not integrated databases but it does store many state funding sources within a single database to prepare regular data dashboards and meet data requests.



2018

**North Carolina's ECAP is a prime example of a strategy that California could use to align existing ECE initiatives. Like California, they have an elected head of their education department (DPI) and have chosen to keep select services under DPI while consolidating most ECE services under the Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, ECAP has created a platform for public and private partners to build consensus around. Defined indicators for success also allow for different state agencies, departments, and offices to be held accountable to shared standards. It is critical to have staff assigned to the implementation of an action plan for alignment, as was the case with ECAP.**

An Executive Board Resolution was passed in 2007<sup>32</sup> to conceive Pennsylvania's [Office of Child Development and Early Learning \(OCDEL\)](#). The Office is jointly overseen by the Pennsylvania Departments of Human Services and of Education, creating a direct linkage between the two state agencies and the different programs they administer. The new office was able to bring together childcare licensing, subsidy, quality measures, professional development, and early intervention services. The office also created a bridge between other supplemental services held within the two departments (e.g. TANF and food benefits).

In 2008 the governor made two executive orders for the creation of an Early Learning Council and an [Early Learning Invest Commission](#). While the council is advisory to the Governor's office, it was designed to give input and advice to OCDEL. The council also has representation as a co-chair of the Early Learning Invest Commission, which was able to bring together public and private partners to raise support for ECE and make it an economic priority.<sup>33</sup>

Even before the inception of OCDEL, Pennsylvania was on the forefront of early childhood data integration. System development for integrated data began in 2002 with a focus on uniquely tracking children, providers, and workforce efforts across systems. In 2007, the system was branded as PELICAN – Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks. Today the system has evolved to house all of Pennsylvania's early learning services (eight different service areas). PELICAN has found success in showing efficiencies and cost savings through access to integrated data systems. OCDEL has also been helpful in breaking down barriers to sharing data between different systems.<sup>34</sup> Even with this success, they have noted challenges with the continual need for additional resources to manage and expand the database. This has limited their data connections with child welfare and other areas.

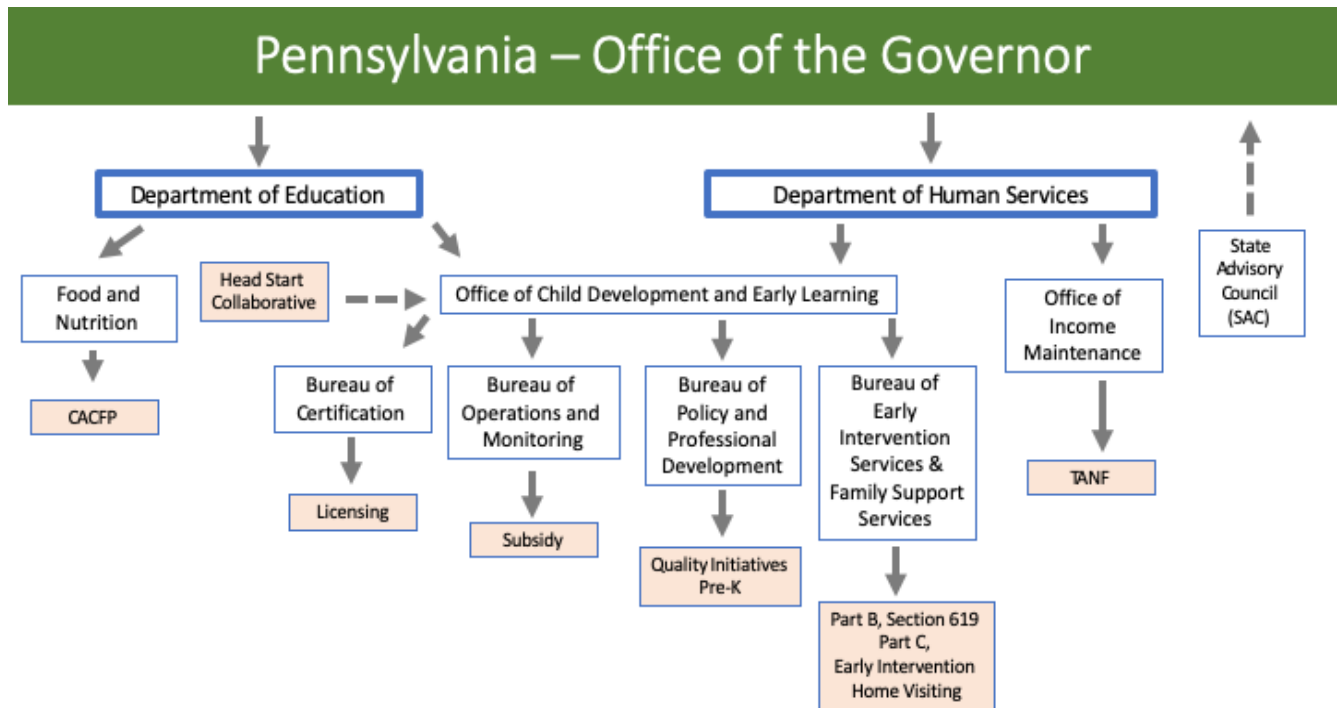
### Bipartisan Policy Center State Early Childhood Administration Ranking #6

#### Strengths

- In Pennsylvania, all programs serving children are co-led by two agencies, which improves efficiency and allows for better alignment of eligibility and monitoring requirements and quality improvement activities.
- IDEA Part C (infants/toddlers) and Part B, Section 619 (3-5 year olds) are administered within the same agency, which can support a smooth transition for parents.
- Pennsylvania was awarded an Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grant, which integrates Early Head Start services and resources into childcare settings, aligns childcare standards with Early Head Start Performance Standards, and creates opportunities for improving outcomes for children and families.

#### [#6 Pennsylvania Fact Sheet](#)

Building comprehensive databases is a timely process that requires commitment from the state to continue updating and expanding upon.<sup>35</sup>



2018

***California can learn from Pennsylvania’s extensive efforts to align multiple funding streams and create integrated data systems. Their efforts have shown fiscal and administrative efficiencies. However, California would have to consider the administrative challenges of joint oversight when leading departments (i.e., CDE and CHHS) are not both directly controlled by the governor, as they are in Pennsylvania.***

## WASHINGTON

*State Model: Independent*

Over the last two decades, Washington has put emphasis on improving the quality of ECE services and streamlining their governance structures. Most recent endeavors have streamlined bureaucracy through consolidation of departments. Based on the recommendations of a 2016 Blue Ribbon Commission report, House Bill 1661 was passed in 2017 forming the [Department of Children, Youth, and Families \(DCYF\)](#) under which early learning operates and can more closely partner with state agencies serving families. The legislation also called for an Office of Innovation, Alignment, & Accountability within DCYF to oversee the transition of services to the department and create oversight for department goals.<sup>36</sup> The process has been declared a holistic way to serve children and families that allows for more of a preventative approach. Additionally, efforts have been made to seek out philanthropic supports for the success of the nine priority outcomes set for the department.<sup>37</sup>

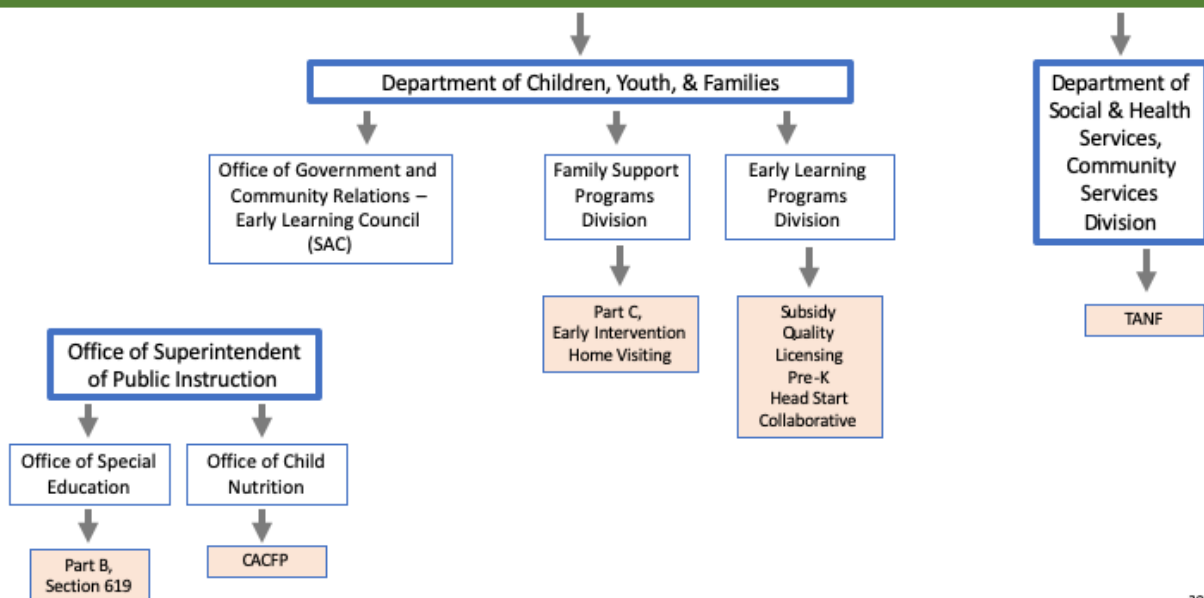
### Bipartisan Policy Center State Early Childhood Administration Ranking #8

#### Strengths

- Washington's QRIS is mandatory for providers receiving subsidy, which ensures quality of care for all children.

[#8 Washington Fact Sheet](#)

## Washington – Office of the Governor



2018

The new department houses what was previously under Children's Administration Services (e.g. Child Protective Services, foster care, and adoption support) and the Department of Early Learning (e.g. Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program, Working Connections Child Care & Home Visiting).

Similar to recent legislation in New Mexico, getting public and private support for the change focused on the need for a new department to better administer funding and create improved efficiencies of existing resources.

Prior to this consolidation, initial efforts to streamline the state's governance had established a separate Department of Early Learning in 2007. A state-level, public-private partnership, today known as [Thrive Washington](#), was also created in 2009 as a strategy to cultivate buy-in for further advancing ECE efforts from a larger variety of stakeholders.<sup>38</sup> These efforts brought together several ECE services and increased attention to the need for quality ECE services.

***As California moves towards more aligned ECE governance, Washington provides a good example of a new structure that holistically streamlines services around family needs. When working with state partners, a single department allows for a united stance in serving families rather than efforts coming from multiple departments. Yet, to be able to administer numerous services within one department, many divisions must work collaboratively together.***

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CALIFORNIA MOVING FORWARD**

As seen in the examples above, states across the nation have taken a variety of steps to improve and streamline their ECE systems to better meet children and family needs. States have also approached where ECE should live within their systems in different ways -- within their Education Departments (New York), Human Services Departments (North Carolina), as a standalone department (New Mexico), or a combination of these departments (Pennsylvania). As states look to better align their ECE governance structures, state leadership should have an understanding of the complexities of the ECE system, differences in the functionality of childcare versus K-12 systems, and connections across ECE, health, and child welfare. Not every state department is equipped to meet these diverse needs. **The most critical factor for any of these formations is intentional inter- and cross-departmental collaboration with clear goal setting and accountability across departments.**

Given that every state is unique, there is no one model that California should be looking to replicate. However, learning how other states have consolidated or created independent agencies to oversee the majority of their ECE functions will be beneficial to California as it looks to change its ECE governance structure. As the Master Plan works to align partners and provide actionable recommendations to the state, leadership in the process should consider the practical implications of implementation of those recommendations and strategies for alignment of governance activities.

This section reflects on the leadership needed to make governance changes, presents a recommended model for the state, and discusses key factors state leadership will need to consider as ECE governance changes are made.

### ***Leadership that Supports Change and Encourages Interagency Coordination***

The Center for American Progress did research to identify some of the top action items and priority areas that governors can focus on to make commitments and

create positive early childhood supports.<sup>39,40</sup> Governor Newsom has already made strides toward several of the items that they propose. In particular, current efforts for developing a statewide strategic plan, the formation of an Early Learning Council, and appointment of an early learning advisor within the governor's office are steps towards a stronger ECE system. However, there are several other actions that the governor could still implement for systems improvement – most notable would be the proposed creation of a Department of Early Childhood Development and providing strong encouragement of interagency coordination.

For the success of Governor Newsom's proposal, the administration will need to build political support from the legislature and stakeholders. California may look to other states, such as Washington, that have leveraged recommendations from Blue Commission and other state-wide assessments to gain the needed buy-in for legislation to change their governance structures. The creation of the recently appointed Early Childhood Policy Council and development of a State Master Plan provide great potential for in-depth consideration and support for ECE governance alignment in California.

As Governor Newsom's 2020-21 budget proposal suggests, the new governance model will "promote a high-quality, affordable, and unified early childhood system that improves program integration and coordination with other major programs serving young children."<sup>41</sup> His administration will want to **highlight the tangible long-term financial savings** of the proposal and how building an coherent system will make it easier for families, providers, and agencies to navigate.

While not an entirely unique position, California should consider the influence that the State Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, can bring to the ECE system. This new position has the potential to bring focus on child well-being and the benefits of having aligned systems to serve families. Dr. Burke Harris has already stated she plans to work to ensure better health outcomes through the early childhood budget.<sup>42</sup> Her leadership could be beneficial in the creation of a holistic, aligned approach for serving families.

### ***New ECE Governance Structure***

The creation of a Department of Early Childhood Development in California has great potential to enhance ECE services across the state. As seen in the state examples, there are several different options that California could consider for where the new office should be placed.

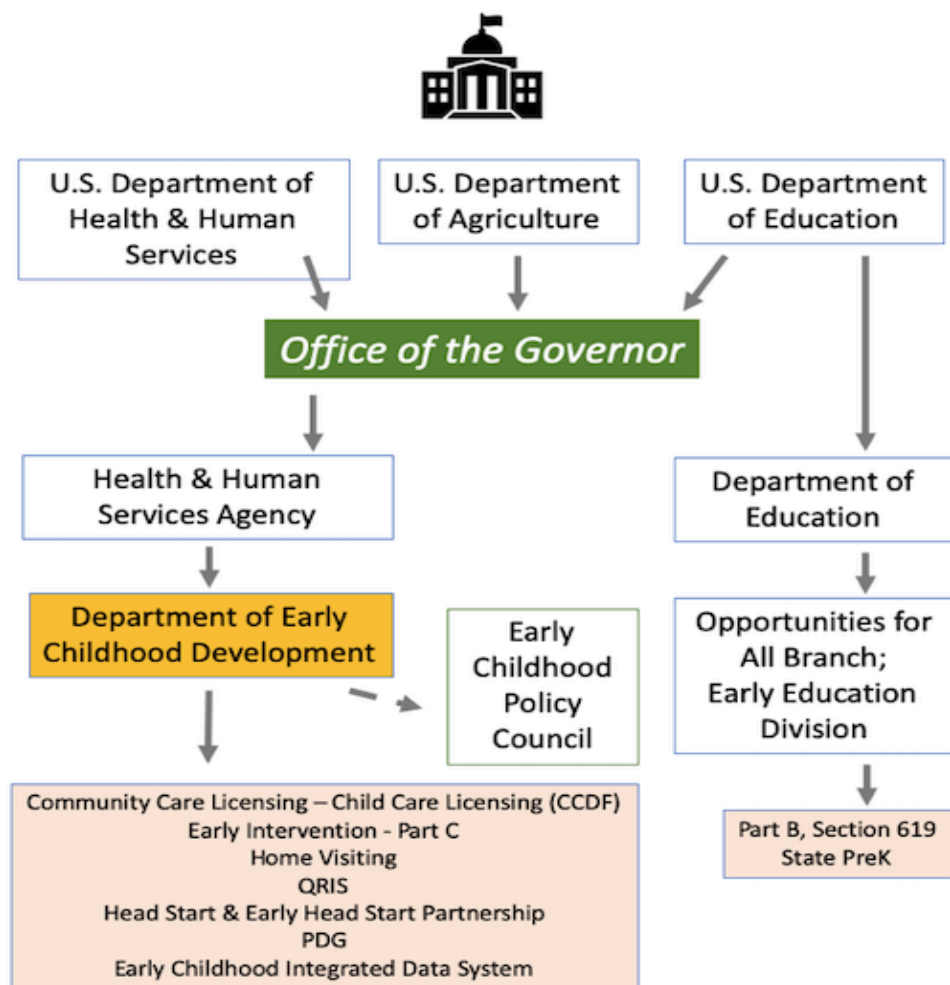
One option would be for the creation of an entirely separate, standalone department reporting to the governor. While less common than some of the other models, a standalone department provides adequate attention to the complexities of ECE and allows for an equal exchange during department-level interactions. However, it would require significant resources and time to create a standalone department which California will likely have trouble securing. A second option would be for a new department to be jointly overseen by CHHS and CDE. This model has the potential to be a great bridge between existing departments and to align different service areas; however, it also would require the most coordination and present challenges of joint decision-making agreement. Additionally, given that CHHS and CDE do not both report directly to the governor, this model is less likely to succeed in California.



The model most likely to succeed would be a new Department of Early Childhood Development within CHHS, as Newsom has proposed in his 2020-21 budget. This model would allow for stronger connections between ECE, public health, and human services and would consolidate the provision of childcare services under CHHS. Newsom’s budget proposal also brings focus to early childhood health and wellness, reducing childhood poverty, and paid family leave, all of which align with serving the whole child and enhance CHHS’s ability to meet the needs of families.<sup>43</sup>

Examples from across the state can also be found where counties and cities have chosen to align ECE services with health and human service functions. San Francisco’s [Office of Early Care and Education \(OECE\)](#) is located under their Human Services Agency, and Los Angeles County’s [Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education](#) was recently moved within the Public Health Department as part of an intentional process to provide a more holistic approach to serving children and families. These examples may help create traction for how this model could be implemented at the state level.

### **EECA Recommended New ECE Governance Structure**



### **Key Factors for Consideration of Governance Changes**

With the complexity involved in making governance changes, other states have placed an emphasis on having staff and resources dedicated to overseeing the



transition. Governor Newsom's budget proposal includes an \$8.5 million General Fund to establish a transition team. Given that some of the services under the proposed new Department currently reside in CDE, moving to this model would require great collaboration between existing structures and make this team critical.

A **transition plan** should be developed to ensure services are not disrupted to children and their families during the governance change and to recommend the best way to migrate services to the new Department over time (e.g. home visiting and early intervention might transition after other core services have been established within the new department).

Significant governance changes to any public sector system are challenging and dependent upon many factors. The evidence of potential benefits that California would see from better aligning its ECE system is strong. The creation of a new Department of Early Childhood Development would likely lead to more integrated data systems, coordination of resources, improved communication, aligned quality standards, aligned platform for professional development, reduced duplication, and improved accountability across the system. By maintaining state pre-k services under CDE, Governor Newsom's proposal supports opportunities for strong pre-k through third-grade alignment within districts but also brings greater need for **inter-departmental collaboration** to ensure alignment across services.

Establishing a new governance model will also require a strong, **comprehensive action plan** to create accountability across all departments serving children and families. State agencies perform many different functions and, while the creation of a department designated for early childhood is valuable, it is not enough to ensure that successful outcomes are reached for families. A plan such as North Carolina's [Early Childhood Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#) should be considered as a tool to create buy-in and accountability across stakeholders in California. This type of plan can prioritize the greatest needs in the state for families and children and coordinate any governance structure to align departments or multiple offices within departments. As seen in Washington, standalone departments still require coordination across multiple departments or divisions. A comprehensive action plan is also an opportunity to develop common indicators that stakeholders can partner around and data systems can be built around. **The State Master Plan conceivably could lay the foundation for a more long-term action plan and should include recommendations that build in cross-departmental accountability.**

Below are some important factors to be considered as this work moves forward:

- Designate a team to provide oversight and accountability of the **transition**.
- Complete a **fiscal review** of existing services to develop a comprehensive budget and resource list of what is needed (including staffing capacity, facilities plan, and IT strategy).
- Create a business advisory committee to bring in **public-private partnerships and support**. These public-private partnerships can be foundational in ensuring a new Department receives adequate support.
- Consider **regional/local implementation needs**. Other states referenced the value of having local support for their governance changes. Given the size of California and the number of functions within existing local ECE structures, a clear communication plan and involvement with local ECE stakeholders will be critical.

- Build an **integrated system that allows for comprehensive data, evaluation, and strategy**. As California evaluates its ECE data systems through the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Workgroup, energy should be put towards these goals. Data platforms that connect data across systems and also keep families and providers at the forefront so that stored information is usable should be prioritized.

Governor Newsom will need to continue gathering support from the legislature and stakeholders for the legislation needed to create the new Department. Policymakers should be specifically informed about the potential gains from aligned governance. The Education Commission of the States compiled a list of questions that policymakers and stakeholders may want to consider for the success and **sustainability of a governance change**.<sup>44</sup>

*Questions Policymakers and Stakeholder Should Consider*

- Will the governance initiative survive through political change?
- What will it take to get the new structure into state statute, so it is sustainable?
- Will the working relationships among policy leaders at the state and local levels function in a way that reinforces student success and policy cohesion?
- Will the governance entity have the fiscal and policy/rule-making authority and administrative oversight to achieve the goals?
- Will the structure be positioned to achieve interim goals, (i.e., increased program coordination, cost savings, engagement with new stakeholders, etc.)?
- Will agency mandates and authority be aligned to provide an environment for effective intergovernmental cooperation?
- Will the structures that are put in place have the supports and tools necessary to monitor program quality and share data across relevant agencies?

## CONCLUSION

California has made great strides to build a quality ECE system but there is evidence to support further alignment of ECE governance structures within the state. Efforts across the United States provide examples of how aligned ECE governance structures can be built. The recommendations in this report support Governor Newsom's proposal to create a new Department of Early Childhood Development under CHHS. The Newsom Administration will need backing and evidence to gain buy-in for the required changes and legislation. The recently appointed Early Childhood Policy Council and State Master Plan provide great potential for in-depth consideration and support for ECE governance alignment in California. While the Master Plan does not have a specific focus on governance structures, successful implementation of the Plan's recommendations will be enhanced with an aligned governance system. Beyond all of these efforts, it should be a top priority for the state to define key indicators (e.g. healthy babies, access to preventative health services, safe and secure housing, access to high-quality early learning, on track for school success, etc.) for serving children and families with a focus on coordination and accountability across state agencies to achieve successful outcomes.

## APPENDIX

- A. Flow of Federal Early Childhood Funds: California. (2018). Bipartisan Policy Center
- B. Many Agencies Control California's ECE Programs. (2017). Learning Policy Institute

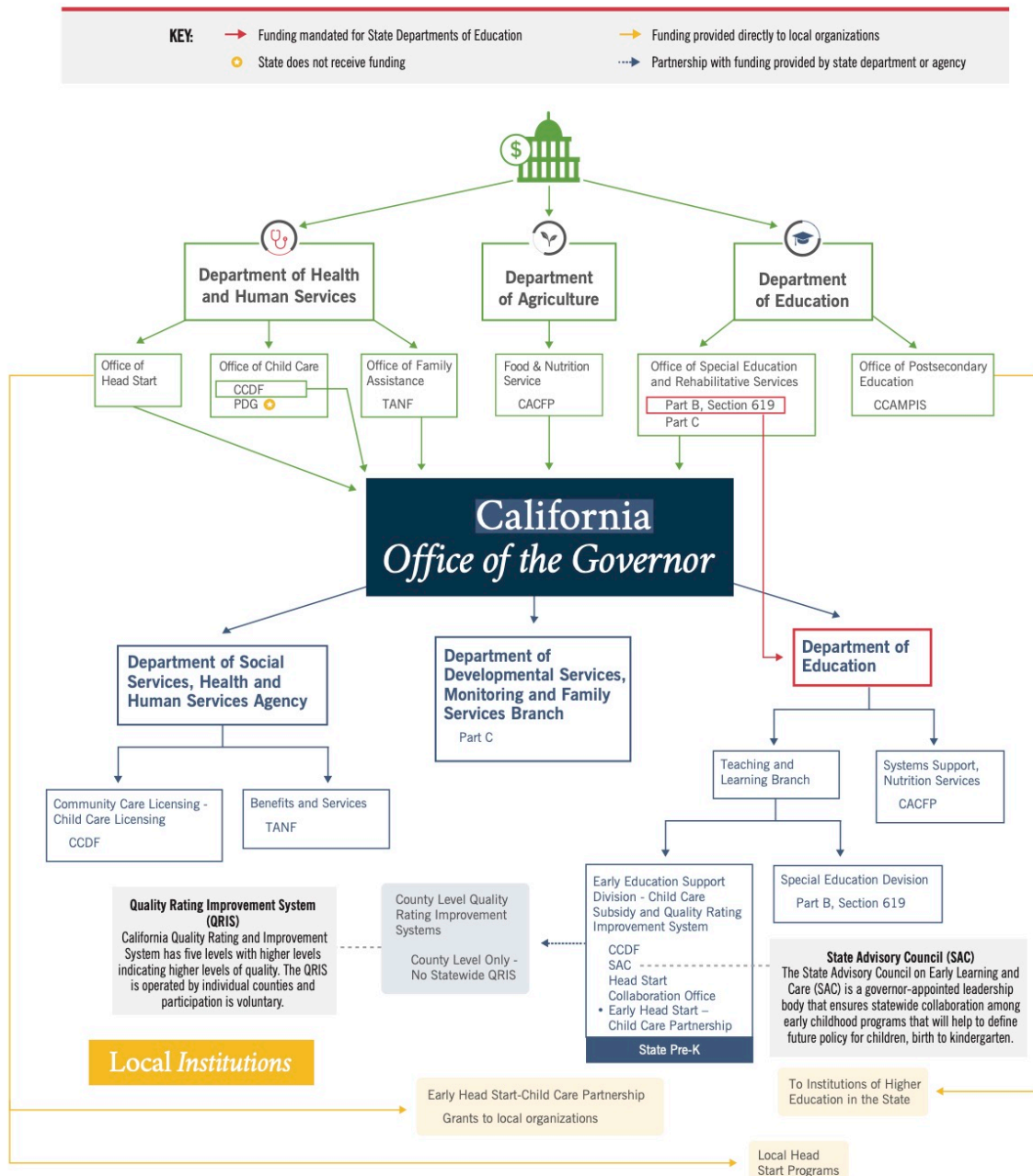
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## APPENDIX A

# Flow of Federal Early Childhood Funds: California

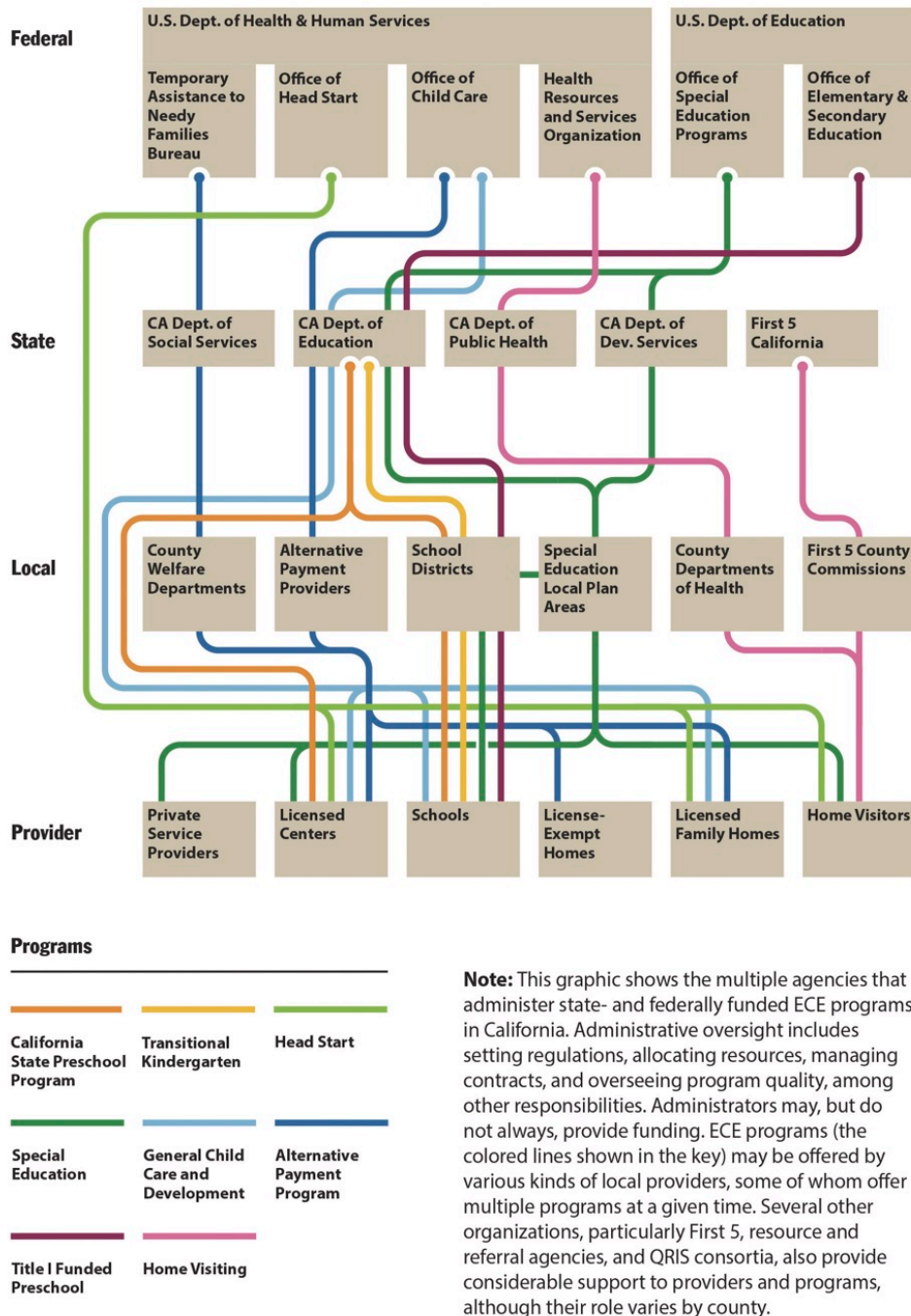


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## APPENDIX B

### Many Agencies Control California's ECE Programs



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