

CALECSE

California Early Childhood Special Education Network



Funded by the California Department of Education (CDE), Special Education Division

Creating Inclusive Learning Opportunities Through Local Educational Agency (LEA) Special Education and California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Partnerships

November 19, 2026

About CalECSE

Funded by the CDE

Supporting Educators. Strengthening Partnerships. Improving Outcomes.

Explore. Learn. Connect.
Visit the CalECSE Network website for no-cost trainings, communities of practice, practical tools, and resources.

California Early Childhood Special Education Network (CalECSE)

A CDE-funded technical assistance project supporting local educational agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs), county offices of education (COEs), and agency partners through:

- Professional learning
- Technical assistance
- Evidence-based resources
- Cross-agency collaboration

Mission

Strengthen early childhood systems to improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families.

Leadership Team



Scott Turner
Co-Executive Director



Melanie Hertig
Co-Executive Director



Carrie Rodrigues
Program Specialist, Exemplar Leads



Sara Castille
Program Specialist, Northern California



Laura Clarke
Program Specialist, Southern California



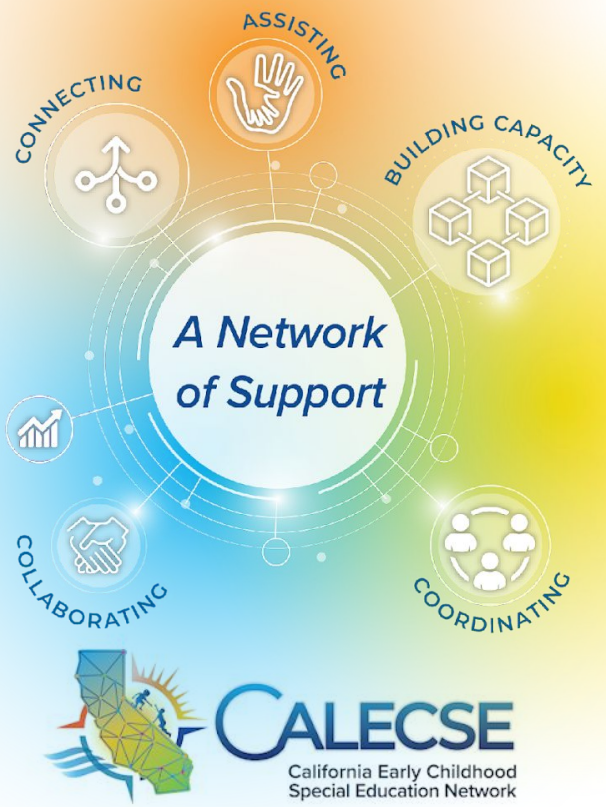
André Eng
Program Specialist, Birth to Three

Today's Presenters

Daniel Mendoza
CalECSE Geographical Technical Assistance Facilitator, Region 3
dmendoza@placercoe.org

Jordan Hulstrom
CalECSE Geographical Technical Assistance Facilitator, Region 10
jordan@rcselpa.org

Lucia W. Garay
Consultant
CalECSE Exemplar Lead, Interagency Collaboration
lucia.w.garay@gmail.com



Today's Agenda

- Understand California State Preschool Program eligibility and enrollment requirements and opportunities for collaboration with special education.
- Explore rightful presence and least restrictive environment requirements.
- Review inclusive preschool service delivery models, roles, and responsibilities.
- Examine funding considerations and resources for inclusive preschool programs.
- Identify common licensing challenges and strategies for addressing them.

California State Preschool Program Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements for Inclusive Preschool Placements

California State Preschool Program Overview

- State-funded preschool for two, three, and four-year-olds
  - The California State Preschool Program (CSPP) provides state-funded early learning opportunities for eligible children. Age eligibility, enrollment priorities, and available program schedules are determined by current state requirements.
  - Child must be three or four years old by December 1 of the enrollment year.
  - Two-year-old enrollment: Through June 30, 2027, California State Preschool Program (CSPP) contractors may, but are not required to, enroll eligible two-year-old children. Beginning July 1, 2027, new enrollment of two-year-olds will no longer be permitted; children enrolled before that date may continue receiving services.
  - Enrollment ends when child ages out or enters kindergarten unless the child is enrolled in transitional kindergarten (TK) and CSPP is accessed in addition to TK to extend the child's hours of early learning and care
  - Offers part-day and full-day options.
- Aligned with California Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLFs).



Source: California Department of Education (CDE). (2026). Eligibility and Priority Frequently Asked Questions, CDE. (2025). Management Bulletin 25-03: Serving Two-Year-Old Children in CSPP

Income- and Needs-Based Eligibility

State Fiscal Year 2026–27 Schedule of Income Ceilings

Family Size	Family Yearly Income Ceiling (100% of SMI)	Family Monthly Income Ceiling (100% of SMI)	Maximum Monthly Income for 15% above Income Eligibility Threshold
1-2	$100,510	$8,376	$9,632
3	$113,708	$9,476	$10,897
4	$136,044	$11,337	$13,038
5	$157,811	$13,151	$15,124
6	$179,578	$14,965	$17,210
7	$183,659	$15,305	$17,601
8	$187,741	$15,645	$17,992
9	$191,822	$15,985	$18,383
10	$195,903	$16,665	$18,774
11	$199,985	$16,325	$19,165
12+	$204,066	$17,006	$19,556

Source: CDE. (2026) . Management Bulletin 26-03: Early Education Contractor Information

- Eligibility may be established through income-based or other qualifying categories under current CSPP requirements.
- Full-day enrollment generally requires an applicable eligibility basis and a qualifying need for services, subject to statutory exceptions.
- Certification and continued eligibility depend on the applicable program requirements.

California State Preschool Program Enrollment Priorities

- CSPP contractors must follow the enrollment priorities established in current state law and CDE guidance.
- Enrollment priorities include children receiving protective services or at risk of abuse or neglect, children with disabilities, family income, children of LEA employees, children residing in free and reduced school lunch zones, and other qualifying enrollment categories.
- Contractors must also meet applicable requirements for reserving enrollment opportunities for children with exceptional needs.

Sources: CDE. (2026). Eligibility and Priority Frequently Asked Questions.
California Legislature. (2026). Senate Bill 150

Required Enrollment Documentation

Documentation varies by eligibility category and program requirements.

- **Child's age and family size:** Birth records, school or medical records, or other acceptable documentation.
- **Family income:** Income verification, such as pay stubs or other qualifying records, when required. Self-certification is permitted for children qualifying under the exceptional-needs eligibility category.
- **Need for full-day services:** Documentation of employment, education or training, homelessness, child protective services, or other qualifying circumstances, when applicable.

Sources: California Code of Regulations (CCRs), Title 5, Section 17758: Contents of Family Data File.
CCRs, Title 5, Article 3: Documentation Requirements.
CDE. (2026). Exceptional Needs Set Aside Frequently Asked Questions.
CDE. Serving Children With Disabilities Frequently Asked Questions.
California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Child Care Center Records Requirements

Required Enrollment Documentation (Continued)

Documentation varies by eligibility category and program requirements.

- **Child health and emergency records:** Required documentation under applicable child care licensing regulations, including a physician's report when required.
- **Exceptional-needs documentation:** Evidence of an active Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) for children enrolled under applicable exceptional-needs provisions.

Note: Staff health screening and tuberculosis clearance requirements are separate from child enrollment documentation.

Sources: California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 17758: Contents of Family Data File.
California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Article 3: Documentation Requirements.
California Department of Education. (2026). Exceptional Needs Set Aside Frequently Asked Questions.
CDE. Serving Children With Disabilities Frequently Asked Questions.
California Department of Social Services. Child Care Center Records Requirements

Program Enrollment and Certification Timelines

- **Advance enrollment:** Part-day CSPP contractors may enroll children up to 120 days before the beginning of the preschool program year.
- **Part-day certification:** Eligibility continues for the remainder of the current program year and the following program year, provided the child remains age-eligible.
- **Full-day certification:** Families are generally certified for 24 months. Eligibility may extend through the end of the program year if the child remains age-eligible.
- **Recertification:** Families who remain eligible for additional program years are recertified according to the applicable part-day or full-day requirements. Changes in family circumstances do not automatically trigger recertification.

Sources: CDE. (2022). Initial Interim Guidance on 2022–23 Budget Changes: California State Preschool Program Eligibility and Certification.
CDE. (2023). Management Bulletin 23-05: California State Preschool Program Enrollment Periods

Children with Exceptional Needs



Source: CDE. (2025). Management Bulletin 25-10: Support to California State Preschool Program Contractors on the Set Aside and Serving Children with Disabilities

- Children with exceptional needs may qualify under applicable CSPP provisions when they have a current Individualized IFSP or IEP, as appropriate.
- CSPP has a statutory requirement to set aside five percent of their enrollment for children with exceptional needs
- CSPP must have copies of current IFSPs and IEPs in children's files for children enrolled under this provision
- In November 2025, the CDE released Management Bulletin 25-10: Support to California State Preschool Program Contractors on the Set Aside and Serving Children with Disabilities.
- *Education Code* sections 8208(c)(1) and (d)(2)(A) direct the CDE to establish a waiver process for CSPP contractors unable to meet the five-percent enrollment set-aside requirement for children with disabilities.
    - The waiver process will allow contractors to document circumstances that may justify an exemption from conditional contract status.
    - The first waiver application will be available in fall 2027 for fiscal year 2026–27.
- For additional guidance, see EveryChild California's New CSPP Waiver Process Explained: What Programs Need to Know for 2026–27.

Documenting Efforts to Serve Children with Exceptional Needs

- Document outreach and recruitment efforts to families of children with disabilities.
- Collaborate with LEAs and special education partners.
- Identify barriers affecting enrollment and participation.
- Maintain required documentation and complete applicable CDE reporting.

Source: CDE, Early Education Division. (2026, March 30). Documentation of strategies to meet the enrollment set-aside for serving children with disabilities requirements [Email to California State Preschool Program contractors distributed through the CDE Early Education Division listserv]

Rightful Presence and Least Restrictive Environment

Rightful Presence

Rightful Presence and Inclusive Early Education

> "Rightful presence refers to the intentional effort to ensure children with disabilities are fully included, valued, and supported in the educational settings they would attend if they did not have a disability. It emphasizes belonging, equitable access to resources, and active participation in learning and social opportunities alongside peers without disabilities."

Source: CDE. (2024, December 4). Rightful Presence and Inclusive Early Education Programs as the First Consideration for Children with Disabilities [Official letter].

Core Principles

- **First Consideration:** Inclusive programs must be considered first for placement decisions
- **Belonging:** Children are valued members of their learning community
- **Access:** Equitable access to high-quality early education programs and resources
- **Participation:** Active engagement in learning and social opportunities alongside peers

Least Restrictive Environment

- Children with disabilities must be educated with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Removal from the general education environment is permitted only when education in that setting cannot be achieved satisfactorily with supplementary aids and services.
- Placement decisions must consider each child's individualized needs and the supports necessary for meaningful participation.

Source: Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 300.114: Least Restrictive Environment Requirements

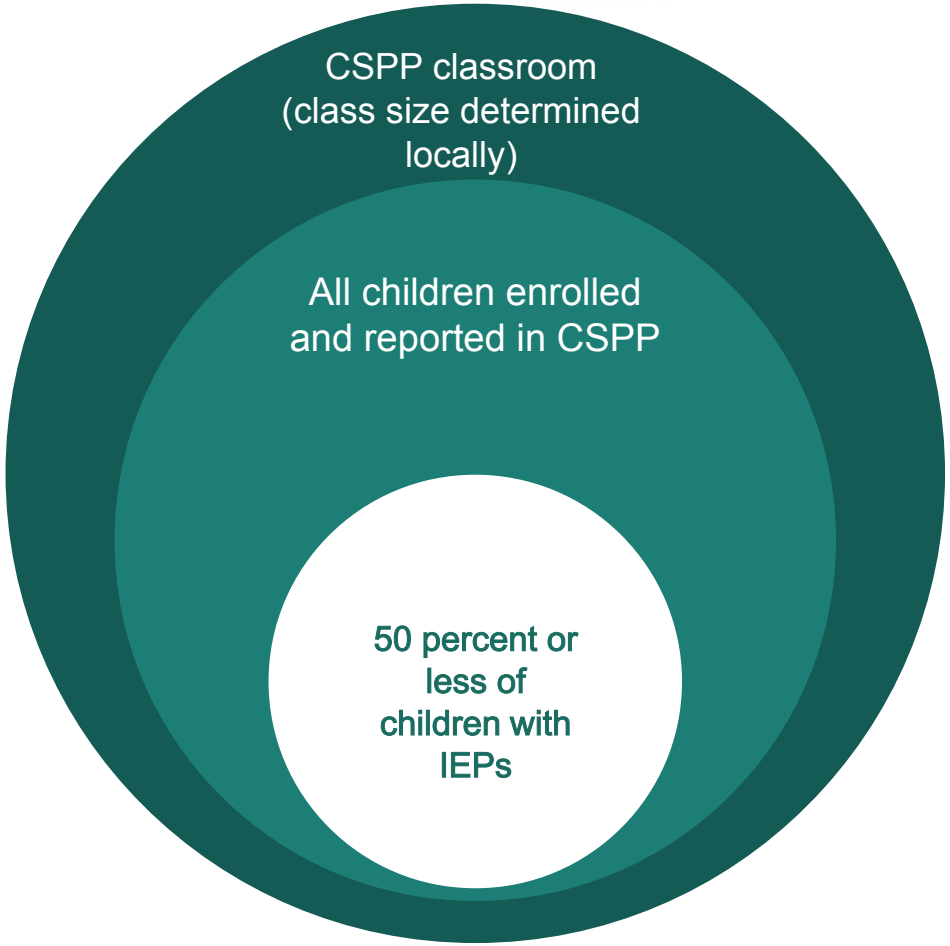
Aligning Inclusive Placements, Special Education, and Licensing

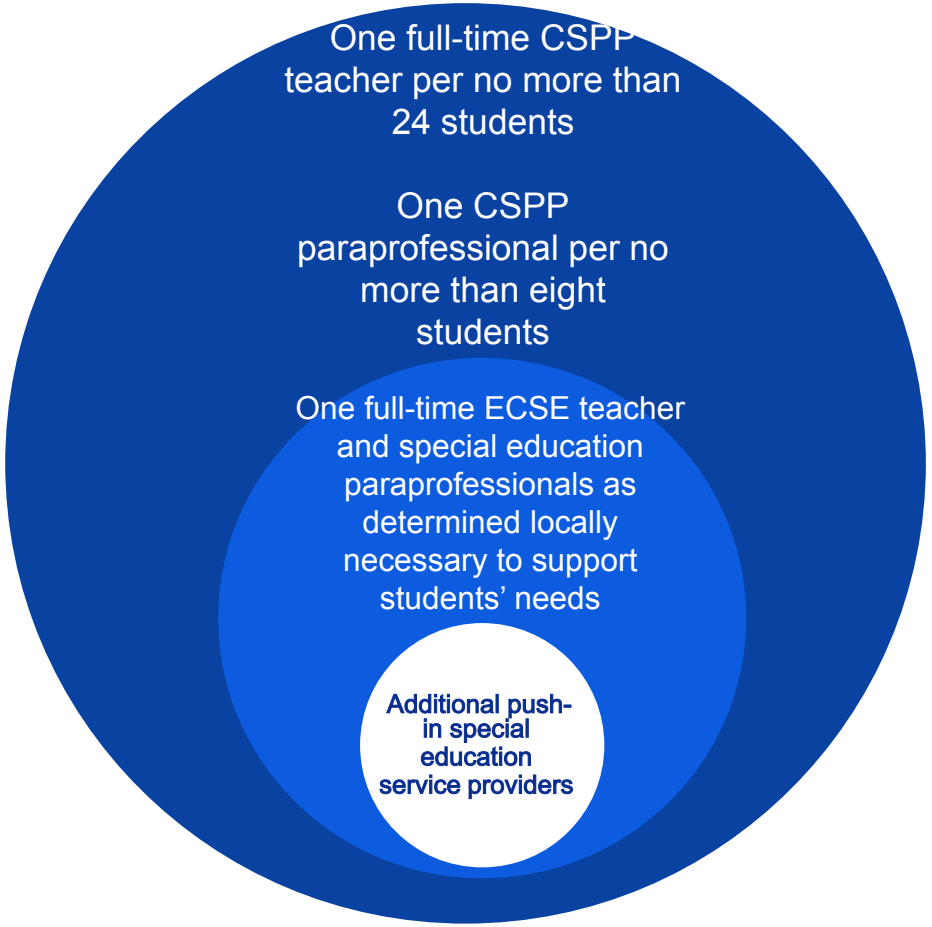
- **Supervision:** Licensed CSPP classrooms must maintain teacher supervision, including visual observation of children from a licensed CSPP teacher, in accordance with Title 22 licensing requirements. Special education services must be coordinated to maintain required supervision by a licensed CSPP teacher.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** When a child's IEP team determines that services should be provided in a general education preschool setting, providing those services within the CSPP classroom supports inclusion alongside peers without disabilities.
- **Enrollment and reporting:** Children enrolled in CSPP who have active IEPs and receive appropriate special education may count toward the CSPP enrollment set-aside requirement. State Performance Plan Indicator 6 reporting separately reflects the child's actual educational environment, including participation in a regular early childhood program and the location of special education services.

Sources: CDSSs. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 101229: Responsibility for Providing Care and Supervision.
CDE. (2025). Management Bulletin 25-10: Support to California State Preschool Program Contractors on the Set Aside and Serving Children with Disabilities.
CDE. Serving Children with Disabilities Frequently Asked Questions.
CDE. State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report: Indicator 6, Preschool Least Restrictive Environment.

Local Educational Agency-Based California State Preschool Program Inclusion Models, Roles, and Responsibilities

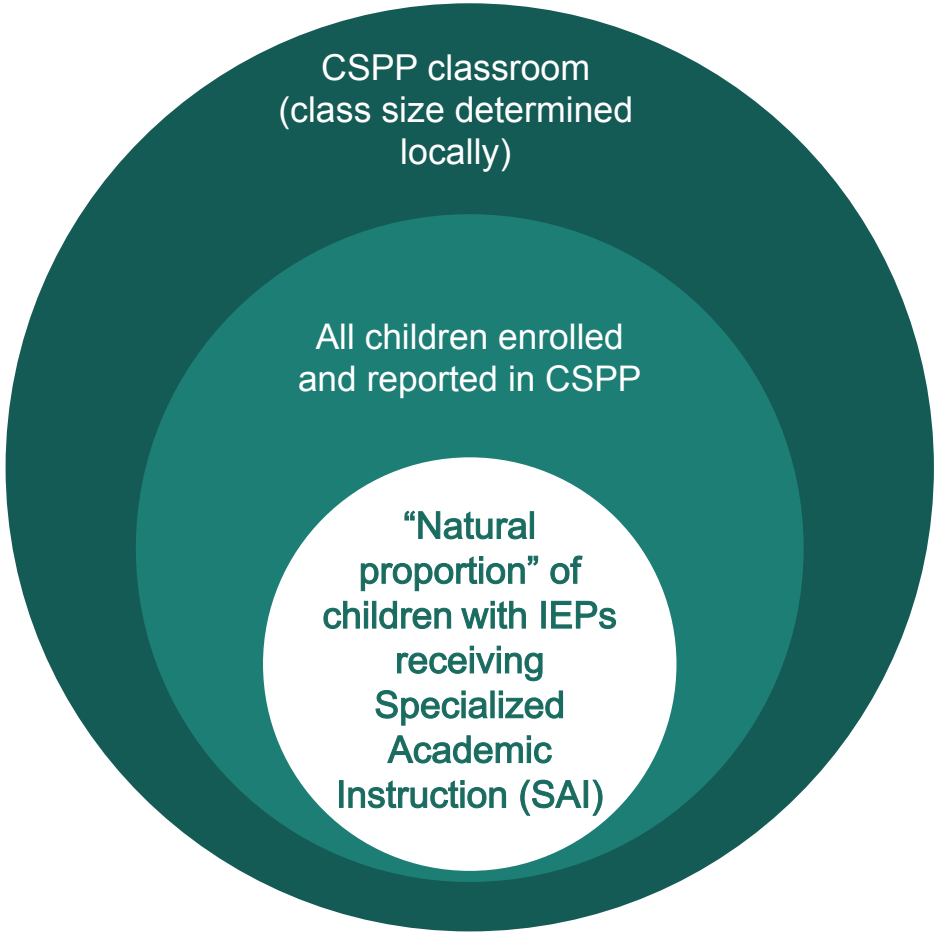
Co-Teaching Model

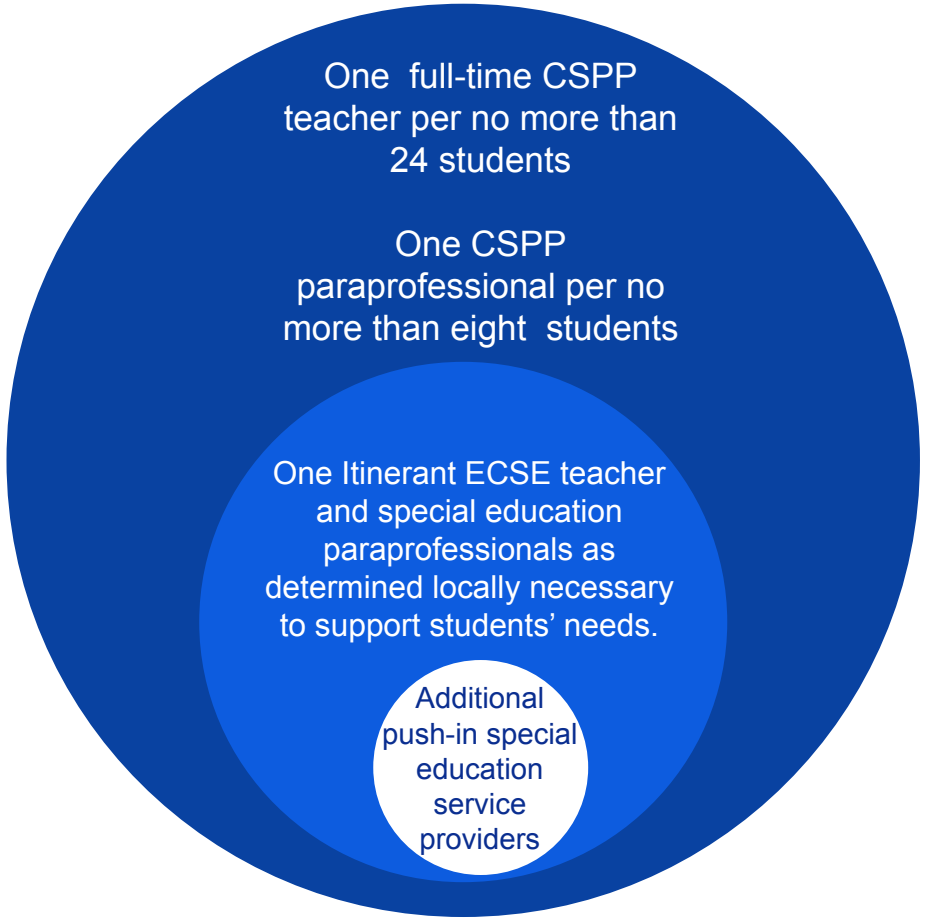




- CSPP and early childhood special education teachers collaboratively plan and deliver instruction.
- All enrolled children participate in the inclusive classroom community.
- Staff coordinate responsibilities for CSPP requirements and IEP implementation.
- Staffing, funding, and licensing arrangements must be determined locally and comply with applicable requirements.

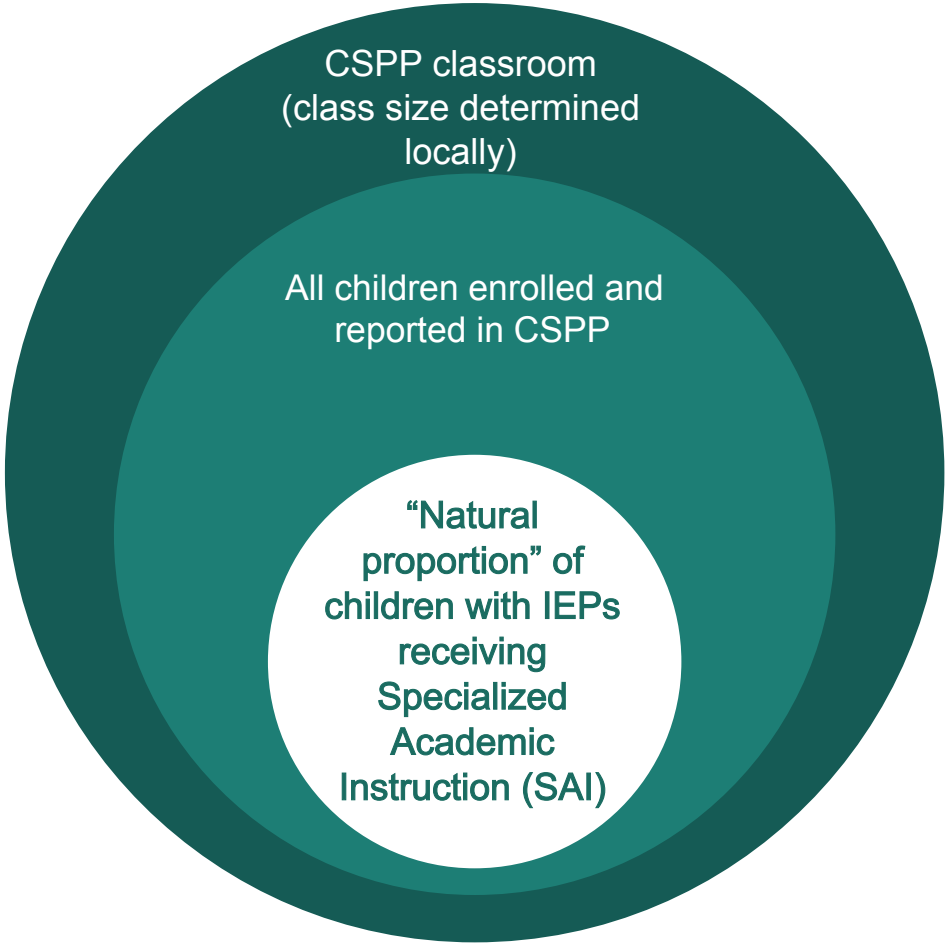
Itinerant ECSE Teaching and Consultation Model

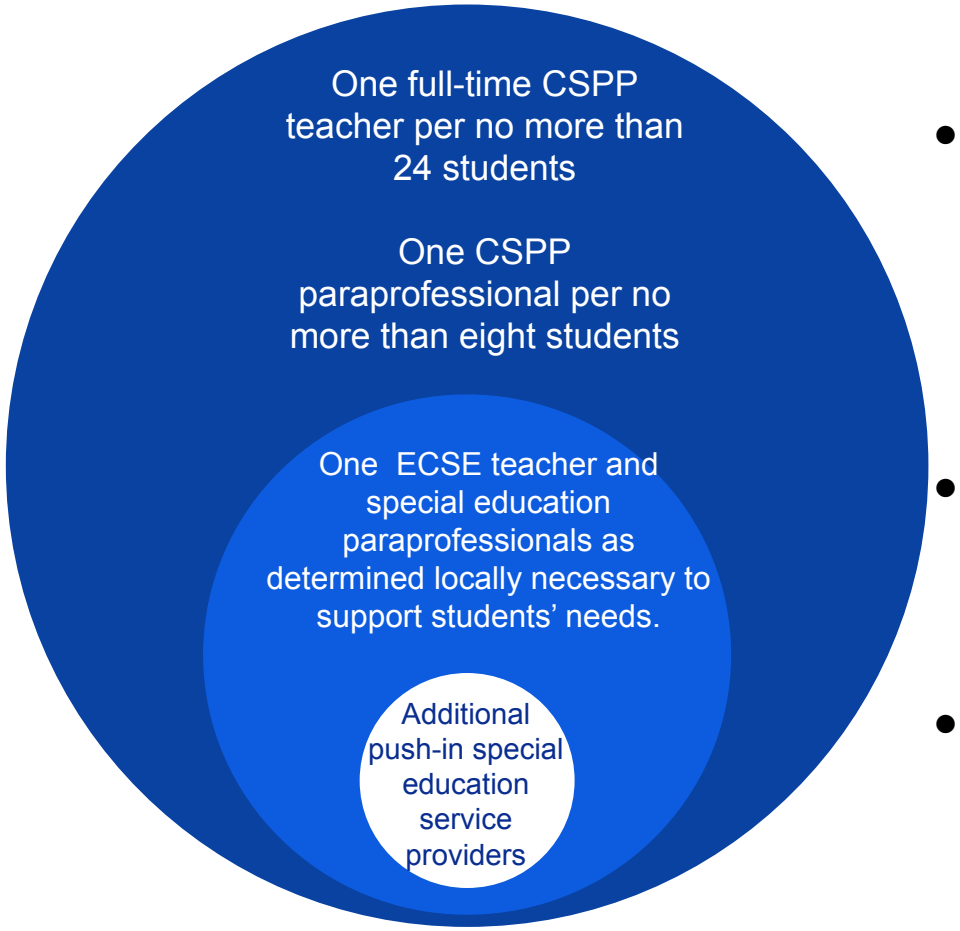




- The CSPP teaching team provides daily classroom instruction.
- An itinerant early childhood special education teacher collaborates with staff to support IEP implementation.
- Specialized instruction and related services are delivered according to each child's IEP.
- Teams coordinate schedules, responsibilities, and progress monitoring to support participation in classroom routines.

Push-In Services in California State Preschool Program Classrooms





- The CSPP teaching team provides daily instruction for enrolled children.
- Early childhood special education staff deliver individualized instruction and services within classroom activities, as appropriate.
- Staff collaborate to implement IEP goals, accommodations, and supports.
- Staffing assignments and schedules are determined by student needs, IEP requirements, and local program resources.

Preschool Inclusion in Practice

Observe how educators support participation, peer interactions, and belonging within everyday classroom activities in this Video from Placer County Office of Education.

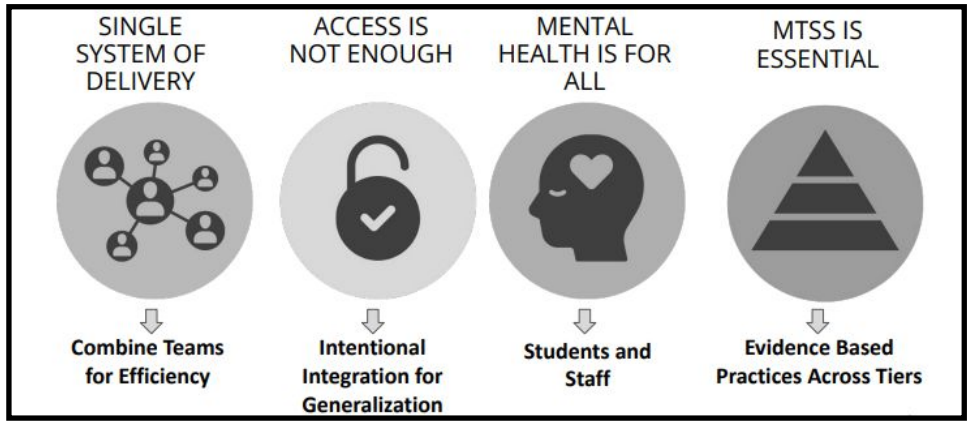


Interconnected Systems Framework

The Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) integrates social-emotional-behavioral supports within a multi-tiered system of supports.

It emphasizes:

- Integrated teams and collaborative decision-making
- Data-informed identification of needs
- Coordinated, evidence-based practices
- Alignment with existing systems, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the Pyramid Model





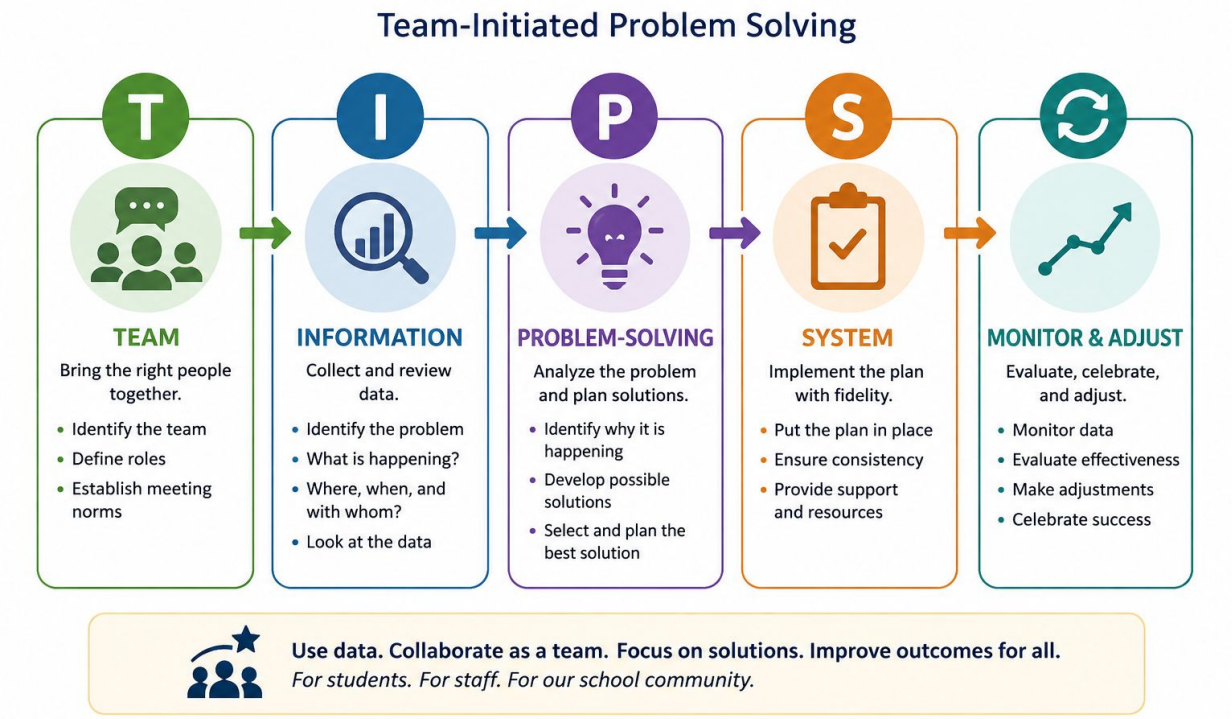
CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Data-Driven Process to Support Inclusive Practices

At Placer County Office of Education (PCOE), we use a structured, data-driven problem-solving process to identify system-level concerns, examine contributing factors, implement coordinated strategies, and evaluate measurable outcomes.

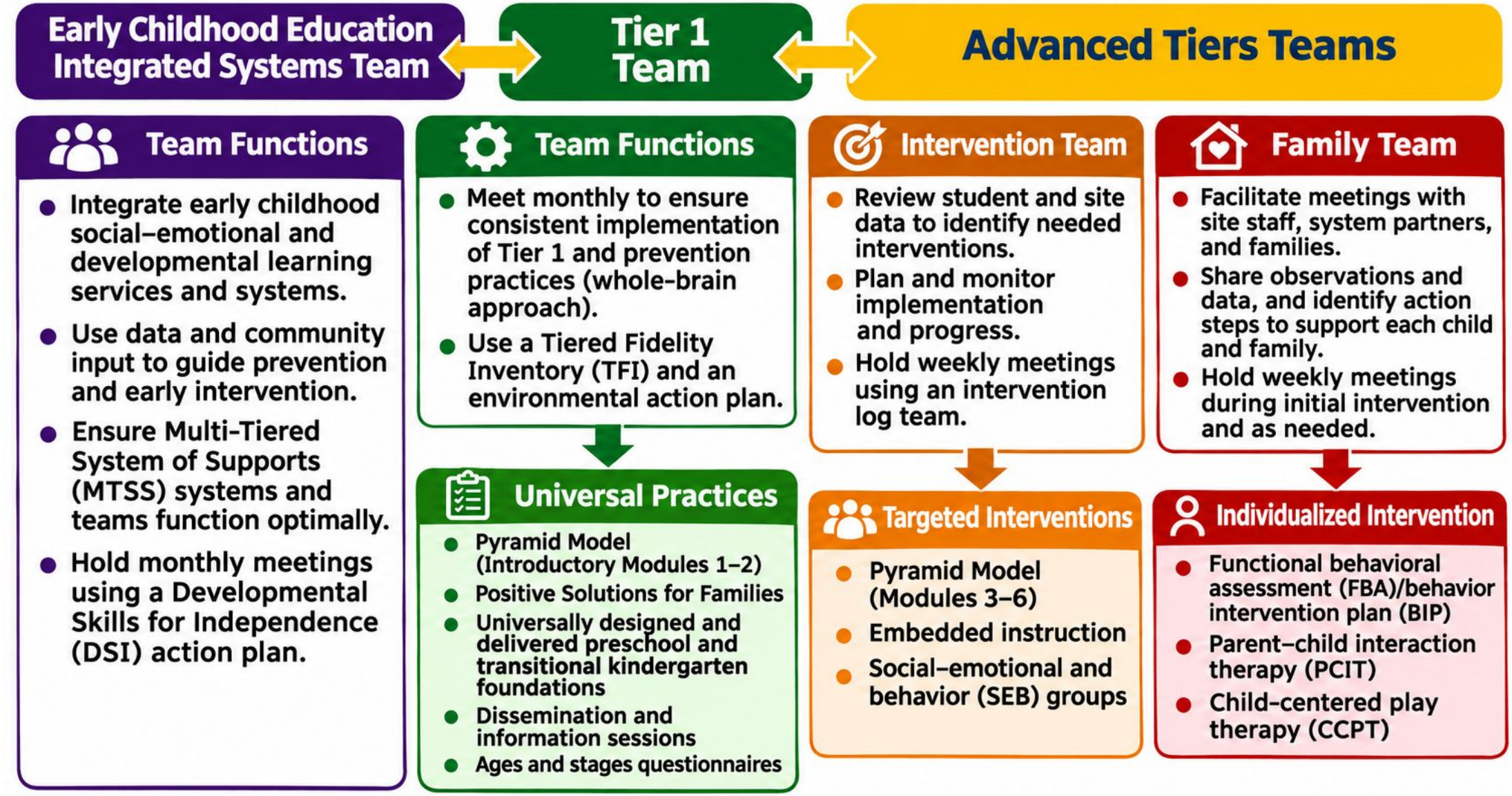
The four-step problem-solving cycle organizes the Early Childhood Education Team Information Problem-Solving System (ECE TIPS), into four recurring questions. Each step builds on the previous one, and step four creates a feedback loop back to earlier steps when data show adjustments are needed.

1. **Problem Identification:** What is the concern?
2. **Problem Analysis:** Why is it happening?
3. **Plan Implementation:** What will we do?
4. **Plan Evaluation:** Is the plan working?



CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

How Placer County Office of Education Supports Inclusion



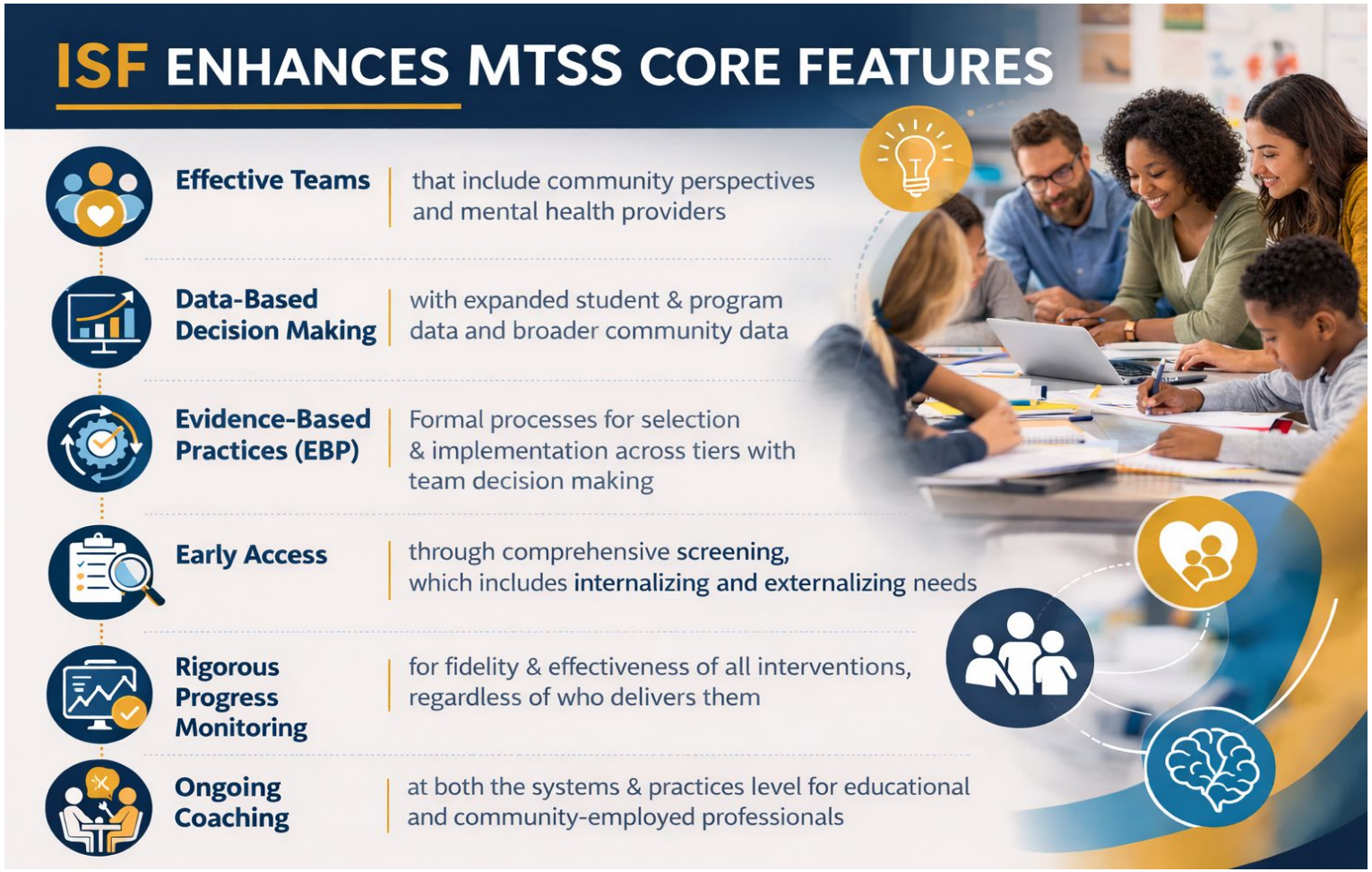
Preschool Inclusion

"Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much."

—Helen Keller

Resources for Inclusive Preschool Practices

Interconnected Systems Framework and Multi-Tiered System of Supports

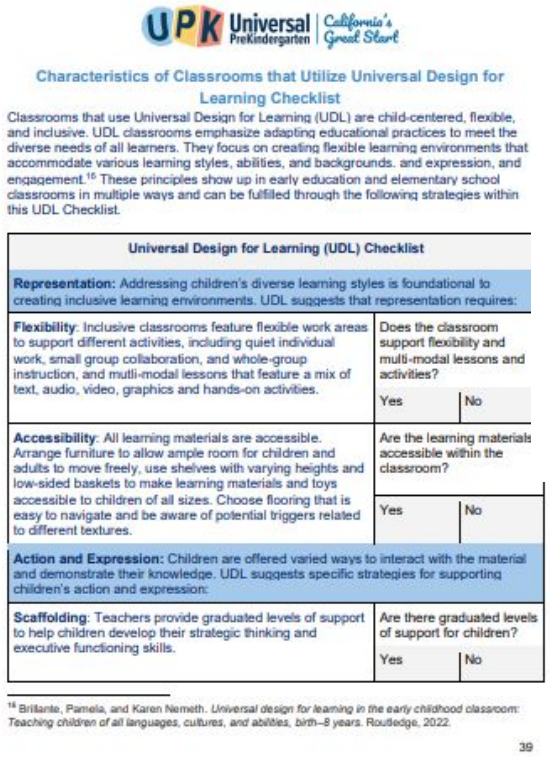


The Interconnected Systems Framework strengthens multi-tiered supports through effective teams, data-based decision-making, evidence-based practices, early access, progress monitoring, and ongoing coaching.

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Supporting Inclusive Preschool Practices for All Children Toolkit

The CDE recently released the [Supporting Inclusive Preschool Practices for All Children Toolkit](), which provides resources to support inclusive practices in preschool settings.



UPK Universal PreKindergarten | California's Great Start

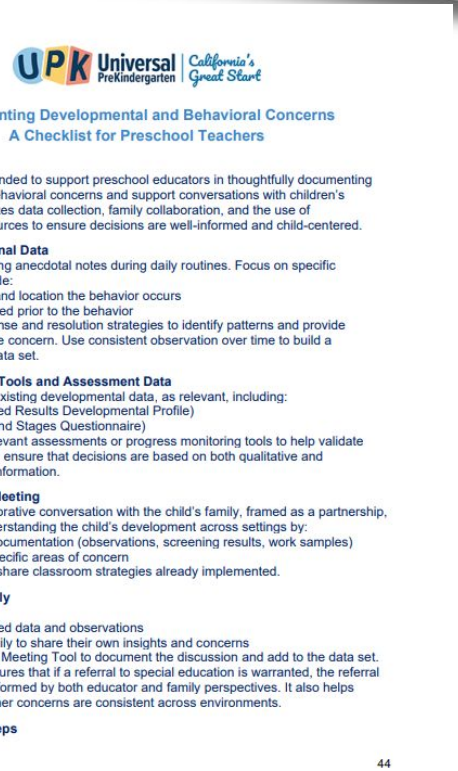
Characteristics of Classrooms that Utilize Universal Design for Learning Checklist

Classrooms that use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are child-centered, flexible, and inclusive. UDL classrooms emphasize adapting educational practices to meet the diverse needs of all learners. They focus on creating flexible learning environments that accommodate various learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. and expression, and engagement.[16] These principles show up in early education and elementary school classrooms in multiple ways and can be fulfilled through the following strategies within this UDL Checklist.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Checklist		
Representation: Addressing children's diverse learning styles is foundational to creating inclusive learning environments. UDL suggests that representation requires:		
Flexibility: Inclusive classrooms feature flexible work areas to support different activities, including quiet individual work, small group collaboration, and whole-group instruction, and mutli-modal lessons that feature a mix of text, audio, video, graphics and hands-on activities.	Does the classroom support flexibility and multi-modal lessons and activities?	
	Yes	No
Accessibility: All learning materials are accessible. Arrange furniture to allow ample room for children and adults to move freely, use shelves with varying heights and low-sided baskets to make learning materials and toys accessible to children of all sizes. Choose flooring that is easy to navigate and be aware of potential triggers related to different textures.	Are the learning materials accessible within the classroom?	
	Yes	No
Action and Expression: Children are offered varied ways to interact with the material and demonstrate their knowledge. UDL suggests specific strategies for supporting children's action and expression:		
Scaffolding: Teachers provide graduated levels of support to help children develop their strategic thinking and executive functioning skills.	Are there graduated levels of support for children?	
	Yes	No

[16] Brillante, Pamela, and Karen Nemeth. *Universal design for learning in the early childhood classroom: Teaching children of all languages, cultures, and abilities, birth–8 years.* Routledge, 2022.

39



UPK Universal PreKindergarten | California's Great Start

Documenting Developmental and Behavioral Concerns
A Checklist for Preschool Teachers

This checklist is intended to support preschool educators in thoughtfully documenting developmental or behavioral concerns and support conversations with children's families. It emphasizes data collection, family collaboration, and the use of developmental resources to ensure decisions are well-informed and child-centered.

Collect Observational Data
Begin by documenting anecdotal notes during daily routines. Focus on specific behaviors and include:
- ❑ Time of day and location the behavior occurs
- ❑ What happened prior to the behavior
- ❑ Child's response and resolution strategies to identify patterns and provide context for the concern. Use consistent observation over time to build a meaningful data set.

Review Screening Tools and Assessment Data
Gather and review existing developmental data, as relevant, including:
- ❑ DRDP (Desired Results Developmental Profile)
- ❑ ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire)
- ❑ Any other relevant assessments or progress monitoring tools to help validate concerns and ensure that decisions are based on both qualitative and quantitative information.

Plan for a Family Meeting
Prepare for a collaborative conversation with the child's family, framed as a partnership, with the goal of understanding the child's development across settings by:
- ❑ Organizing documentation (observations, screening results, work samples)
- ❑ Identifying specific areas of concern
- ❑ Preparing to share classroom strategies already implemented.

Meet with the Family
Hold a meeting to:
- ❑ Share collected data and observations
- ❑ Invite the family to share their own insights and concerns
- ❑ Use a Family Meeting Tool to document the discussion and add to the data set. This step ensures that if a referral to special education is warranted, the referral decision is informed by both educator and family perspectives. It also helps identify whether concerns are consistent across environments.

Determine Next Steps

44

Resources to Support Inclusive Early Education

- The CDE's Early Education Inclusive Resources webpage provides resources to support inclusive early learning environments for children with disabilities.
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA): The Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion resource identifies key indicators and practices that support high-quality inclusive early childhood programs.
- The CDE's Inclusion Works! Creating Child Care Programs That Promote Belonging for Children with Disabilities (Second Edition) provides guidance and practical strategies for creating inclusive child care and early education environments that support the participation and belonging of all children, including children with disabilities.
- The Developmentally Appropriate Toileting Practices Toolkit from the CDE provides resources to support developmentally appropriate toileting practices in early childhood settings. Access requires creating a free account through California Educators Together.

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Additional Resources to Support Inclusive Early Education

- Supporting Inclusive Practices promotes inclusive learning environments where students develop as purposeful and reflective, resourceful and authentic, and strategic and action-oriented learners within communities that foster belonging and connection.
- The CalBloom framework supports job-embedded professional learning through approaches such as Practice-Based Coaching (PBC). The framework emphasizes intentional learning plans aligned with children's Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessments and IEP goals to support learning and development.
- Access to Inclusive Prekindergarten Transportation Services: The School Services of California article, Access to Inclusive Prekindergarten Transportation Services Options, discusses transportation considerations for inclusive prekindergarten programs. Although California does not require school districts to provide transportation to all students, federal law requires transportation in certain circumstances for students with disabilities and students experiencing homelessness. Some programs, including Head Start, also have transportation-related responsibilities, such as helping families arrange transportation and providing transportation safety education.

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Fiscal Implications and Resources for Local Educational Agencies

Understanding California State Preschool Program Funding

State Preschool Funding, Enrollment and Reimbursement

Contract reimbursement (2026–27)

- Beginning July 1, 2026, CSPP reimbursement is based on the lowest of:
  - The contract's maximum reimbursable amount.
  - Net reimbursable program costs.
  - Adjusted child days of enrollment multiplied by the contract rate.

Enrollment and adjustment factors

- Adjusted child days of enrollment reflect reported child days of enrollment with applicable adjustment factors.
- Part-time enrollment is fewer than 30 certified hours per week; full-time enrollment is 30 hours or more.
- Applicable adjustment factors include:
  - Children with exceptional needs or severe disabilities: **full-time 2.40/part-time 1.463**, with an active IFSP or Individualized Education Program IEP.
  - Four-year-old children: **full-time 1.0/part-time 0.6193**
  - Two- and three-year-old children: **full-time 1.80/part-time 1.1147**.
  - Dual language learners: **1.20** for eligible full-day enrollment.
  - Early childhood mental health consultation: **1.10**, when qualifying services are provided.
- Generally, a child's enrollment days cannot be reported under multiple adjustment-factor categories. The mental health consultation adjustment factor may be combined with one other applicable adjustment factor.

Five-percent enrollment set-aside

- Contractors must reserve five percent of funded enrollment for children with disabilities.
- A service-level exemption credit supports reimbursement for eligible expenses when contractors have not fully earned the set-aside amount through enrollment.
- Contractors must continue efforts to recruit and enroll children with disabilities to meet the requirement.

Sources: CDE. (2026). Management Bulletin 26-06: Reimbursement Based on Enrollment Beginning Fiscal Year 2026–27.
CDE. (2025). Management Bulletin 25-10: Support to California State Preschool Program Contractors on the Set Aside and Serving Children with Disabilities.
CDE. Serving Children with Disabilities Frequently Asked Questions.
CDE. Funded Enrollment Resources.
CDE. 2025-2026 Fiscal Handbook

State Preschool Reimbursable Amounts Sample

Sample LEA				
San Diego County Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR)	$ 59.93			
FULL DAY CSPP	Rate	Students	Days	Total
Four-year-olds (adjustment factor to SRR: 1.0)	$ 59.93	12	210	$ 151,024
Two and three-year-olds (adjustment factor to SRR: 1.8)	$ 107.87	12	210	$ 271,842
TOTAL		24		$ 422,866
PART DAY CSPP*	Rate	Students	Days	Total
Four-year-olds (adjustment factor to SRR: 0.6193)	$ 37.11	8	180	$ 53,445
Two and three-year-olds (adjustment factor to SRR: 1.1147)	$ 66.80	16	180	$ 192,395
Sub Total (per AM/PM session)		24		$ 245,841
GRAND TOTAL) 2 sessions)		48		$ 491,681

State Preschool Reimbursable Amounts with Adjustment Factors

Sample Part-Day CSPP Classroom

- Two four-year-olds with IEPs
- Three two- and three-year-olds with IEPs
- Four four-year-olds
- Fifteen two- and three-year-olds

Part-day CSPP Classroom Earning Estimates (SRR $ 59.93)	Four-year-olds with IEP	Two & three-year-olds with IFSP/IEP	Four-year-olds without IEP	Two & three-year-olds without IFSP/IEP	Daily projected earnings per session	Number of program days	Projected income per AM/PM session	TOTAL projected contract earnings AM/APMsessions
Enrollment = 24 per AM/PM session	2	3	4	15				
Adjustment factor	1.463	1.463	0.6193	1.1147				
SRR	$ 59.93	$ 59.93	$ 59.93	$59.93				
TOTAL	$ 175.36	$ 263.03	$ 148.46	$1,002	$ 1,589	180	$ 286,003	$ 572,006
Actual daily rate per student category	$ 87.68	$ 87.68	$ 37.11	$66.80				

The CDE provides a Funded Enrollment Calculator (Excel) to assist CSPP contractors with:

- Determining the number of children they are funded to serve and the number of children required to meet the enrollment set-aside requirements for children with exceptional needs and children with severe disabilities.
- Selecting county-specific reimbursement rates and applicable adjustment factors using drop-down menus.

Understanding Early Childhood Special Education Funding

Special Education Early Intervention Preschool Grant Funding

- California's Special Education Early Intervention Preschool Grant provides ongoing state funding to school districts to support early intervention services for preschool children.
  - Funding allocations are calculated using a per-pupil rate.
  - The number of first-grade students with exceptional needs residing in each school district is used as a proxy for the number of preschool children with exceptional needs.
  - Funding supports early intervention services for preschool children at risk of falling behind academically, including children with disabilities.

Purpose of the funding

“Funding is provided to ensure preschool pupils receive appropriate interventions and services as needed before the pupil falls behind academically. Early intervention services and supports provided to children who are at risk of falling significantly behind, including children with disabilities, can reduce the need for additional services in future years.”

Funding considerations

- Funds are distributed through the Principal Apportionment.
- School districts determine how to implement early intervention services consistent with applicable funding requirements.

Source: CDE. (2026). Special Education Early Intervention Preschool Grant: 2026–27 Funding Profile

Funding Special Education Services for Preschool Children

Determine LEA's per-child expenditures for preschool children whose IEPs' include Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI).

Identify the funding sources supporting these services, including:

- Special Education Early Intervention Preschool Grant
- State and federal special education funding
- LEA general fund contributions

2026–27 Budget Act: Additional Special Education Funding

- The 2026–27 Budget Act provides approximately $2.4 billion in additional ongoing funding for special education, increasing the statewide base funding rate to $1,340 per student.
- LEAs should work with their fiscal teams to determine how additional special education funding affects local expenditures for preschool children with IEPs.

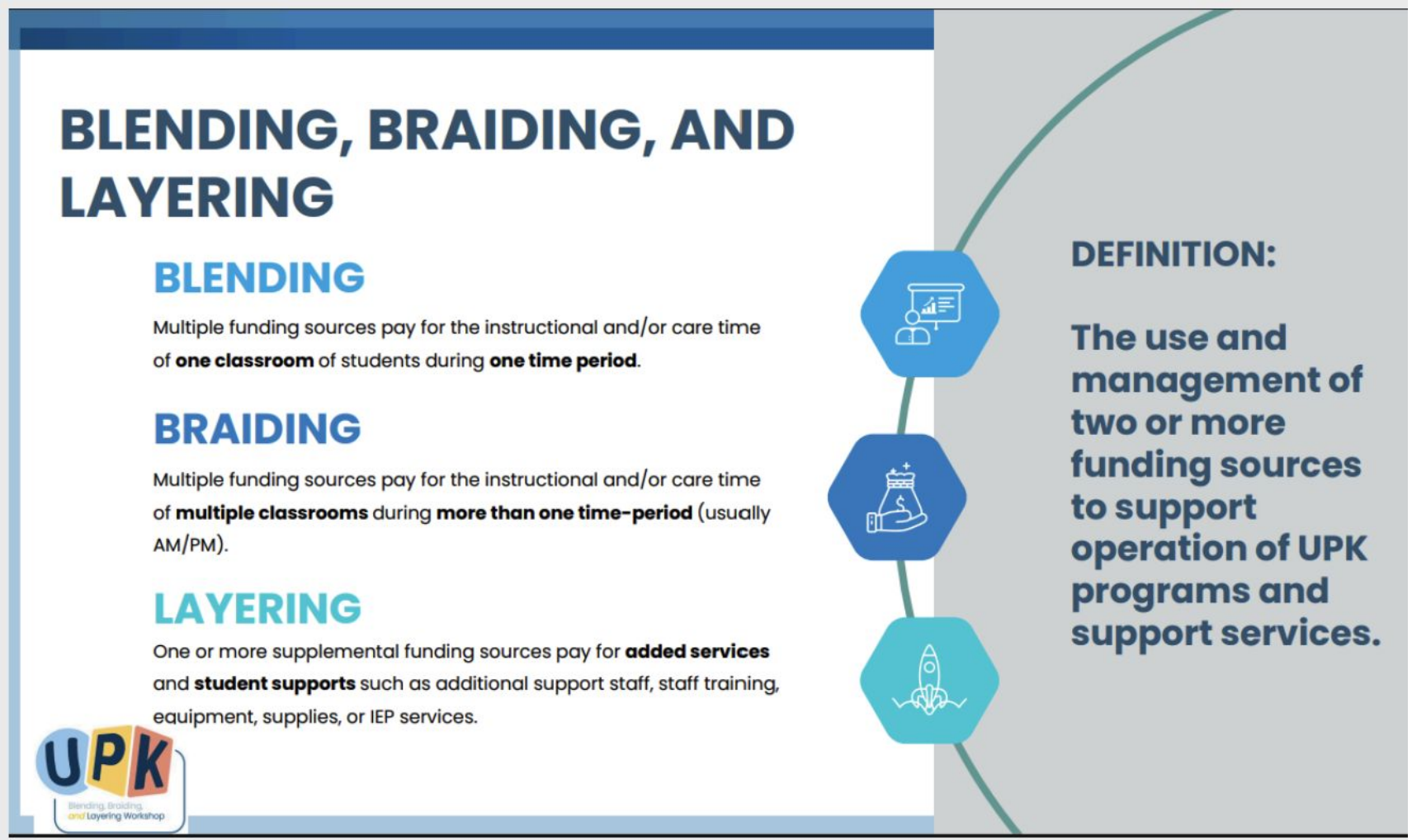
Sources: CDE. (2026). 2026–27 Advance Principal Apportionment.
CDE. (2026). Special Education Early Intervention Preschool Grant: 2026–27 Funding Profile.
Legislative Analyst's Office. (2026). The 2026–27 California Spending Plan: Proposition 98 and K–12 Education.

Funding Special Education Services for Preschool Children, Continued

Questions for LEA Planning

- Will the additional funding reduce the LEA's existing general fund contribution to special education, without increasing total per-child expenditures?
- Will the LEA use the additional funding to increase investments in special education services, including services for preschool children with IEPs?

Defining Blending, Braiding, and Layering Funds



Dickey, 2022

Source: DIAL EE, Cultivate Learning, CDE, and Lancaster School District. (2026, March). Blending, Braiding, and Layering Funds: A Creative Approach to California's Universal Preschool Program

Blending, Braiding, and Layering for Inclusion



CSPP teacher funded through the CSPP contract

Early childhood special education teacher funded through special education



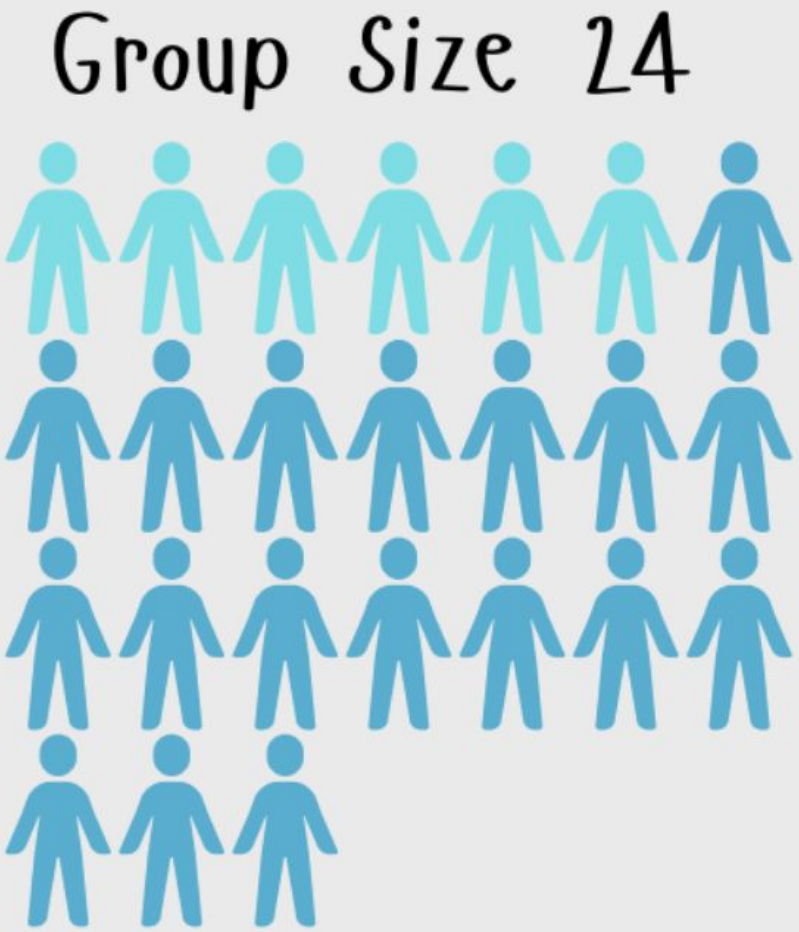
CSPP paraprofessionals funded through the CSPP contract

Additional paraprofessionals funded through special education, as appropriate



Source: DIAL EE, Cultivate Learning, CDE, and Lancaster School District. (2026, March). Blending, Braiding, and Layering Funds: A Creative Approach to California's Universal Preschool Program

Blending, Braiding, and Layering: Sample Calculation



Calculation sample(s) based on 24 children in each session.	Estimated special education revenue based on six students with IFSPs or IEPs	Estimated CSPP enrollment revenue for all (24) students with and without IEPs*	Estimated classroom staff costs, plus itinerant specialist, transportation, and general operational costs*
	ECSE funds +	CSPP funds =	Salaries/benefits and operating costs

*CSPP projected enrollment and contract revenue estimates must include children's ages, full or part day adjustment factor, and IFSP/IEP status, as per the examples previously provided.

Blending, Braiding, and Layering: Key Takeaways

- Bring together local educational agency, CSPP, special education, and fiscal experts.
- Review existing funding sources, expenditures, and program requirements.
- Develop and compare funding scenarios for inclusive preschool classrooms.
- Allocate administrative time to establish sustainable staffing and fiscal structures.
- Ensure that funding decisions align with applicable program requirements and children's individualized needs.

Licensing Considerations and Strategies for Inclusive Preschool Programs

Most Frequently Cited Licensing Related Inclusion Challenges

- Required child enrollment and health documentation
- Staff immunization and background clearance requirements
- Child supervision and staff responsibilities
- Indoor and outdoor space requirements
- Adult-to-child ratios
- Incidental Medical Services (IMS) plans
- Fire clearance and emergency procedures



Licensed providers sometimes report concerns about receiving licensing citations that would jeopardize their preschool's operation and overall business.

Required Child Documentation



In addition to basic child and family information required for CSPP enrollment, Community Care Licensing (CCL) requires licensed child care centers to maintain the following documentation, unless an applicable exemption applies:

- **Immunization records:** Documentation of each child's required immunizations must be provided provided provided prior to enrollment and updated as applicable.
- **Child's medical assessment:** A written medical assessment, completed by or under the supervision of a licensed physician, must be obtained before or within 30 calendar days following enrollment.

Exemption for Children Also Enrolled in Elementary School

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, section 101220(e), states:

"The licensee is not required to document medical assessments on children who are also enrolled in a public or private elementary school."

- A corresponding exemption from documenting immunizations is provided in Title 22, section 101220.1(i).

Sources: CDSS. .*California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 101220: Child's Medical Assessments.
CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 101220.1: Immunizations.

Addressing Documentation Barriers

Medical assessment requirements

- Implement applicable exceptions to the physician's medical assessment requirement under Title 22, section 101220.
- Document the facility's medical assessment policies and applicable exceptions in the licensed CSPP facility's plan of operation and admission policies.

Information sharing

- Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), LEA special education and LEA-operated CSPP staff may share relevant student information without separate written parental consent when they qualify as school officials with legitimate educational interests.

Coordinating staff responsibilities

- When a child with an IEP attends an LEA-operated CSPP and receives all special education services at that site, the LEA must ensure that staff responsible for implementing the IEP understand their assigned responsibilities.
- The LEA should also clearly identify staff responsibilities for CSPP program requirements, including assessments, instructional planning, and family communication.

Sources:**CCRs**, Title 22, Section 101220: Child's Medical Assessments.
CCRs, Title 22, Section 101173: Plan of Operation.
U.S. Department of Education. Disclosure of Education Records to School Officials Under FERPA.
U.S. Department of Education. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Regulations, Section 300.323: When IEPs Must Be in Effect.

Staff Vaccination Requirements in California

In addition to applicable tuberculosis screening requirements, Senate Bill 792 (2015) established immunization requirements for employees and volunteers at licensed child care centers and family child care homes, effective September 1, 2016.

Health and Safety Code section 1596.7995 requires:

- **Immunizations:** Employees and volunteers must be immunized against influenza, pertussis, and measles, unless an applicable exemption is met.
- **Annual influenza vaccination:** Employees and volunteers must receive an influenza vaccination between August 1 and December 1 each year, unless exempt.
- **Allowable exemptions:**
  - A licensed physician provides written documentation that immunization is medically unsafe or that the individual has evidence of current immunity.
  - An employee or volunteer submits a written declaration declining the influenza vaccine. This exemption applies only to influenza.
  - Certain individuals hired or beginning volunteer service between December 2 and July 31 qualify for an exemption from the influenza vaccination requirement during their first year of employment or volunteer service.
- **Documentation:** Licensed child care centers must maintain documentation of required immunizations or applicable exemptions in personnel records.
- **Definition of volunteer:** A volunteer is a nonemployee who provides care and supervision to children in care.

Sources: California Department of Public Health. Immunization Requirements for Child Care Staff.
California Legislature. (2015). Senate Bill 792: Day Care Facilities—Immunizations—Exemptions.
CDSS. Child Care Licensing: Laws and Regulations.

Possible Solutions Related to Staff Vaccination Requirements

Staff classification and immunization requirements

- LEAs should review how applicable child care licensing requirements apply to special education staff providing services in licensed CSPP classrooms.
- Under *Health and Safety Code* section 1596.7995, employees and qualifying volunteers at licensed child care centers must meet immunization requirements or applicable exemptions.
- The law defines a volunteer as a nonemployee who provides care and supervision to children.

Recommended LEA coordination practices

- Collaborate with Human Resources, CSPP administrators, special education administrators, and applicable employee bargaining representatives to establish procedures for meeting licensing immunization requirements.
- Determine the applicable requirements for including LEA employees in licensed facility's personnel records and criteria for individuals to be considered volunteers under CCL regulations.
- Establish procedures for documenting required immunizations or exemptions and ensuring records are available for CCL inspections.
- Coordinate with the local licensing office to clarify requirements for LEA employees who provide services within licensed CSPP classrooms and are not listed as CSPP personnel (teacher/assistant) on the Site License.



Sources: California *Health and Safety Code* Section 1596.7995: Child Care Employee and Volunteer Immunization Requirements.
California Department of Public Health. (2026). Staff and Volunteer Immunization Requirements for Child Care Facilities.
CCRs, Title 22, Section 101217: Personnel Records.

Supervision and Background Clearance

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Teacher supervision

- The licensed child care center is responsible for providing care and supervision appropriate to children's needs.
- Children must remain under teacher supervision at all times, except as specifically permitted by Title 22 regulations.
- Supervision must include visual observation.
- Special education staff providing services in licensed CSPP classrooms must coordinate with classroom personnel to maintain required teacher supervision.

Criminal background check requirements

- Staff and other individuals subject to background check requirements must receive official clearance or an approved exemption from the California Department of Social Services before working or being present in a licensed facility.
- A California Department of Justice (DOJ) fingerprint clearance alone does not authorize an individual to work in a licensed facility when CDSS approval is required.
- Individuals subject to clearance requirements must have the appropriate authorization and facility affiliation before beginning work.
- Certain individuals, including qualifying volunteers, may be exempt from background check requirements.

Sources: CDSS. (2025, August 15). Provider Information Notice 25-12-CCLD: Background Check Approval Requirements for Eligibility to Work, Reside, or Be Present in a Facility, Organization, or Home.
CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 101229: Responsibility for Providing Care and Supervision.
CDSS. (2016). Background Check Requirements for Caregivers: Child Care Center Operators (Transcript).

Background Check Exemptions in California

Can LEA special education staff providing services in a licensed CSPP classroom qualify for a criminal background check exemption?

Under *Health and Safety Code* section 1596.871(b)(1)(D), a volunteer providing time-limited specialized services is exempt from obtaining a criminal record clearance or exemption when **all three conditions** are met:

- The volunteer is directly supervised by the licensee or a facility employee who has a criminal record clearance or exemption.
- The volunteer spends no more than 16 hours per week at the facility.
- The volunteer is not left alone with children in care.

Source: CDSS, Child Care Licensing Division. (2026, June 23). Child Care Program Quarterly Provider Webinar (PDF), slide 33.

Possible Solutions for Staff not on the Site License

- Itinerant ECSE services in CSPP:
  - Plan for LEA special education staff to provide services within the classroom and playground areas under the CSPP teacher's visual supervision (to satisfy licensing requirements)
- Co-taught ECSE and CSPP classroom:
  - Add all LEA special education staff to the site license (criminal records clearance will be required specific to the site license number)



Indoor and Outdoor Activity Space Requirements

Licensed capacity and plan of operation

- Licensed child care centers must operate within their approved licensed capacity.
- Each licensed facility must maintain a current, written plan of operation.

Outdoor activity space

- At least 75 square feet of outdoor activity space per child, based on the total licensed capacity.
- Outdoor activity space must:
  - Include a shaded rest area and provide safe access for children.
  - Be maintained free of hazards.
  - Include appropriate cushioning beneath climbing equipment, swings, slides, and similar equipment.
  - Be enclosed by a fence at least four feet high.

Indoor activity space

- At least 35 square feet of indoor activity space per child, based on the total licensed capacity.
- Bathrooms, hallways, offices, food preparation areas, storage areas, and floor space occupied by permanent built-in cabinets and shelving are excluded from the calculation.
- Drinking water must be readily available indoors and in outdoor activity areas, and children must be permitted to drink as needed.

Sources: CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 101238.2: Outdoor Activity Space.
CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 101238.3: Indoor Activity Space.
CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 101239.2: Drinking Water.
CDSS. Child Care Center Licensing Regulations, Title 22, Division 12.

Possible Solutions to Use of Indoor and Outdoor Spaces

- Verify licensed capacity and applicable indoor and outdoor space requirements.
- Coordinate the use of shared spaces between CSPP and special education programs.
- Review supervision, accessibility, and safety considerations.
- Update the program's plan of operation when required.
- Consult CCL before implementing arrangements that may affect licensed capacity or approved space use.



Assembly Bill 2827: Shared Outdoor Play Spaces

Legislation Supporting Inclusive Outdoor Play

Assembly Bill (AB) 2827 (2022) added section 1596.804 to the California *Health and Safety Code*, requiring the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to revise licensing regulations by January 1, 2024, to:

- Permit children with exceptional needs who are enrolled in separate programs or classrooms to use outdoor play spaces simultaneously with children without disabilities, without first obtaining a waiver of Title 22, section 101238.2.
- Specify the health and safety requirements that must be met when children share outdoor play spaces simultaneously.

Sources: California Legislature. (2022). Assembly Bill 2827: Child Daycare Facilities (Chapter 916, Statutes of 2022).
California *Health and Safety Code* Section 1596.804: Simultaneous Use of Outdoor Play Spaces.

Assembly Bill 2827: Shared Outdoor Play Spaces: Implementation Status

- CDSS, through its Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), has gathered stakeholder input on interim licensing standards (ILS) to implement Assembly Bill (AB) 2827.
- The AB 2827 Outdoor Activity Inclusion Workgroup included child care providers, parent advocates, disability advocacy organizations, special education professionals, and state and local partners.
- The proposed standards address health and safety requirements for the simultaneous use of outdoor play spaces by children with exceptional needs and children without disabilities who are enrolled in separate programs or classrooms.
- These requirements are particularly relevant when licensed preschool programs and LEA special education programs share outdoor play spaces.

Sources: CDSS. Child Care Licensing Workgroups (see AB 2827 Outdoor Activity Inclusion Workgroup)
California Legislature. (2022). Assembly Bill 2827: Child Daycare Facilities (Chapter 916, Statutes of 2022).

Adult-to-Child Ratios and Teacher-to Child Ratios

CSPP contractors and other Title 5-funded center-based programs must maintain minimum staffing ratios based on children's ages, program requirements, and actual attendance.



CSPP preschool classrooms

- Adult-to-child ratio: 1:8
- Teacher-to-child ratio: 1:24

Other Title 5-funded programs serving toddlers (18 to 36 months)

- Adult-to-child ratio: 1:4
- Teacher-to-child ratio: 1:16

CSPP classrooms enrolling two-year-old children

- A 1:8 adult-to-child ratio and 1:24 teacher-to-child ratio may be maintained when two-year-olds do not exceed eight children or 30 percent of classroom enrollment, whichever is less.
- When enrollment exceeds these limits, the applicable toddler ratios must be followed, with additional requirements for mixed-age groups.

Sources: CCRs, Title 5,Section 17713: Staffing Ratios for CSPP.
CCRs, Title 5,Section 18290: Staffing Ratios for Early Learning and Care Programs.
CDE.Serving Two-Year-Old Children in CSPP: Frequently Asked Questions.

Staff Ratios for Mixed-Age Groups in CSPPs



CSPP classrooms may enroll children of different ages. Title 5, section 17714 establishes staffing requirements when children from different age categories are grouped together.

When children from different age categories are commingled:

- **More than 50 percent younger children:** The entire group must meet the adult-to-child and teacher-to-child ratios required for the younger age group.
- **50 percent or fewer younger children:** Adult-to-child and teacher-to-child ratios must be calculated separately for each age group.

Important consideration: These requirements are based on actual attendance and are subject to the exceptions for classrooms enrolling two-year-old children specified in Title 5, section 17713(d) and (e).

Sources: CCRs, Title 5,Section 17714: Commingling of Age Categories.
CDE.Serving Two-Year-Old Children in California State Preschool Programs: Frequently Asked Questions.

Strategies for Meeting Adult-to-Child Ratios

- Recognize that only staff associated with the site license may be counted toward the teacher-to-child and adult-to-child ratios in the CSPP.
- Remember that even if square footage allows for more children, a licensed CSPP must not exceed its licensed capacity, even when the LEA provides additional special education staff.
- Collaboratively review and revise the plan of operation with ECSE and CSPP leadership to describe how the licensed CSPP ensures the health and safety of all children, specifically:
  - Children with health needs
  - Children with challenging behaviors
  - Children with IEPs who may require additional supervision and supports
  - Adult-to-child ratios in emergency plans
  - How LEA staff collaborate to support implementation of the plan



Plan of Operation

Licensed child care centers must maintain a plan of operation describing the program's organization, staffing, facilities, services, and applicable health and safety procedures. When developing inclusive programs, CSPP and special education leaders should collaboratively review whether proposed changes require updates or licensing approval. The plan should include:

- Statement of purposes, program methods, and goals.
- Statement of admission policies and procedures.
- Administrative organization, if applicable.
- Staffing plan, qualifications, and duties, if applicable.
- A sketch of the building(s) to be occupied, including a floor plan describing building capacities, intended uses, room dimensions, and rooms to be used for nonambulatory children.
- Consultant and community resources to be utilized by the child care center as part of its program. (Include collaboration with LEA special education service providers.)
- IMS plan.

Any proposed changes to the plan of operation that affect services to children shall be subject to departmental approval before implementation. The child care center shall operate in accordance with the terms specified in the plan of operation.

Source: CDSS. Manual of Policies and Procedures, Community Care Licensing Division, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Sections 101212 and 101173: Reporting Requirements and Plan of Operation.
Authority cited: California Health and Safety Code sections 1596.72, 1596.73, 1596.81, 1596.95, and 1597.05.

Possible Solutions to the Site Plan of Operation

Senate Bill (SB) 722 (2023) required the CDSS to develop standardized templates by January 1, 2025, for:

- Plans of operation.
- IMS plans.

Additional requirements

- CDSS must revise applicable regulations and guidance to eliminate requirements for prior approval of an IMS plan or amended plan of operation before a child with exceptional needs may attend a child care or child development program.
- Licensed child care facilities that submit a completed IMS plan using the CDSS template may enroll a child before departmental approval of the plan.

Recommended collaborative practices

- CSPP and ECSE leadership should jointly review and update applicable plans.
- Schedule periodic or annual reviews to ensure plans reflect current services and children's needs.



Sources: California Legislature. (2023). Senate Bill 722: Daycare Facilities—Incidental Medical Services Plans (Chapter 631, Statutes of 2023).
California *Health and Safety Code* Section 1596.802: Plans of Operation and Incidental Medical Services Plans.

Incidental Medical Services Plans

All licensed centers must have a plan to address children's medical and other services needs called the IMS plan.

- The IMS plan identifies the types of medical services the program is prepared to provide and the procedures for providing them safely.
- The IMS plan is part of the facility's plan of operation.
- The IMS plan should be written, kept current, submitted to the CCL regional office, and made available to staff.
- Under *Health and Safety Code* section 1596.802, licensed facilities that submit a completed IMS plan using the CDSS template may enroll a child before departmental approval of the plan.
- CDSS Provider Information Notice (PIN) 22-02-CCP, issued in February 2022, provides guidance and best practices for safely administering IMS in licensed child care facilities.

Sources: University of California, San Francisco, California Childcare Health Program. (2024). Incidental Medical Services (IMS) in Child Care Programs.
CDSS. (2022). Provider Information Notice 22-02-CCP: Best Practices Related to the Provision of Incidental Medical Services in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes.
California *Health and Safety Code* Section 1596.802: Plans of Operation and Incidental Medical Services Plans.

Postural Supports and Protective Devices

Under Title 22, section 101223.1, postural supports may be used with prior approval from the CDSS, subject to the following requirements:

- Postural supports are limited to devices, including straps, spring-release trays, or soft ties, used to support a child in a bed, chair, or wheelchair to prevent falling.
- Requests must be submitted in writing and include a physician's written order indicating the need for the support. CDSS may require additional documentation.
- Approved postural supports must be secured in a manner that permits quick release.
- CDSS may approve postural supports only after the appropriate fire clearance has been obtained.
- CDSS may grant conditional or limited approval for the use of postural supports.

Consideration for IEP teams: Coordinate with the licensed facility and CCL when planning services for a child who requires postural supports. An IEP does not replace applicable licensing approval requirements.

Source: California Department of Social Services. *Manual of Policies and Procedures*, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Section 101223.1: Postural Supports/Protective Devices (PDF).

Strategies for Providing Incidental Medical Services: Senate Bill 722

Senate Bill (SB) 722 (2023) was enacted to reduce barriers to child care access for children with exceptional needs by streamlining incidental medical services (IMS) plan requirements.

Key provisions

- Requires the CDSS to develop standardized plan of operation and IMS plan templates by January 1, 2025.
- Allows licensed child care facilities that submit a completed IMS plan using the CDSS template to enroll a child before departmental approval.
- Provides specified liability protections for providers administering medication under a completed and submitted IMS plan, except in cases involving gross negligence or willful or malicious conduct.

Recommended strategies

- Collaborate with CSPP and ECSE leadership to develop and update IMS plans.
- Review current CDSS guidance and templates before submitting plans.
- Subscribe to CDSS Community Care Licensing Updates to receive Provider Information Notices (PINs) and other updates.

Sources: California Legislature. (2023). Senate Bill 722: Daycare Facilities—Incidental Medical Services Plans (Chapter 631, Statutes
California *Health and Safety Code* Section 1596.802: Plans of Operation and Incidental Medical Services Plans.



Fire Clearance Requirements

- All child care centers must obtain and maintain a fire clearance approved by the city or county fire department, the district providing fire protection services, or the State Fire Marshal.
- Applicants must notify the CDSS if the child care center plans to enroll **children who are nonambulatory** so that the appropriate fire clearance can be obtained before their enrollment.



Source: CDSS. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Sections 101152(n)(1), 101171, and 101174: Child Care Center Licensing Requirements.

Disaster and Mass Casualty Plan

Each licensed child care center must maintain a written disaster and mass casualty plan of action that is readily available for review.

The plan must include:

- Designation of administrative authority and staff assignments.
- Contingency plans for fires, floods, and earthquakes.
- Special procedures, as needed, for the evacuation and relocation of children who are nonambulatory.

Considerations When Enrolling Children Who Are Nonambulatory

Before enrolling a child who is nonambulatory, the licensed facility must ensure that its fire clearance authorizes the care of nonambulatory children.

The facility should also review and update applicable plans and procedures, including:

- The plan of operation and emergency evacuation procedures.
- An incidental medical services (IMS) plan, when applicable.
- Requests for approval of postural supports or protective devices, when required.

Sources: CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Sections 101171 and 101174: Fire Clearance and Disaster and Mass Casualty Plan.
CDSS. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Section 101223.1: Postural Supports and Protective Devices.

Strategies for Meeting Fire Inspection Requirements

Early childhood special education and CSPP leadership collaboratively identify:

- General language to include in the plan of operation that allows for the possibility of enrolling children who are nonambulatory in the CSPP.
- Supports necessary to meet evacuation and emergency procedure requirements for children who are nonambulatory.
- Strategies for collaboratively resolving items identified during the fire marshal's preinspection and/or CDSS and CCL prelicensing visit.



ECSE and CSPP leadership also collaboratively identify materials that must be purchased to meet emergency evacuation requirements and potential funding sources.

Additional Strategies for Meeting Fire Inspection Requirements

Assembly Bill (AB) 176, passed in 2023, required the Office of the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the CDSS, to adopt regulations pertaining to occupancy standards for child care centers no later than January 1, 2027.

The proposed code changes will address occupancy classification provisions for child care centers and will apply at the time of licensing applications and revisions.

Preinspections will include consultation, interpretation of fire safety regulations, and identification of specific requirements that must be met to obtain fire clearance.

Source: California Legislature. (2023). Assembly Bill 176: Child Daycare Facilities—Fire Safety Requirements (Chapter 70, Statutes of 2023)

Questions

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Communities of Practice: Join the Conversation

Discuss and Discover. Share and Strengthen. Connect and Inspire.

View the full schedule of communities of practice (CoPs) on the CalECSE Communities of Practice webpage

Join a regional, job-alike, or statewide Community of Practice (CoP) to share ideas, solve problems of practice, exchange successful strategies and tools, and strengthen early childhood special education across California.

Interested in joining a community of practice (CoP)? Scan the QR code below or complete the CalECSE Community of Practice Interest Form

Communities of Practice
California Early Childhood Special Education Network

bitly

Share Your Feedback for a Chance to Win CalECSE 2027 Symposium Registration

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network



Please help us improve our practice and complete the zoom survey following this session.

After doing so, you will be entered into a raffle to win a free registration to CalECSE's 5th Annual Symposium to be held at Paradise Point in San Diego October 19–20, 2027.

CALECSE
California Early Childhood Special Education Network



Growing Knowledge. Building Capacity. Changing Lives.

Thank you for joining us today! We appreciate your participation and hope to see you at a future training. Explore our full schedule of no-cost professional learning opportunities on the [CalECSE Training Calendar]

SCAN ME

Continue the conversation with CalECSE:

@CalECSE

@CalECSE

@Cal_ECSE

@Cal_ECSE

@CalECSE