ANNUAL REPORT

TULARE COUNTY COUNCIL ON CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

2025 - 2026



Tulare County Council on Child & Youth Development

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Mission

The Tulare County Council on Child & Youth Development supports, promotes, and advocates for increased access to community-wide, high-quality early care and education to meet the needs of all children and families.

Vision

The Tulare County Council on Child & Youth Development's vision is to equip all members of the community with the knowledge of, and the ability to, access high-quality early care and education resulting in lifelong success for the children and families within our community.



History

In 1991, Congress established the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which led to the creation of Local Child Care and Development Councils in every county throughout California. These councils were formed to set funding priorities based on the specific needs of low-income families within each county. They work collaboratively with public and private organizations, child care providers, and families who use child care services to address and support the diverse child care needs of all families in the community.

Mandates

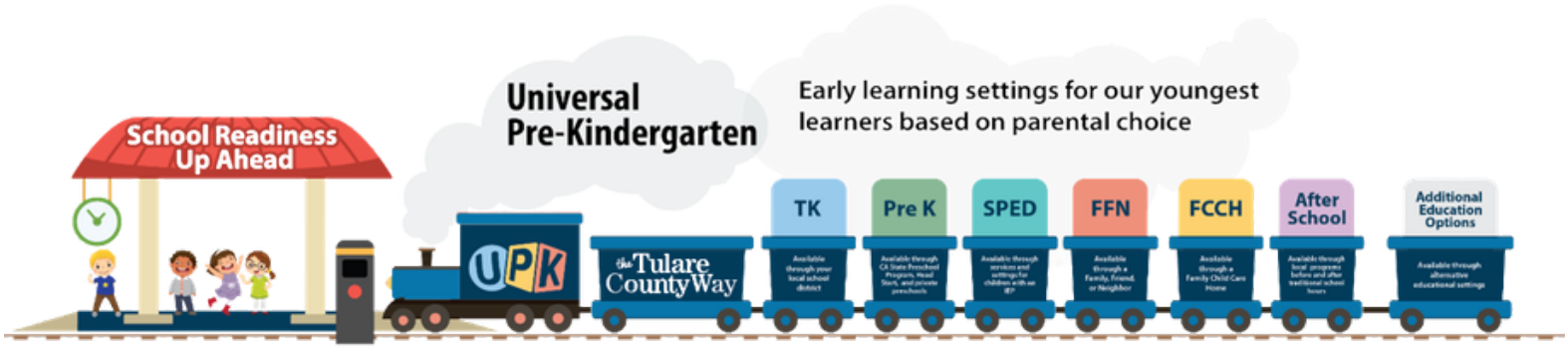
As set forth in the legislation; some of the Council's mandates include the following:

- Conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment once every 5 years
- Prepare a comprehensive countywide child care plan designated to mobilize public and private resources to address identified needs
- Identify local priorities for child care needs in Tulare County
- Design a system to consolidate local child care waiting lists if a centralized eligibility list does not already exist
- Support local coordination and collaboration to foster partnerships designed to meet local child care needs

Tulare County's Early Care and Education Needs

The Council supports and advocates for a mixed delivery system of options for children and families of Tulare County. Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) includes a variety of early learning programs designed to support all children's growth and development from birth to age 12. UPK revolves around parental choice; therefore, families choose the option that works best for their child. Depending on the family's needs, a child may receive care in more than one ECE program per day.

Research shows that 80% of a child's brain develops by age 3, and 90% by age 5. Therefore, ECE programs help children build important skills in all areas of development, setting them up for success now and in the future. The Council continually advocates and supports parental choice and the numerous options that are available for children. Each option is unique and provides the opportunity for children to receive care in an environment that is most beneficial for their child's needs.



Early Care and Education Needs Assessment

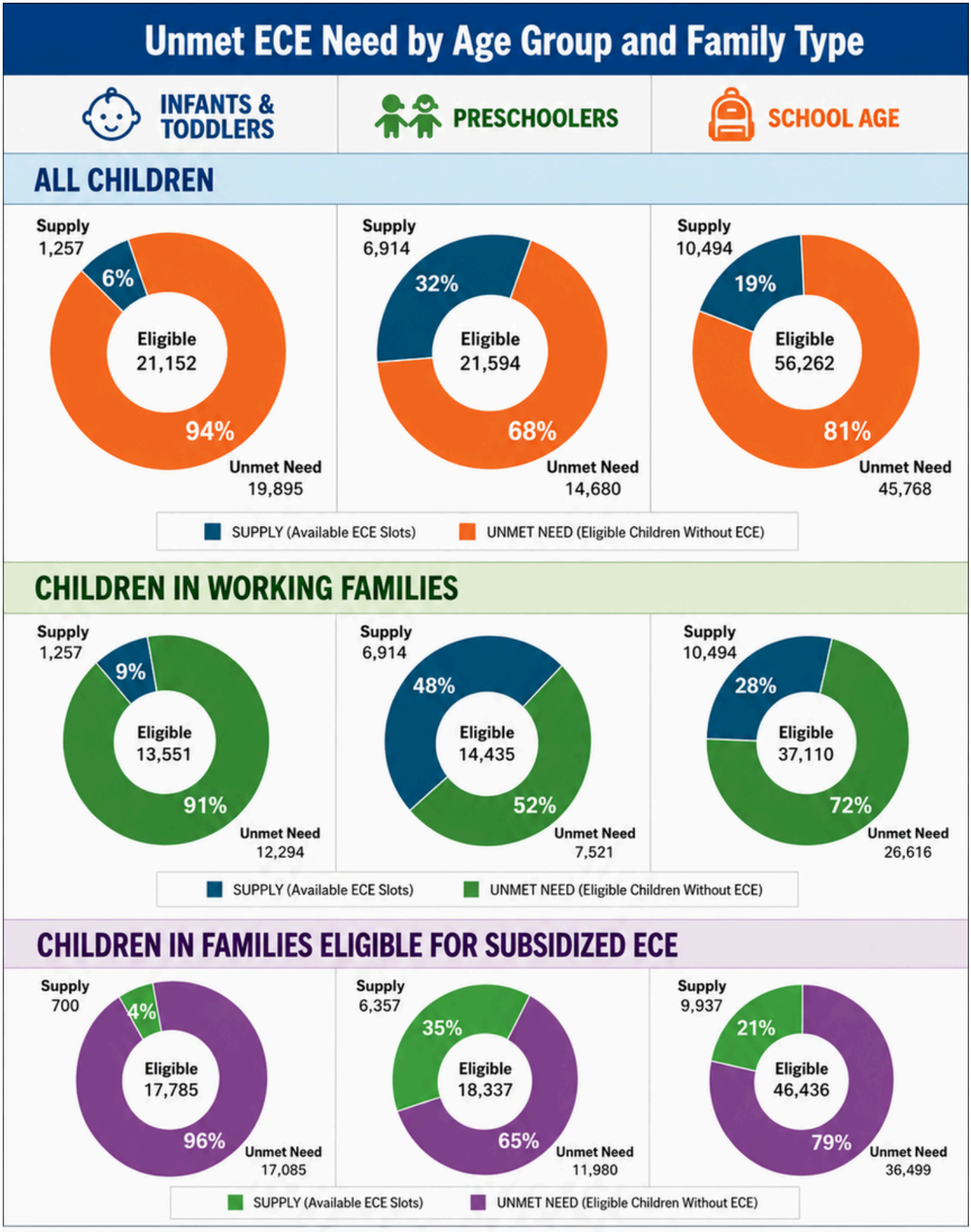
One of the mandates of the Tulare County Council on Child & Youth Development is to complete a child care needs assessment once every five years. This report is a snapshot in time that identifies the child care needs from ages birth through age 12. The Council uses the results from the report to advocate for changes to be made through community collaborative effort, to better serve the children and families in Tulare County.

Tulare County provides numerous ECE options for children that work diligently to provide developmentally appropriate environments for children's healthy development. However, even with the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten, there are still areas of need that are present with Tulare County, as well as statewide, that demonstrates the unmet child care needs. Highlighted below are key findings from the council's 2026 Early Care and Education Needs Assessment.

Council Meetings

The Council held five meetings during the 2025-2026 fiscal year, all of which were open to the public in accordance with the Brown Act. All meetings were held at the Tulare County Office of Education Early Childhood Education Program. Meeting agendas, minutes, and supporting materials for the 2025-2026 fiscal year are available to the public on the Council's website at www.tularecountykids.org





Source: Tulare County Council on Child and Youth Development. (March 2026). Tulare County Needs Assessment of Early Care and Education. Visalia, CA: Tulare County Office of Education

Council Membership

Council Members are jointly appointed by Tulare County Superintendent of Schools and Tulare County Board of Supervisors. The Council is composed of 25 seats. Members are placed under the following categories: child care provider, consumer, public agency representatives, community representatives, and discretionary. Each category composes 20% of the entire Council.

During the 2025-2026 fiscal year, one new member joined the Council, resulting in 21 of the Council's membership seats being filled. Vacancies remain in the Consumer, Family Child Care Provider, Discretionary, and Public Agency membership categories. The Council actively encourages interested individuals to join its ongoing efforts to advocate for and promote quality early care and education programs that benefit all children in Tulare County.



TULARE COUNTY COUNCIL ON CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Chart Updated: July 23, 2026
Date listed in boxes is the date the term expires



Executive Committee Members

- **Chair:** Timberly Romero
- **Vice Chair:** Lorena Castillo
- **Secretary:** Cheri Doria
- **County Superintendent of Schools Representative:** Christina Sauceda
- **County Board of Supervisors Representative:** Sherri Glenn

Strategic Planning

Based on the findings from the 2024 Early Care and Education Economic Benefit Study and the 2026 Early Care and Education Needs Assessment, the Council adopted the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. Within the Strategic Plan, the Council identified the following priorities and goals that will guide the Council's efforts for the next five years.

Priority Area 1: Access and Affordability

- **Goal:** Support the expansion of availability to affordable, high-quality early care and education for all families in Tulare County.

Priority Area 2: Workforce Development

- **Goal:** Promote recruitment, retention, and professional advancement opportunities for Tulare County's early care and education workforce.

Priority Area 3: Quality and Coordination

- **Goal:** Advance quality across all early learning settings through system alignment, continuous improvement, and shared accountability.

Priority Area 4: Family and Community Engagement

- **Goal:** Empower families as active partners in their children's early learning and strengthen community collaboration to improve child and family outcomes.

Priority Area 5: Data and Advocacy

- **Goal:** Strengthen the use of data to inform planning, evaluate outcomes, and advocate for policies that advance early care and education in Tulare County.

The Council is enthusiastic about the adoption of these comprehensive guidelines, which will serve as a strategic roadmap for the next five years. These priorities provide a clear framework to guide decision-making, strengthen collaboration among community partners, and ensure resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact. Through these focused efforts, the Council is committed to promoting opportunities for success, improving child and family well-being, and strengthening the network of support available to children and families throughout Tulare County. By working collectively toward these shared goals, the Council aims to foster healthier, safer, and more resilient communities where every child and family has the opportunity to thrive.

The complete 2026-2031 Strategic Plan, can be accessed at the following website: **https://tcoe.org/tularecountylpc/ELC**

Subcommittees

To ensure that the Council fulfills its mission and vision, council members are required to serve on at least one subcommittee of their choice. Each subcommittee has a designated meeting date, time and location, all of which can be accessed on the website.

Events Subcommittee

The primary focus of this subcommittee is to plan the Councils annual advocacy events. These advocacy events provide different avenues, in addition to the Council mandates, to increase community awareness and deepen understanding of the critical importance of ECE and the impact it has locally. The efforts of the Events Subcommittee support the Council's newly established priorities and goals outlined in the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. The key priorities areas that are addressed through these events include **Priority Area 1** (Access and Affordability), **Priority Area 2** (Workforce Development), **Priority Area 3** (Quality and Coordination), and **Priority Area 5** (Data and Advocacy). These annual events have become valued local initiatives that provide meaningful opportunities for community engagement and support for the Council's mission.

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the Council successfully hosted two advocacy events. The first event was the Annual Collaborative Event that was held on March 26, 2026, at Tulare County Office of Education. Approximately 110 participants attended the event that focused on Bridging the Connection: Where Home, School, and Community Come Together. The goal of the event was to bring together educators and parents to build positive relationships for lifelong success for the children of Tulare County. This event featured keynote speakers; Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent, SELPA Director, Tulare County Office of Education and Dr. Ramon Resa, local pediatrician. Both provided a presentation from their perspective on how to engage the parents and the importance of the collaboration to ensure lifelong success for children of Tulare County. This event included a Community Resource Exhibit that consisted of numerous local resources that are available to children and families as well as collaborative conversations among the participants.











In addition, the Council also hosted the 17th Annual Legislative Event on April 14, 2026, at the Visalia Convention Center in collaboration with Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Mixed Delivery Planning Grant, and UPK Planning and Implementation (P&I) Grant. Approxiately 131 participants attended the event that focused on The Collective Impact of Care: Partnerships Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Lifelong Health. The intent of this event was to bridge the gap between the ECE community and the medical community to support the healthy development of all children in Tulare County. The event featured Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, who presented on ACEs and the lifelong health impact that has on children and families. Eligible participants were given Continuing Medical Education (CME) units to encourage the medical professionals to attend.

There is a positive correlation to the healthy development of children and their exposure to ECE programs. All participants received copies of the English and Spanish Early Education Opportunities Brochure and brochure holders to display in their locations throughout Tulare County. As a result, the pediatricians and medical community can partner with the ECE community to assist the UPK supports by encouraging families to enroll in one of the many options that are available for their children. This event brought together people from the medical community, California Department of Education Director level staff, executive level staff from local government and non-profit agencies and some legislative field representatives to discuss ECE and the importance of everyone working together to better support children and families of Tulare County.

To enhance the impact of these efforts, the Council actively pursued partnerships with local agencies, businesses, and community organizations through sponsorship and donation opportunities. As a result, the Council secured $19,500 in sponsorship support for its 17th Annual Legislative Event, significantly contributing to the event's success and expanding its reach within the community.

Moving forward, the Council remains committed to strengthening relationships with local partners and stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and increasing community involvement. These ongoing efforts will help support future advocacy initiatives, promote shared goals, align with the Council's priorities and goals, and further advance positive outcomes for children and families throughout Tulare County.









Community Resource Subcommittee

The 2025-2026 fiscal year was the beginning stages of the development of this subcommittee whose primary goal is a collaborative, community-based group designed to coordinate services, identify needs, and strengthen support systems for children and families. The target audience is all children and families of Tulare County. The efforts of the Community Resource Subcommittee support the Council's newly established priorities and goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. The primary priority area that has begun to be addressed within this subcommittee is Priority Area 4 (Family and Community Engagement).

Through a collaborative review process, subcommittee members identified and discussed a variety of community resources available to families throughout Tulare County. By sharing knowledge and perspectives from their respective organizations and experiences, members explored areas where additional resources, services, or support may be beneficial to children and families.

The subcommittee also identified several major employers and workforce-related organizations as potential partners for future outreach and engagement efforts. Members discussed opportunities to increase awareness of UPK and support families in understanding the early learning options available to them.

The insights, ideas, and goals generated through these discussions will help inform the subcommittee's work and guide future action planning during the 2026–2027 fiscal year. Continued collaboration among members will support efforts to strengthen community partnerships and enhance access to information and resources for children and families throughout Tulare County.



Conclusion

A notorious quote in the ECE community is “It takes a village to raise a child” and with that, no one organization can do all the work to support the healthy development of all children in Tulare County. Therefore, as the Council progresses through the new fiscal year, they will be seeking local support and collaboration to better improve the outcome for all children not only now but for the future. The success of the ECE community impacts everyone and everything in some way or another. The final question remains, ***“How can you take part in the village that will help shape the future of Tulare County?”***

For questions regarding the Council, please contact

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