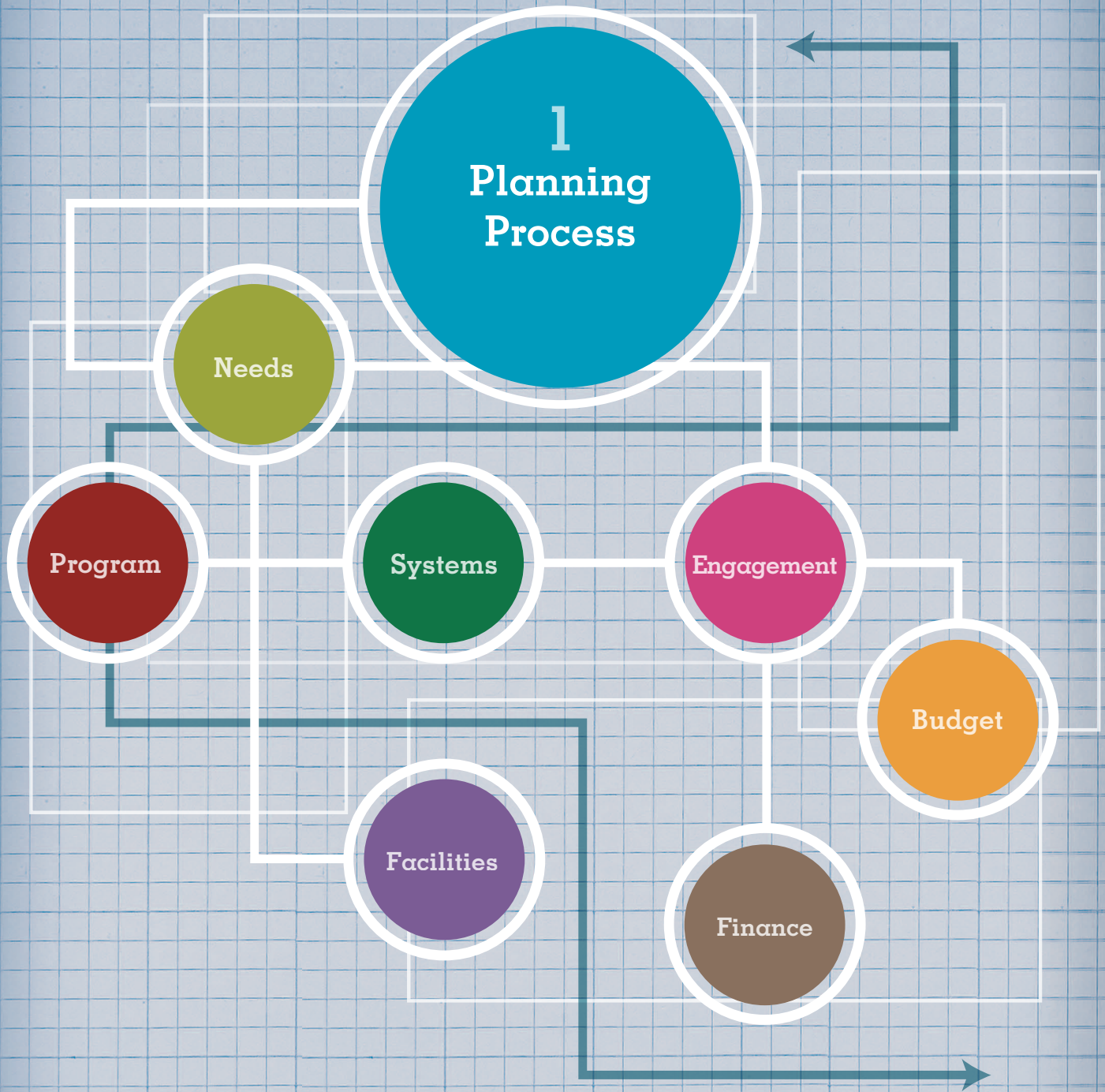


California Preschool Planning Toolkit



by





Planning Process

OVERVIEW

Whether you are creating a master plan for preschool, or revamping an existing plan, the effort can be monumental. Throughout the state, early education services exist in diverse and decentralized delivery systems. This factor alone creates a tremendous amount of work. The data you need on supply, demand, workforce, and costs is in several places. Decentralization means there will be many stakeholders who have a vested interest in any effort to modify preschool policy or services. Financing neither comes from a single source nor is adequate, so a broad base of support must be developed to achieve the goal of serving more children. Anyone engaged in planning preschool must leverage multiple interests, skills, and resources – from needs assessment to social networking, from budgeting to focus groups – to get the job done.

When a plan is completed, your stakeholder community should feel that the plan is responsive to local needs. They should be primed and anxious to deliver on its promise. In the following section you will find a discussion of multiple approaches to the planning process, and specific tools and templates that will help you gather data at meetings, externally poll public opinion, promote interactivity along with group decision-making, generate priorities in multiple areas, and produce a document that reflects the potential of your community.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

There are currently no state guidelines or regulations regarding the adequacy of preschool planning. Each County has the privilege of designing a system that is locally responsive while anticipating the State's evolving policy. Therefore, in the interest of attaining similar goals and practices throughout the state, we suggest that counties consider the Preschool California Principles, the First 5 California Power of Preschool Demonstration Grant Criteria, and the new Assembly Bill 172 provisions for expansion of State Preschool and Family Literacy programs in developing the different components of their plan.

- Several basic understandings have become accepted standards of adequacy for a County Master Plan. These standards have no regulatory authority, and may be deemed excessive or inadequate, depending on who is reviewing your work. However, to have a complete picture of your community's capacity, resources, needs, and targets, a Master Plan should logically include the following content which is referenced to specific Sections of this binder. You should have a summary of a complete needs assessment based on analysis of data on preschool supply and demand, with an estimate of the need for new and upgraded spaces ([Section 2-Needs Assessment](#));
- A summary of the workforce adequacy and the potential pipeline for an expanded workforce ([Section 3-Program and Teacher Quality](#));
- A proposed system for workforce development and continuous quality improvement ([Section 3-Program and Teacher Quality](#));
- A proposed system for quality ratings and quality development in preschool programming and instruction ([Section 3-Program and Teacher Quality](#));
- A description of one or more approaches to curriculum – or menu of options that flow from expectations of what preschool children should know and be able to do –deemed acceptable by the county ([Section 3-Program and Teacher Quality](#));



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- A proposed facilities development plan ([Section 4-Facilities](#));
- An estimate of the cost of upgrading existing publicly funded spaces for preschool children to meet new quality goals, and of establishing new preschool services ([Section 4- Facilities and Section 7-Budget and Phase-In](#));
- An organizational model with robust governance and accountability ([Section 5-Delivery Systems](#));
- Documentation of community wide commitment to the concept of preschool as a significant component of a child’s learning experience and preparation for school ([Section 6- Parent and Community Engagement](#));
- A strong component for parent engagement ([Section 6-Parent and Community Engagement](#));
- Several different scenarios for phasing in access to voluntary, publicly supported quality preschool services, from attendance areas of low Academic Performance Index (API) schools 1-3, to 1-5, to county-wide ([Section 7-Budget and Phase-In](#));
- A proposed launch schedule or methodology for determine the launch and growth ([Section 7-Budget and Phase-In](#)); and
- A proposed finance plan ([Section 8-Finance Options](#)).

MOST IMPORTANT: DO NOT FEEL YOUR COUNTY HAS TO ‘INVENT ANEW’ EACH COMPONENT OF A PLAN. ADOPT AND ADAPT THE IDEAS AND PRACTICES FROM OTHER COUNTIES WHENEVER IT MAKES SENSE AND SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO YOUR COUNTY CIRCUMSTANCES.

SAMPLE APPROACHES

Several states and many California counties have either completed a Master Plan or are in the midst of at least a beginning planning process. While each county with a completed plan took a slightly different approach, the majority used the planning process to:

- Build consensus and buy-in from their respective communities, by including the many stakeholders that would be affected by any policy change or new program development;
- Calculate to the extent possible the supply, demand, and unmet need for preschool, based on the 4 year old population;
- Create collaborations among agencies to leverage existing community resources in service to the preschool plan;
- Make public the benchmarks for enrollment and resource deployment.

In a few instances, notably in Oklahoma, the preschool program was developed in-house by existing Department of Education staff and not vetted with community leaders. This was because the state’s enrollment decline coincided with a build-up of school funding, making it possible to do Universal Preschool with credentialed teachers as a matter of course.



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BASIC ISSUES

The overarching issues we have in California regarding preschool planning are commitment of funds and clear leadership at the state level. Below are some other issues that your planning team should consider when beginning or revising your preschool master plan. These issues are discussed in more depth in the Planning Process document.

1. Is your organization the right group to spearhead the planning process?
2. If yes, what approach will you take; community planning or agency planning? If not your agency, what organization should lead the process?
3. Are adequate staff resources attached to planning? This is work that will need to be embedded in a staff function. Volunteers and staff from other agencies can play important supportive roles, but even with a small planning effort, you will want at least one person to devote a substantial amount of time to the planning function.
4. How much time can be set aside for the planning function?
5. Who should be invited to participate in the process?
6. Can the key stakeholders (those whose support is needed for program success) become involved in the planning process?
7. What approach will you use to sustain participation in the process?
8. How will the planning process be financed?

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Below is a list of tools and templates with a description of how they can be applied to your planning process.

Tool or Template	Purpose
Agenda Template	Visual agenda to give comprehensive view of the meeting “in one glance”
Visioning Exercise and Template: What’s Your Headline?	To develop consensus on the long term vision for preschool’s impact on the county
Strategic Mission Statement Template	To guide group process in developing your strategic mission and developing the metrics to benchmark your success
Sample Strategic Mission Statements	Exemplars of the Strategic Mission model
Case Statements Group Polling	Interactive technique to poll participants, aimed at lowering volatility and excessive discussion on strong-belief type issues; used to give the group a sense of direction and political reality
Conjoint Analysis Tool	To assist group in understanding it’s values for different service configurations



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2,5,7 Year Goal Templates	To guide goal projection and to crosswalk goals in one area against the goals of another
Brainstorming and Priorities Templates	Generic user-friendly templates for guided small group discussions
Top Issues Templates	Generic user-friendly templates for guided small group discussions
Meeting Preparation Tips	Some tips and ideas to help smoothly facilitate meetings

OTHER RESOURCES

Included in This Section

- Stages of a Planning Process (KHS)
- Guidelines and Tips on How to Prepare and Conduct a Successful Planning Process (KHS)
- Power Point Tips and Tools that Promote User-friendly Power Point Presentations (KHS)
- Tips on Recording and Documenting Meeting Process Especially for Committees (KHS)

Additional Resources

Below are links to additional resources that you may find useful in your planning process.

Resource	Link
California County Preschool Plans	
Los Angeles	www.laup.net/downloads/Proj_UPK_MasterPlanFinalDraft.pdf
San Diego	www.sdcoe.net/pdf/PFA-MasterPlanDRAFT.pdf#search='preschool%20master%20plan'
San Francisco	www.first5sf.org/pfa.htm
San Mateo	www.first5sanmateo.org/smc/department/home/0,,4313274_254692172_123861501,00.html
Santa Clara	www.santaclarakids.org/Docs/PFA%20MP%20Overview%20V%2012.pdf#search='santa%20clara%2C%20preschool%20plan'
Solano	http://first5solano.org/home/first5s/
Ventura	http://first5ventura.org/preschool/workplan.pdf#search='ventura%2C%20preschool%20plan'
West Sacramento	www.yolochildren.org/PDF/West-Sacramento-UPK-Plan.pdf
Other Resources	
California Master Plan for Education School Readiness	www.preschoolcalifornia.org/assets/school-readiness-final-report.pdf
Grove Consultants International	www.grove.com