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Early and School-Age Care in Santa Monica

Current System, Policy Options, and Recommendations

Ashley Pierson, Lynn A. Karoly, Gail L. Zellman, Megan K. Beckett



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RAND Education and RAND Labor and Population

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Preface

In July 2012, the City of Santa Monica Human Services Division and the Santa Monica–Malibu Unified School District contracted with the RAND Corporation to conduct an assessment of child care programs in Santa Monica, California. The study was motivated in part by the perception of some stakeholders that the system of care in Santa Monica had become fragmented and complex. Additional motivations were the uncertainty of resource streams stemming from recent and anticipated state and federal budget cuts and a desire to ensure youth well-being in the community. The project sought to assess how well Santa Monica’s child care programs meet the needs of families, including child care and early education programs serving children from birth to kindergarten entry, as well as care for school-aged children (focusing on kindergarten through eighth grade) in the hours before and after school and in the summer. This information would be used to make recommendations for ways to better meet family needs and sustain programs going forward.

This report presents the findings from the RAND study, capturing the full range of information gathering and the associated analyses. We examine early and school-age care (ESAC) and analyze the most effective ways to use available sources of public funding and existing public and private provider infrastructure in delivering effective programs. In developing recommendations for care in Santa Monica, we synthesized information regarding demographics, an inventory of local programs, parent surveys and focus groups, interviews with providers and other stakeholders (e.g., committee members, elected officials, and local experts), an analysis of ESAC program costs, an examination of the funding and policy environment, and a review of service delivery models from other communities.

The recommendations described in this report will be of interest to policymakers in local government and school district settings, particularly those in cities with a demographic profile similar to that of Santa Monica.

This report was funded by the City of Santa Monica and the RAND Corporation. This research was conducted jointly in RAND’s Education and Labor and Population units. Additional information about RAND is available at www.rand.org.

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Summary

The landscape of early learning and out-of-school-time programs in the City of Santa Monica is complex, with numerous providers and funding streams. This complexity reflects its evolution in response to changes in federal, state, and local priorities and initiatives. Future shifts in funding levels, program auspices, and other features are likely. With our growing understanding of the importance of high-quality early learning experiences and the value of the extended day for out-of-school-time learning, it is imperative to ensure that child care—and the public funds that support it—meet the needs of families in the city and provide opportunities for optimal growth and development for the children who use these services.

This is a particularly opportune time for the city to examine early and school-age care. Building upon a partnership initiated in 2010 to address youth violence and mental health, the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica–Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Santa Monica College, and other community partners have formed the Santa Monica Cradle to Career (SMC2C) Working Group. SMC2C’s efforts, based in a collective impact framework, recognize that youth well-being must be examined from many angles and that the city and other stakeholders have an opportunity and a challenge to provide its children and youth with opportunities for healthy growth and development starting at birth and continuing through the school-age years. The SMC2C initiative recognizes that while individual agencies and institutions do their best to meet the needs of families in the community, systems can become complex, fragmented, and challenging for families to navigate. Thus, SMC2C aims to address the fragmentation through unified goals, shared information, and a common commitment to serving the diverse needs of children and youth.

In light of the SMC2C initiative, the goal of this report was to provide the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD with the data and analysis required to deliver effective and sustainable care programs through effective use of available sources of public funding and existing provider infrastructure in the public and private sectors. Specifically, we seek to answer the following questions:

- How will state (and federal) budget and policy changes affect the system of infant and toddler care, preschool and prekindergarten programs, and school-age programs in the City of Santa Monica in terms of access, quality, effectiveness, and sustainability?
- How can new funding sources be integrated with existing funding streams, including subsidy and fee structures, to simplify and sustain the mix of programs and services required to meet the needs of families in the city?

- How can the current system of early care and learning programs and school-age programs be improved or redesigned to address gaps in service, raise quality, streamline service delivery, and strengthen and reconfigure the funding structure?

In addressing these questions, we focused on two age groups of children and their associated care: (1) infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children and the *early care and education (ECE) programs* that serve them in home and center settings prior to kindergarten entry; and (2) school-age children and youth, from kindergarten through high school, and the *out-of-school-time (OST) programs* they attend in the hours before or after the school day, on weekends, and on school breaks. Collectively, these programs constitute *early and school-age care (ESAC)*. We focused on ESAC programs that operate within Santa Monica; programs within SMMUSD that operate in Malibu were not included. In addition, our central focus is on licensed providers, both small and large family child care homes (FCCHs) and centers, or license-exempt school-age programs. For the most part, we do not address license-exempt family, friend, and neighbor care or private enrichment classes.

Study Framework and Approach

Our study was guided by a framework for provision of ESAC in Santa Monica that considers (1) the federal, state, and local policy and funding environment; (2) ESAC delivery from a supply perspective, focusing on providers in the public and private sectors; and (3) the demand perspective, assessing families' needs for and experience with ESAC services. It also considers the views and concerns of other key stakeholders, including the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, resource and referral agencies, and training and workforce development providers, among others. Key topics of interest for ESAC include four interrelated themes that form the building blocks for our analysis:

- *Access and participation*: which children are eligible to participate in the array of programs and the resulting patterns of participation.
- *Quality of care*: the nature of the ECE and OST programs, the adequacy of those services for providing safe and developmentally appropriate care, and the opportunities for innovative programming.
- *Service delivery profile*: the mix of providers in the public and private sectors and the vehicles for providing publicly funded subsidies for care, whether through direct provision by government agencies, by contracts or grants to service providers, or by vouchers provided to families that can be used to pay for care.
- *Financing*: the amounts and sustainability of public and private sources of funds used to pay for ESAC, including federal, state, and local sources on the public side and private sources that include families, employers, and community-based organizations (CBOs).

We employed a variety of methods to address the research and policy questions, including document reviews and identification of best practice models, key informant interviews, focus groups, analysis of existing data, and the collection of new data. The following components informed our work:

- To gain perspective on ESAC needs and gaps, we assembled publicly available information on the city’s demographics. We analyzed parent survey data collected by the city and SMMUSD that addressed project-relevant topics. We also conducted five focus groups with Santa Monica parents to elicit information about care selection, access, and concerns.
- To develop a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of ESAC, we constructed an inventory of local programs, drawing our information from materials provided by the city, SMMUSD, and other partners, and from a series of interviews with providers in the community. We also collected cost data from a small sample of ESAC providers to better understand the cost of care in the community.
- To learn about the perspective of other key stakeholders in the community regarding ESAC, we extended our interviews about the ESAC system to include parents as well as representatives from a broad range of organizations, such as the local community college and the Parent-Teacher Association.
- To sharpen our understanding of the funding and policy environment, we relied on these interviews with providers and stakeholders, as well as a review of relevant documents (e.g., previous reports on the subject by local stakeholders, legislative summaries). We also identified a number of service delivery approaches and strategies (best practices models) for sustainable funding operating in other communities in California and in other states to inform our recommendations.

In the remainder of this summary, we first highlight important demographic information and other contextual data that inform our understanding of ESAC in Santa Monica. We then turn to a summary of the key ESAC issues that emerged from the study activities. In addition, we briefly highlight the best practices models. Finally, we discuss the policy options and recommendations for responding to those issues. For these final two sections, we organize the presentation around the four key themes associated with the study questions: access and participation, quality of care, service delivery, and financing.

Context for ESAC in Santa Monica

As of 2011, the city of Santa Monica had a population of nearly 12,000 children under age 18, about 13 percent of the city’s total population of just over 90,000 residents. Approximately 3,600

children were under age 5, while the remaining children were of school age. Each annual birth cohort consists of about 700 children.

Compared with the state of California or Los Angeles County, the city's population is somewhat less diverse and relatively more affluent. For example, nearly seven of ten city residents are non-Hispanic white, compared with about three of ten countywide, and a smaller share are foreign-born (22 percent versus 35 percent). Median income for families in Santa Monica with children under 18 stands at nearly \$107,000, higher than the county or state figures (about \$51,000 and \$59,000, respectively). Likewise, the overall poverty rate (12 percent) and child poverty rate (6 percent) are lower than the comparable county and state figures. The child poverty rate implies that about 45 children in each annual birth cohort would be expected to be in families with income below the federal poverty line, one benchmark that is used for targeting publicly subsidized ESAC programs.

For the 2011–2012 academic year, SMMUSD schools located in Santa Monica enrolled just over 9,400 students in all grades. Consistent with the makeup of the Santa Monica population as a whole, students in SMMUSD are more advantaged, on average, compared with their counterparts in the county or state. Nevertheless, there is a range of economic and social circumstances for students in the public schools. For instance, about 30 percent of SMMUSD students are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged, meaning they are receiving free or reduced-price lunch or neither parent finished high school. Also at risk of poorer school performance are the 10 percent of students classified as English-language learners, with nearly 60 percent of this group being Spanish speakers. Recent data on school readiness based on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) further demonstrate that there are varying degrees of readiness for entering kindergartners across the seven neighborhoods examined, with a substantial minority of children classified as not on track to succeed when they first enter school.

Key Issues in ESAC in Santa Monica

The information and data-gathering activities confirmed that the ESAC system in Santa Monica has much to be commended. The city has a diverse mix of public and private ECE providers in home-based and center-based settings. There is a surplus of preschool spaces for city residents, which makes the city an attractive place to work for nonresidents with young children who wish to use care near their job. The city is one of the communities in Los Angeles County participating in Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and the Los Angeles Steps to Excellence Program (LA STEP), two initiatives designed to improve the quality of ECE programs, although they affect a small number of providers in Santa Monica to date (four for LAUP and 19 for LA STEP). The City of Santa Monica funds its child care subsidies using tiered reimbursement, which gives providers an incentive to be rated and to improve quality. It also funds other programs to support child development, with one example being a program to improve the capacity of child care providers to support social-emotional development through Family Services

of Santa Monica and Connections for Children. Additionally, the city is participating in the EDI readiness assessment tool to better understand kindergarten readiness issues across the community. SMMUSD and the city work together to ensure that there are OST offerings on every elementary- and middle-school campus in Santa Monica; the city also invests in other off-campus OST offerings (including free options). Many parents provided positive feedback about their experiences in both ECE and OST programs; they value the ESAC services the city offers. These strengths mean the city has a solid foundation from which to further advance its ESAC system.

Despite these strengths, our qualitative and quantitative data revealed a number of important issues with ESAC in Santa Monica in each of the four areas of focus: access and participation, quality of care, service delivery, and financing. These issues, both those general to ESAC as well as those specific to ECE or OST services, are summarized in Table S.1.

Access and Participation

Parents are often unaware of the full range of ECE and OST options in Santa Monica and can find the system of care subsidies challenging to navigate. There is strong support for greater economic diversity of families in ECE and OST programs, particularly those that are funded by contracts and grants for a specific number of slots.

Santa Monica providers have more than enough ECE slots to serve the city's preschool-age children. However, there appears to be a shortage of infant/toddler spaces. Subsidy-eligible parents often experience delays in subsidy approval, which may result in missing the window of opportunity to register for programs with limited openings. Among parents who do not qualify for Head Start or the California State Preschool Program, many appear not to be aware that they may still enroll their child at their neighborhood school's preschool program on a fee-paying basis (space permitting).

Parents indicated that they did not have flexible OST payment options, especially for children in middle school and high school. Without the option to prorate fees for some full-time OST options, children with nonstandard schedules may not be able to participate. Moreover, parents often feel constrained in their OST choices by a lack of transportation for their children to the program option.

Quality of Care

While there was a perceived need on the part of many to improve the quality of ECE and OST program services, there is no objective quality information collected for all or most programs to validate that concern and identify specific areas to target for improvement. Moreover, research has shown that parents have difficulties identifying quality in care programs and typically rate quality higher than trained professionals. Greater transparency in program quality is critical for ensuring that parents are well informed when making care choices.

One indicator of ESAC quality for some stakeholders—economic diversity—is absent for some programs because of targeted funding streams and self-selection. Another quality concern

specific to ECE was the need for greater alignment with the elementary grades for preschool programs located on school sites. A number of quality concerns were specifically focused on OST programs. Staff qualifications were particularly noted; lack of homework help was another. Safety concerns were also raised, particularly in those programs that permit participants to leave without parent supervision.

Table S.1. Summary of Key Issues Identified for ESAC in Santa Monica

Care Type	Issue
a. Access and Participation	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of parent awareness regarding available ECE and OST programs Subsidized system is complex and challenging for parents to navigate Need for more economic diversity of families in ECE and OST programs, especially those that are subsidized by contracts or grants that fund a specific number of slots
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply of slots available for infant and toddler care may be below demand Delays in subsidy approval may close off program options, as some programs fill quickly Parents may not know that public-school preschool programs are open to fee-paying parents
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OST offerings do not meet the full range of family needs across the kindergarten through eighth-grade (K–8) age spectrum Lack of prorating of fees for partial participation in OST programs limits options for families with nonstandard schedules and limits participation in additional part-time OST care Lack of transportation between school and some off-campus OST programs constrains program options for families
b. Quality of Care	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived need to improve quality of both ECE and OST Limited objective data on quality shortfalls make improvement targeting difficult
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents need guidance concerning program quality, particularly for FCCH providers Lack of coordination between schools and onsite ECE programs limits program alignment
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that staff in some programs are not well-qualified or are disengaged Parents are concerned about safety issues with some programs (e.g., kids can leave when they want, safety of shared facilities, use of public buses) Parents need homework to be done during OST program time, but this is not regularly provided Limited options within some programs may not meet developmental needs of some older children
c. Service Delivery	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed delivery system (public-private) is viewed as an advantage, but need to ensure programs are using public resources as efficiently as possible Need to improve alignment (e.g., ECE with elementary grades; school day with after-school programs)
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited connection between school-based preschools and school principals and staff
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs operated by public-sector agencies may have higher costs, but cost and quality tradeoffs with alternative delivery approaches are not fully known
d. Financing	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most public funding sources for ECE and OST are targeted to a relatively small part of the city's population Some public funding sources are not utilized (e.g., Title I for preschool services, CCLC, ASES) or are underutilized (e.g., tax subsidies) Most public funding sources are constrained and likely to remain so

Service Delivery

Like most communities, Santa Monica has a mixed public-private delivery system for both ECE and OST programming that offers a variety of care options. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing such a mixed delivery system, relevant for both ECE and OST programming, is ensuring that the different components in the system are aligned (e.g., a private OST provider is aware of the public schools' lesson plans). Many pointed to instances of programmatic nonalignment, both between ECE programs and elementary schools and between the school day and the OST services that precede or follow it. Alignment across preschool and the early elementary grades is hindered by having different agencies responsible for program oversight and delivery, as well as other institutional features that limit communication and coordination. In the case of OST, where the City of Santa Monica directly operates several programs, a number of key informants we met with raised concerns about potentially higher costs when the city serves as the direct provider, although the cost to achieve the same quality of programming with alternative delivery options was not fully known.

Financing

There are potentially more than a dozen different public funding streams at the federal, state, and local level available to subsidize ECE and OST programs, as well as private funding streams from parents (e.g., fees), employers, and philanthropies. With some exceptions (e.g., LAUP), the public funding sources target lower-income families: either those below the federal poverty line or with income up to about twice the federal poverty line. Yet with a child poverty rate at about 6 percent and with a smaller share of low- or moderate-income families compared with Los Angeles County or the state, relatively few Santa Monica families qualify. At the same time, middle-income families may still find it challenging to pay the cost of full-time care in a licensed center or home with monthly fees of \$1,000 or more for a preschool-age child and upward of \$1,500 for an infant.

A comparison of the potential sources of public funds for ESAC and those used by programs in the city shows that some sources are currently untapped. Federal Title I funds could be used in full or in part for preschool services, whereas they are now allocated by SMMUSD to the elementary grades. The city could also qualify for two sources of OST funding that it has not yet pursued: federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) and the state After School Education and Safety (ASES) program. In addition, parent survey data indicate that families may not be taking advantage of features in the tax system that subsidize ESAC, either by claiming a child care tax credit on federal and state income tax returns or through an employer-established flexible spending account (FSA).

The future outlook for the public dollars that support ESAC adds to the funding challenges. While there is generally bipartisan support for programs investing in high-quality early learning programs and for providing a safe and stimulating environment for children beyond the school

day, the fiscal prospects at the federal, state, and local level suggest that funding levels are not likely to expand any time soon and may actually contract further in some cases. Thus, assembling a viable portfolio of sustainable sources of ESAC funding is a major challenge for the city and SMMUSD.

Strategies Drawn from Research and Other Communities

Our review of the research literature and model practices being implemented in other communities—many of a similar size and makeup as Santa Monica—identified a number of strategies for ESAC that address issues related to access and participation, program quality, service delivery, and financing. Table S.2 summarizes these strategies. For the most part, the literature and model initiatives listed focus on either ECE or OST, although many of the same strategies have relevance for the provision of early and school-age care—including creative strategies for outreach and recruitment, the focus on staff professional development as a way to raise program quality, and the creation of dedicated sources of funding. Many initiatives also make use of new technologies for information gathering, monitoring, and reporting.

Examples of strategies that may have relevance for Santa Monica include:

- attracting full-fee families to publicly provided preschools, often with innovative offerings such as dual-language immersion programs
- improving ECE program quality through mechanisms that measure and report quality, support and incentivize quality improvement, and monitor children’s school readiness and educational outcomes
- aligning early learning programs with the early elementary grades (often referred to as preschool through third grade, or P–3, systems), with integration across the curriculum, teaching staff, professional development, data systems, and other aspects of the education environment
- using market research and other tools to guide OST program offerings and boost attendance and engagement
- providing transportation services to shuttle students from school to a diverse set of after-school programs designed to match their needs and interests
- using technology in after-school programs to track participant attendance and engagement, and link school-day learning progress with after-school activities
- employing a nonprofit intermediary to conduct OST marketing and outreach, coordinate across programs, establish data systems, and deliver technical assistance

- identifying new funding streams (e.g., a dedicated tax) or prioritizing existing funding streams (e.g., Title I funding) to support expanded access or improved quality of ECE or OST programs.

Table S.2. Strategies for ECE and OST Provision Based on Research and Existing Models

Domain	ECE	OST
Access and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand access through new sources of funding (see financing section below) • Improve quality and expand offerings (e.g., dual-language programs) to attract more full-fee families and achieve greater economic diversity among enrolled children • Attract full-fee parents to cross-subsidize public or private programs • Close information gaps about available care options through multiple mechanisms (e.g., information campaigns, resource centers, event outreach, social media, the Internet) • Facilitate access to publicly funded programs through a common application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve OST program uptake through outreach and recruitment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource and referral systems ○ Market research to guide program offerings ○ Recruitment fairs and teacher outreach • Improve OST program engagement through attendance monitoring, high-quality programming, incentives, and employing young staff (e.g., college students or recent college graduates) • Facilitate participation through transportation services and coordinated program offerings
Quality of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ promising practices to improve quality of care, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality rating and improvement systems ○ Raise standards and measure and monitor quality ○ Expand accreditation ○ Provide financial incentives to improve quality • Support the professional development of the ECE workforce through coaching, mentoring, professional learning communities, and other mechanisms • Track children from preschool to elementary grades to measure impact of early learning programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ quality improvement strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical support, training, professional development, and credentialing ○ Raise standards and measure and monitor quality and child outcomes
Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a fully aligned P–3 system that improves school readiness and capitalizes on early investments • Invest in longitudinal data systems to measure ECE outcomes and link them to K–12 performance and other key indicators of child well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a nonprofit intermediary to provide technical assistance, establish data systems, coordinate across agencies, and engage in marketing and outreach • Configure a management structure consistent with a mix of school-based and off-site providers
Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated funding stream for ECE programs (e.g., special tax levies) • Prioritize education funding (e.g., Title I funds, Proposition 30 funds) for ECE programs • Attract full-fee families to public ECE programs to stabilize funding • Engage employers as an added source of private support for ECE for their employees or the community more generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated funding stream for OST programs (e.g., general fund set-asides, special tax levies) • Use the nonprofit intermediary to raise private and public funds

It is worth noting that a number of the strategies listed in Table S.2 are already employed in Santa Monica, such as the use of financial incentives for quality improvement (specifically through tiered reimbursement for ECE) and the engagement of employers to infuse private support for ECE in the community (namely, through development agreements).

Policy Options and Recommendations

Table S.3 provides a summary of our recommendations that respond to the issues that emerged in the course of the research. Some of the recommendations are relevant for the full range of ESAC services; others are specific to ECE or OST. Those recommendations that could be implemented in the short term are marked with a single asterisk; a double asterisk marks those recommendations that would require more time to develop and implement. A dagger denotes recommendations that would require significant new resources to implement. In many cases, we draw on the best practices and other innovative models we identified, although we typically recommend piloting major new approaches, even if they have been tried in other settings. A more complete discussion of the recommendations is contained in the body of the report; we also discuss the merits and drawbacks of alternative policy options when there is no clear policy course.

The recommendations are grouped in Table S.3 in relation to the four themes associated with the study questions: access and participation (recommendations A1 to A8), quality of care (recommendations Q1 to Q9), service delivery (recommendations S1 to S3), and financing (recommendations F1 to F7). From the perspective of the ESAC system as a whole, the specific recommendations support achievement of a set of interrelated objectives: obtaining data to support decisionmaking, improving information flows and addressing other barriers to care access, incentivizing and improving program quality, addressing alignment and other service delivery issues, and diversifying the funding base.

Obtain Data to Support Decisionmaking

Decisionmaking can almost always be improved by having more and better data. This project has contributed to that objective. Going forward, we recommend the following additional steps to support data-driven decisionmaking regarding ESAC:

- To better understand the care needs and experiences of families in Santa Monica, collect periodic data from a representative sample of parents (for example, annual or biennial data collection efforts that are representative of the population of Santa Monica and have sufficiently large samples to provide results for subgroups of interest) (A3).
- To support targeted quality improvement efforts and determine if those efforts are working, collect periodic independent assessments of ECE and OST program quality (Q1).
- To further monitor the developmental needs of children and the impact of quality improvement (QI) efforts, collect kindergarten readiness data from individual children that can be linked with preschool developmental assessments and subsequent school performance (Q4).

Table S.3. Summary of Recommendations for ESAC in Santa Monica

Care Type		Recommendations
a. Access and Participation (A)		
Both	* * **†	A1. Develop a web-based portal for one-stop information on ECE and OST care providers and sources of financial support, including options for subsidies A2. Explore reestablishing a centralized waiting list specific to Santa Monica A3. Collect periodic data from a representative sample of parents on care use and need
ECE	** ** *	A4. Consider options for expanding infant/toddler slots in existing programs or new programs A5. Develop a strategic plan for expanding public preschool slots for fee-paying families and increase awareness of this option A6. Give priority enrollment for preschool slots in SMMUSD schools to neighborhood children who will continue on to kindergarten
OST	** *†	A7. Coordinate OST offerings to meet programming and scheduling needs of children and families, and ensure that participants can access the offerings with appropriate prorated fees A8. Develop transportation options to shuttle students from site to site
b. Quality of Care (Q)		
Both	**† **† *	Q1. Collect periodic independent assessments of ECE and OST program quality to support QI initiatives Q2. Create incentives and capacity for improving ECE and OST program quality Q3. Align QI initiatives with developmental needs of children
ECE	**† ** *	Q4. Collect kindergarten readiness data that can be linked with preschool developmental assessments and subsequent student performance Q5. Incorporate specific features in public preschool programs likely to attract full-fee families Q6. Consider city subsidies for FCCHs in exchange for targeted QI
OST	**† * **	Q7. Improve skills of OST program staff Q8. Address safety concerns related to OST facilities open to the public Q9. Improve quality of OST programming, with a focus on broadening the scope of available activities to appeal to middle- and higher-income families
c. Service Delivery (S)		
ECE	**	S1. Develop a more closely integrated preschool to early public elementary system
OST	* **	S2. More closely connect OST staff and their activities with the K-8 staff and academic program S3. Consider merits and drawbacks of contracting out OST programming to providers who operate on public-school campuses and/or other sites
d. Financing (F)		
Both	* * * * **	F1. Encourage private- and public-sector employers to offer dependent care FSAs and to consider other ways of providing child care funding assistance to their employees F2. Use web-based portal and other outreach methods (e.g., public awareness campaign) to increase parent knowledge and take-up of tax code subsidies for ESAC F3. Encourage ESAC providers to routinely provide families with documentation needed to obtain reimbursement through tax subsidies or employer-based plans F4. Encourage enrollments by fee-paying parents in public programs to provide more sustainable funding and increase economic diversity F5. Explore the option of establishing a nonprofit intermediary to support ESAC services in the city
ECE	*	F6. Examine options to (a) reallocate a portion of Title I funds or (b) use a portion of Proposition 30 funds to support preschool programming through expanded slots or improved quality of existing slots
OST	*	F7. Review potential for relevant city agencies to qualify for state ASES and 21st CCLC funding and develop a strategic plan to secure funding if merited

NOTE: * denotes a recommendation that could be implemented in the near future. ** denotes a recommendation that may take more time to develop and implement. † denotes a recommendation that may require significant resources to enact.

Other recommendations also contribute to this goal, such as the centralized waiting list, which will provide more accurate information on areas of unmet need (A2). We discuss these recommendations next.

Improve Information Flows and Address Other Barriers to Care Access

Although a number of the issues related to access and participation arise because of the complex web of federal and state funding streams, eligibility requirements, and regulations over which the city has little control, there are strategies it can consider to improve information flows and to make the ESAC system work better for families in Santa Monica. The following recommendations are designed to support this goal:

- Establish a web-based portal for one-stop information on ECE and OST care providers and sources of financial support (both subsidies and tax-based options) to ensure that families have the information they need to support their care decisions. A web-based portal allows for more frequent updating, is more affordable to maintain, and was suggested by parents (A1).
- Explore reestablishing a centralized waiting list specific to Santa Monica to facilitate timelier and better matching of children to slots for which they qualify (A2).
- Consider options for expanding infant/toddler slots in existing programs or new programs if warranted by information on excess demand (e.g., from surveys (A3) or the waiting list (A2)) (A4).
- Develop a strategic plan for expanding public preschool slots for fee-paying families, following successful models in other communities, as a way to create more economically integrated programs and increase awareness of this option through the web portal (A1) and other mechanisms (A5).
- Give priority for preschool enrollments in SMMUSD schools to neighborhood children who will continue on to kindergarten as a way to support preschool–elementary school alignment, facilitate successful preschool to kindergarten transitions, and increase principal and elementary teaching staff buy-in (A6).
- Coordinate the content and schedule of OST offerings—following successful models in other communities that use social media and other outreach mechanisms to understand family needs (e.g., regarding offerings and schedules) and to engage students—and ensure that youth participants can access the activities offered at various sites with appropriate prorated fees (A7).
- Develop a transportation option (perhaps working with the transportation department) to shuttle students from school sites to OST sites (A8).

Incentivize and Improve Program Quality

An optimal strategy would be to make a clear public commitment to high-quality programs and QI. These efforts are likely to pay off in terms of creating better learning environments for children and improving their school performance; this reality can help to justify the costs associated with implementing some of these efforts. Moreover, improving ESAC program quality can further goals with respect to program access and participation (e.g., more diversity). The following recommendations are designed to support a commitment to quality:

- Create incentives (e.g., QI grants, expanded tiered reimbursement) for programs to improve quality and develop local QI capacity (e.g., expansion of tiered reimbursement, professional development supports, the planned training facility in the new civic center Early Childhood Education Center) (Q2).
- Align QI initiatives with the developmental needs of children, such as continuity of care in the early years and varied and developmentally appropriate OST offerings for school-age children (Q3).
- Incorporate specific features in public-school preschools such as dual-language immersion programs likely to attract full-fee families (Q5).
- As a motivator and support for improving quality, consider financial supports specifically for FCCCH providers linked to QI goals targeting areas in need of improvement (Q6).
- Improve skills of OST program staff through standards for education and training and desired competencies, ongoing professional development, and on-site supervision (Q7).
- Address safety concerns related to public facilities through specific policies and increased staff-to-student ratios (Q8).
- Improve the quality of OST programming, with a focus on broadening the scope of available activities to appeal to middle- and higher-income families (Q9).

Align System Components and Address Other Service Delivery Issues

The two primary service delivery issues identified concern with alignment and public provision of ESAC services versus private provision. Two recommendations pertain to alignment:

- Develop a more closely integrated preschool to early elementary system for both on- and off-campus programs, drawing where possible on successful systems (P–3 systems) in other communities (S1).
- More closely connect OST staff efforts with K–8 staff efforts by mechanisms such as an on-site OST coordinator for each school campus, integrated K–8 and OST in-service and other trainings, and other strategies used in successful OST systems in other cities (S2).

Alignment between preschools and elementary schools will also be facilitated by giving priority to neighborhood children in preschool enrollments, as already discussed (A6).

Regarding public versus private delivery of OST services, there may be a tradeoff between cost and quality: Services provided by a public-sector agency may be more costly, but quality may be higher as well. Even if a private provider can deliver the same program quality at lower cost, the government agency needs to consider the added administrative cost of contracting with outside CBOs and the costs of performance monitoring which may otherwise offset any cost savings. Direct provision offers greater control over the services provided and the potential for higher quality and greater public accountability. On the other hand, CBOs may be able to generate synergies with other services they provide and thereby provide more integrated and effective services at lower cost. With those tradeoffs in mind, we make the following recommendation with respect to OST:

- Consider the merits and drawbacks of contracting out OST programming on school campuses and/or at other sites to nonpublic providers, drawing on the knowledge base regarding performance-based accountability systems and their ability to incentivize organizations to provide high-quality services and to hold them accountable for meeting measureable objectives and piloting any new models for OST delivery (S3). If the city opts to pursue contracting out, a pilot outsourcing program at one or two school sites would provide information regarding costs and benefits to guide the possible expansion of this approach.

Diversify the Funding Base

In considering policy options for sustainable ESAC funding, it is clear that there is no single untapped funding source that will provide stable long-term funding for ESAC in the city. Rather, the optimal strategy would appear to be to develop a diverse portfolio of public and private funding, where the public side would include as many of the federal, state, and local sources as possible and the private side would include fees paid by families and contributions from other private entities, such as employers and the philanthropic community. In many respects, Santa Monica already relies on a diverse mix of funding sources to pay for ESAC. But there is room to diversify even further, as indicated in the following recommendations:

- Encourage private- and public-sector employers, as part of more family-friendly workplace practices, to offer dependent care FSAs and to consider the value of providing child care funding assistance to their employees (F1).
- Use the web-based portal and other outreach strategies (e.g., social media) to increase the take-up of tax code subsidies for ECE and OST, which are especially beneficial for lower- to middle-income taxpayers (F2).

- Encourage ECE and OST providers to routinely provide the required documentation (and instructions) needed for parents to obtain reimbursement through tax subsidies or FSAs (F3).
- Enhance the sustainability of public funding streams for ECE and OST by integrating fee-paying families and subsidized families into the same programs, a model already in place in Santa Monica and one that is being adopted more fully in other communities (F4).
- Explore the option of establishing or designating a nonprofit intermediary to channel public resources as well as private donations from foundations, businesses, and individuals into the provision of ESAC services in the city and to function as a central resource for innovation and technical assistance, for the creation and dissemination of data systems, for outreach to parents and the public, and for advocacy efforts (F5).
- Specifically for ECE, assess options for reallocating a portion of Title I funds or using a portion of Proposition 30 funds to create additional preschool slots or to improve the quality of existing slots, considering whether the return to using Title I funds to extend or improve ECE programming is higher than the return to allocating those funds to enhanced services during the elementary grades or whether the gains to investing Proposition 30 funds in ECE programming likewise exceeds the returns to restoring funding to other areas of education spending (F6).
- Specifically for OST, review the potential for city agencies to qualify for state ASES funding (more likely) or federal CCLC funding (less likely) and develop a strategic plan for winning such funding if warranted (F7).

A Stronger ESAC System Within the SMC2C Initiative

These recommendations are designed to promote an ESAC system that is an integral part of the SMC2C initiative. Adopting some or all of these recommendations would allow the city to move toward an ESAC system that is:

- **integrated.** The system would be better integrated across the age groups being served, from birth to kindergarten entry and from kindergarten entry through the school years. It would also be integrated across the public and private sectors.
- **inclusive.** The system would endeavor to serve children and families in the city in more economically diverse programs with the likely benefit, as well, of increased diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and language.
- **aligned.** The system would better align early education with the elementary grades and would more closely link the education that takes place during the school day with the care provided before and after school and during summer and school breaks.

- **high-quality.** The achievement of high quality in ECE and OST programs would be prioritized, supported, and recognized through incentives to achieve high quality and through objective measures that document when high quality is achieved.
- **innovative.** The system would seek to employ innovative and data-driven strategies that respond to the unique needs of the city’s residents. Where possible, the city and its partners in the public and private sector would take advantage of new technologies (e.g., web-based tools) and communication tools (e.g., social media) to support information gathering, communication, and service delivery.
- **evidence-based.** The system would collect relevant data and information to determine the quality of the services being delivered and use that information to target quality improvement efforts. Data on school readiness and academic success outcomes also would be used to hold providers accountable and provide feedback that would guide further quality improvements.
- **diversified.** A diverse portfolio of public and private resources would support the system, taking full advantage of federal, state, and local funding streams and tax subsidies that provide financial supports to qualifying families and motivating the philanthropic and business communities to contribute as well.

Together, with these features, the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders in the community have an opportunity to build a more seamless ESAC system that meets the needs of the city’s children and families and that optimizes public investments in its future human capital.

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Abbreviations

ACS	American Community Survey
AGI	adjusted gross income
APP	Alternative Payment Program
ASES	After School Education and Safety (program)
BGCM	Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands
Cal-SAFE	California School Age Families Education
CalWORKs	California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids
CBO	community-based organization
CCLC	21 st Century Community Learning Centers
CDE	California Department of Education
CDS	Child Development Services (Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District)
CFC	Connections For Children
CREST	Childcare, Recreation, Enrichment, and Sports Together
CSPP	California State Preschool Program
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EHS	Early Head Start
ECE	early care and education
ELC	Early Learning Center
ESAC	early and school-age care
FCCH	family child care home
FPL	federal poverty line
FSA	flexible spending account
FTE	full-time equivalent
FFY	federal fiscal year
FY	fiscal year

HS	Head Start
IEP	individualized education program
IISS	Intensive Intervention Summer School
JAMS	John Adams Middle School
K–8	kindergarten through eighth grade
LA STEP	Los Angeles Steps to Excellence Program
LAUP	Los Angeles Universal Preschool
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAFCC	National Association for Family Child Care
OST	out-of-school-time
P–3	Preschool through third grade
PAL	Police Activities League
PASA	Providence After School Alliance
PD	professional development
PFA	Preschool for All
PSS	Partners for Student Success
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
QI	quality improvement
QRIS	quality rating and improvement system
R&R	resource and referral agency
RTT	Race to the Top
Samohi	Santa Monica High School
SFY	state fiscal year
SMC	Santa Monica College
SMC2C	Santa Monica Cradle to Career
SMI	state median income
SMMCTA	Santa Monica Malibu Classroom Teachers Association
SMMUSD	Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
TK	transitional kindergarten

UCLA

University of California, Los Angeles

VAP

Virginia Avenue Park

1. Introduction

The landscape of child care and early learning programs in the City of Santa Monica is complex, whether viewed in terms of the mix of public and private providers and other stakeholders or in terms of the array of funding streams that subsidize program costs for eligible families. As is true for the state as a whole, the current system has evolved in response to changes in federal, state, and local priorities and initiatives. Future shifts in funding levels, program auspices, and other program features are likely given the policy environment and budget outlook at each level of government. With our growing understanding of the importance of high-quality early learning experiences and the value of the extended day for out-of-school-time learning, there is an even greater imperative to ensure that the child care system—and the public funds that support it—meet the needs of local families while also providing opportunities for optimal growth and development for the children who participate.

This is a particularly opportune time for the city to examine its system of early care and education and out-of-school-time learning programs. Building upon a partnership to address youth violence and mental health initiated in 2010, the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica–Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Santa Monica College (SMC), and other community partners have formed the Santa Monica Cradle to Career (SMC2C) Working Group.¹ SMC2C is charged with examining youth well-being from many angles, as evidenced by the recently released *Youth Wellbeing Report Card* (SMC2C, 2012). The *Report Card* places a spotlight on a range of issues, including youth physical health and development, cognitive development and academic success, and social and emotional well-being, with indicators showing critical gaps for some segments of the city’s population. SMC2C recognizes that the city and other stakeholders have an opportunity and a challenge to provide children and youth with opportunities for healthy growth and development starting at birth and continuing through the school-age years. SMC2C uses a collective impact framework, in which multiple concerned stakeholders come together to solve a social problem; the central idea is that large-scale change requires all concerned stakeholders to act together. Collective impact efforts are marked by the presence of a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone organizational support (Kania and Kramer, 2011).

The focus on early and school-age care programs in Santa Monica as part of the SMC2C initiative is also in line with the larger policy interest at the state and national level. At all levels of government, there is often bipartisan support for investing in programs that support early learning to promote greater school readiness, and in strategies to extend the school-day learning to include programming after school and during the summer months. Nationwide, for example,

¹ For more information, see the SMC2C (undated) website.

40 states now offer state-funded preschool programs for three- or four-year-olds; in several states, programs are available to all children regardless of income (Barnett et al., 2013). In a recent survey of 129 cities with populations of more than 100,000, 59 percent were implementing some form of coordinated after-school programming, with features such as a coordinating entity, a common data system, and a focus on program quality (Simkin et al., 2013). For both early and school-age care, the last decade has been a time of increased public funding, albeit largely through programs targeted at low-income or otherwise disadvantaged children, with the aim of expanding access, improving quality, and building more coordinated systems.

Within this context, the goal of this report is to provide the City of Santa Monica with the data and analysis required to make effective use of available sources of public funding and of the existing provider infrastructure in the public and private sectors to deliver effective and sustainable early and school-age care programs. Guided by the objectives of SMC2C, we seek to answer the following questions:

- How will state (and federal) budget and policy changes affect the system of infant and toddler care, preschool and prekindergarten programs, and school-age programs in the City of Santa Monica in terms of access, quality, effectiveness, and sustainability?
- How can new funding sources be integrated with existing funding streams, including subsidy and fee structures, to simplify and sustain the mix of programs and services required to meet the needs of families in the city?
- How can the current system of early care and learning programs and school-age programs be improved or redesigned to address gaps in service, raise quality, streamline service delivery, and strengthen and reconfigure the funding structure?

In addressing these questions, our focus is on two age groups of children: the early years, from birth to the age of kindergarten entry; and the school-age years, from kindergarten through high school. For these two age groups, we distinguish the following care types:

- *Early care and education (ECE) programs* serving infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children in home and center settings prior to kindergarten entry. Programs may follow an academic-year calendar with or without a summer care option or they may provide year-round care.
- *Out-of-school-time (OST) programs* serving kindergarten through eighth grade (K–8) school-age children in the hours before or after the school day, on weekends, and on school breaks (winter, spring, and summer).²

² In this study, we focused on programs serving K–8 school-age children; OST programs also serve children in grades 9–12 but were not the focus of this work.

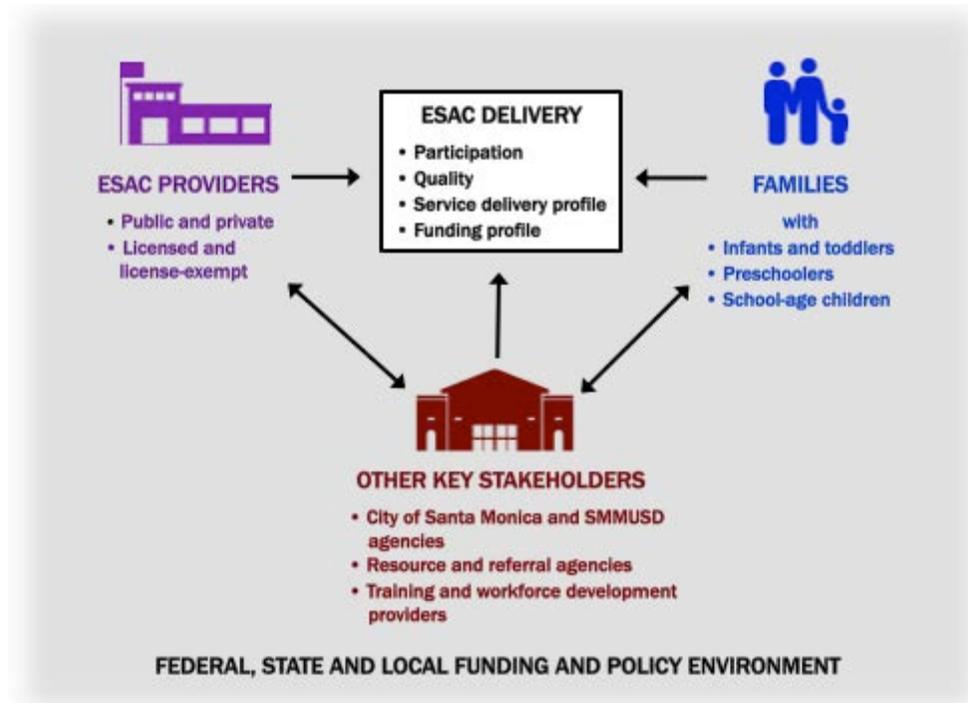
Collectively, we refer to both types of programs—ECE and OST—as *early and school-age care* (ESAC) programs. Our primary interest is with ESAC programs that operate within the City of Santa Monica. Thus, we do not include those programs within SMMUSD that operate in Malibu. In addition, our central focus is on licensed providers, both small and large family child care homes (FCCHs) and centers, or license-exempt school-age programs. For the most part, we do not have information regarding the informal care sector sometimes referred to as family, friend, and neighbor care.

In the remainder of this section, we provide an overview of the framework that guided our study approach and the specific study components we engaged in. We then provide a road map for the rest of the report.

Study Framework and Approach

Our study was guided by a framework for provision of ESAC in Santa Monica depicted in Figure 1.1. On the right side of the schematic, a blue icon represents the families who have children in need of ECE or OST care. The purple icon on the left represents ESAC providers that offer ECE and OST services; this group includes public, private, licensed, and license-exempt providers. The interaction between families and children on the right (considered the demand side of the ESAC market) with the providers on the left (the supply side) produces the resulting delivery of services, depicted in the central white box. The arrows represent influence and interaction between the groups.

Figure 1.1. Framework for ESAC Provision



Key topics of interest for ESAC include four interrelated themes that form the building blocks for our analysis:

- *Access and participation*: which children are eligible to participate in the array of programs and the resulting patterns of participation.
- *Quality of care*: the nature of the ECE and OST programs, the adequacy of those services for providing safe and developmentally appropriate care, and the opportunities for innovative programming.
- *Service delivery profile*: the mix of providers in the public and private sectors and the vehicles for providing publicly funded subsidies for care, whether through direct provision by government agencies, by contracts or grants to service providers, or by vouchers provided to families that can be used to pay for care.
- *Financing*: the amounts and sustainability of public and private sources of funds used to pay for ESAC, including federal, state, and local sources on the public side and private sources that include families, employers, and community-based organizations (CBOs).

The framework also recognizes that there are other key stakeholders (illustrated by the red icon at the bottom of Figure 1.1) that interact with families and providers (which, in turn, interact with stakeholders) and also influence ESAC outcomes. These stakeholders include the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, resource and referral agencies, and training and workforce development providers, among others. Finally, all of these actors and aspects of care delivery exist in a funding and policy environment specific to the federal, state, and local levels, represented by the large gray box that forms the background of Figure 1.1.

Given the complexity of the ESAC system, we employed a variety of methods to address the research and policy questions, including literature and document reviews, key informant interviews, focus groups, analysis of existing data, and the collection of new data. In particular, as illustrated in Figure 1.2, we carried out the following study components:

- To gain perspective on the need for ESAC and existing gaps, we examined publicly available information on the city's demographics (in particular, residents with children). We also analyzed parent survey data collected by the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD that related to the research questions of this project. For an additional perspective, we conducted five focus groups with Santa Monica parents, where they described how they select care and discussed concerns they have with care and care access in the community.
- To develop a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of ESAC programs, we constructed an inventory of local programs for both ECE and OST. The inventory was based on reviewing materials sent by the city, SMMUSD, and other partners and through

a series of interviews with various providers in the community. To better understand the cost of care in the community, we also collected data from a small sample of ESAC providers regarding program features, revenues, and costs.

- To learn about the views of other key stakeholders in the community, we extended our interviews to include representatives from a broad range of organizations and discussed topics centered on all aspects of the ESAC system.
- To sharpen our understanding of the funding and policy environment, we relied on the interviews with providers and stakeholders, as well as a review of documents available from relevant organizations (e.g., the California Legislative Analyst’s Office). This allowed us to understand the current funding landscape and how any future policy changes might affect the system. We also looked to best practices and models used in other communities in California and in other states (identified through our interviews and a literature review) for alternative approaches to service delivery and strategies for sustainable funding.

Figure 1.2. Relationship of Study Components to Framework for ESAC Provision



With the goal of providing actionable recommendations for the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders, the results from each of the study components were synthesized to identify the key issue areas regarding access and participation, quality, service delivery, and funding. We then considered policy options and specific recommendations that would allow the city and SMMUSD to use available public resources devoted to ESAC programs most effectively, as well as to align these initiatives with the broader set of programs providing services from cradle to career in the community.

Report Structure

The next three chapters lay the groundwork for our analysis. Chapter Two provides a basic demographic portrait of the Santa Monica children and families that are of interest for our analysis of ESAC. Chapter Three gives an overview of the array of federal, state, and local funding sources and mechanisms that subsidize ESAC, detailing those in use in Santa Monica. The outlook for these funding sources is also discussed. Then, Chapter Four describes the landscape of ESAC programs in the city. Readers who are familiar with these topics may choose to move directly to Chapter Five, where we present the results from our information-gathering sessions with parents from both surveys and focus groups to better understand their need for ESAC, their current patterns of use, and their experiences with the system. In Chapter Six, we turn to the information we gleaned from interviews with providers about the services they offer and their thoughts about directions for change. Input from other stakeholders is included in that section as well. Chapter Seven provides the results from interviews we conducted with a small number of ESAC providers in the private and public sectors to gain greater insight into program features and costs. Our review of models from other communities is covered in Chapter Eight. Chapter Nine provides a summary of the issues identified through our analysis and the resulting policy considerations and recommendations for ESAC for the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders.

2. Demographics of Santa Monica Families

According to the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS), Santa Monica had a population of 90,373 persons (U.S. Census Bureau, undated-a). In this section, we briefly present a profile of the city's population in terms of its demographic, social, and economic makeup. For a number of the figures, we contrast Santa Monica with the county of Los Angeles and the state of California. We also consider the size and makeup of the population most relevant for considering ESAC: those under age 18 in the city's population and those attending SMMUSD schools in Santa Monica. This demographic profile serves to provide a sketch of the composition of the community and provides background for understanding the ESAC system, linking to the third research question.

Population Profile

Table 2.1 arrays a number of key demographic, social, and economic statistics for the city, county, and state as measured in the 2011 ACS collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. As of that year, children under age 18 comprised about 13 percent of the city's population, and about 15 percent of households had at least one member in that age range.³ A plurality of the population (69 percent) was non-Hispanic white, while African-Americans and Hispanics made up about 4 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Just over one in five residents was foreign-born, although about 28 percent of persons age five and older spoke a language other than English at home. A scant 4 percent of the population ages 25 and older had less than a high-school diploma, while 65 percent had at least a college degree. About two of every three persons over age 16 were employed. About 12 percent had family income below the federal poverty line (FPL), a figure that reached just 6 percent for children younger than 18.⁴ The population with income below 200 percent of the FPL was about 23 percent; median income for families with children under 18 was \$106,992. Compared with Los Angeles County and the state, Santa Monica has a relatively older, less diverse, more educated, and more affluent population.

³ For purposes of our report, with its focus on early childhood programs and school-age programs through eighth grade, the relevant population is those younger than 14. However, the available data sources typically report results for children under age 18, especially when tabulating measures such as the child poverty rate. The figures reported in Table 2.1 for the youth population will differ from those in the *Youth Wellbeing Report Card* (SMC2C, 2012), as that document includes 18- and 19-year-olds in the youth population.

⁴ The poverty threshold for a family of four in 2011 was \$23,021 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

Table 2.1. Population Characteristics for Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, and California: 2011 ACS

Characteristic	Santa Monica	Los Angeles County	California
Population ages 0 to 17 (%)	13.1	24.1	24.6
Households with one or more children younger than 18 (%)	14.9	36.5	36.6
Population non-Hispanic white (%)	68.6	27.5	39.6
Population Hispanic (%)	14.9	48.1	38.1
Population African-American (%)	3.9	8.4	6.0
Population foreign born (%)	21.7	35.1	27.0
Population ages five and older that speaks a language other than English at home (%)	28.3	57.0	43.8
Population ages 25 and older with less than high-school diploma (%)	4.3	23.8	18.9
Population ages 25 and older with bachelor's degree or higher (%)	64.5	29.2	30.3
Population ages 16 and older employed (%)	67.2	56.6	55.6
Population below the FPL (%)	12.0	18.3	16.6
Population below 200 percent of the FPL (%)	23.3	41.8	37.2
Population ages 0 to 17 below the FPL (%)	6.3	25.8	22.8
Median income for families with children under 18 (\$)	106,992	51,192	59,071

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (undated-a), Tables DP01, DP02, and S1903.

Population of Children and Public-School Children

As of 2011, Santa Monica had nearly 12,000 children younger than 18, with about 3,600 children under the age of five and the remaining 8,300 ranging in age from five to 17 (see Table 2.2). Although there is some variation in the number of children in each of the four age groups shown in the table, it is reasonable to characterize each annual age cohort, starting at birth, as having roughly 700 children. If we apply the 2011 child poverty rate of 6.3 percent (as shown in Table 2.1) to these age cohorts, each single-year age group would be expected to have about 45 children with family income below the poverty line. This is the population of children that would be eligible to enroll in the federal Head Start program.

Table 2.2. Population Ages 0 to 17 in Santa Monica: 2011 ACS

Age Group	Total Population (Number)		Estimated Population in Poverty (Number)^a	
	Total for Multiyear Age Cohort	Average for Single-Year Age Cohort	Total for Multiyear Age Cohort	Average for Single-Year Age Cohort
0 to 4	3,615	723	225	45
5 to 9	3,434	687	225	45
10 to 14	2,711	542	175	35
15 to 17	2,169	723	135	45
Total	11,929	663	—	—

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (undated-a), Table S0101.

NOTE: — = not applicable.

^a Estimated number in poverty based on poverty rate of 6.3 percent for children ages 0 to 17 in 2011 (Table 2.1), applied to the 2011 population figures in the first two columns and rounded to nearest five.

As discussed in the next chapter, other public subsidies for ESAC programs are available to children in families with income up to 70 percent of state median income (SMI), which is approximately equal to 200 percent of the FPL. The Census Bureau does not provide estimates of the number or share of children younger than 18 in families with income below 200 percent of poverty. However, the share is likely no higher than the 23 percent figure for all persons (see Table 2.1), and may even be less, given that the child poverty rate falls below the population poverty rate. Using 12 percent as a lower bound for the percentage of children with income below 200 percent of poverty (twice the child poverty rate) and 23 percent as an upper bound (the rate for the population on average), we would estimate that between 85 and 160 children in each annual age cohort would be eligible for publicly subsidized programs.

Enrollment data for SMMUSD schools located in Santa Monica for the 2011–2012 school year, tabulated in Table 2.3, show that city schools enrolled just over 9,400 students that year. Consistent with the makeup of the Santa Monica population as a whole, students in SMMUSD are more advantaged than their counterparts in the county or state. For example, as shown in Table 2.4, about 34 percent of SMMUSD students are socioeconomically disadvantaged (i.e., receiving free or reduced-price lunch, or neither parent completed high school), compared with 69 percent of Los Angeles County students and 59 percent of students statewide. English-language learner students represent 10 percent of the K–12 student population in Santa Monica (see Table 2.4). The percentage of English-language learner students declines with each successive grade cohort, from 12–17 percent of students in kindergarten and first grade, to 8 percent of those in grades six to eight, to 5–7 percent of those in high school (not shown).

Table 2.3. Students Enrolled in SMMUSD Schools in Santa Monica by Grade: 2011–2012

Grade	Enrolled Students
Kindergarten	716
First	653
Second	687
Third	689
Fourth	629
Fifth	673
Sixth	699
Seventh	729
Eighth	762
Ninth	761
Tenth	780
Eleventh	822
Twelfth	809
Total K–12	9,409

SOURCE: California Department of Education (CDE) (undated).

NOTE: These figures exclude the number of children enrolled in the SMMUSD schools located in Malibu (namely Juan Cabrillo, Point Dume, and Webster elementary schools and Malibu High School).

Table 2.4. Characteristics of Students Enrolled in SMMUSD Schools: 2011–2012

Characteristic	Santa Monica	Los Angeles County	California
a. Students in grades K to 12			
Hispanic or Latino (%)	34	64	52
African-American (%)	7	9	7
English-language learners (%)	10	24	22
Enrolled in special education (%)	11	10	10
Socioeconomically disadvantaged (%)	34	69	59
b. Students in fourth grade			
Proficient or advanced in English language arts (2012) (%)	85	66	67
Proficient or advanced in mathematics (2012) (%)	83	70	71

SOURCE: California Department of Education (CDE) (undated).

NOTE: These figures include children enrolled in all SMMUSD schools, including those in Malibu.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged refers to students receiving free or reduced-price lunch or students whose parents did not complete high school.

Although we do not show this, more than half (58 percent) of English-language learner students in Santa Monica are Spanish speakers. Approximately 34 percent of K–12 students in Santa Monica are of Hispanic ethnicity, compared with 64 percent of county students and 52 percent of students statewide. Seven percent of K–12 students in Santa Monica are African-American, comparable to the 9 percent of county students and 7 percent of California students. Based on the statewide academic achievement test scores, more than four of five fourth-grade students are proficient or advanced in language arts (85 percent) and mathematics (83 percent), which is markedly higher than the county and state averages.

Although Santa Monica children and students are a relatively more advantaged group, there is a range of economic circumstances evident across the city. For example, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), nearly 30 percent of SMMUSD students overall are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch (meaning their family income falls below 185 percent of the FPL), but that share ranges from a low of 6 percent in the 90403 ZIP code to a high of 46 percent in 90405.

California does not yet implement a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment, but the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities (2013) has collected data from the eight SMMUSD elementary schools for three years (2009–2010 to 2011–2012) to assess the skills of kindergartners using the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI is an observational checklist, completed by the kindergarten teacher midway through the academic year, with 103 items to assess skills in five domains: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. With the EDI, children are classified as “on track” in terms of school readiness if they score in the 25th to 100th percentile as determined in a national sample (Janus et al., 2007). Those with an average score that falls below the 25th percentile in the nationally normed sample are classified as “not on

track.” Based on assessments for 566 students with valid data that could be mapped to specific communities, the EDI demonstrated that kindergarteners in Santa Monica are somewhat better prepared across the five developmental domains compared with a national sample (i.e., more than 75 percent scored in the “on track” range). At the same time, the extent to which children would be classified as “not on track” varied across the seven neighborhoods examined, indicating varying degrees of school readiness in the community.

3. ESAC Funding Streams and Policy Environment

ESAC may be paid for by private sources—for example, by families themselves or perhaps by employers—or it may be partially or fully subsidized by federal, state, or local funding streams, either by payments to providers or families or through tax subsidies to families. In this section, we catalogue the various sources of public support for ECE and OST care—noting who is eligible to receive such government subsidies, which funding sources are currently used to pay for care in Santa Monica, and the funding outlook for each source. Our aim is to identify the funding sources that are likely to be most viable and sustainable in Santa Monica in the next five to ten years. This section seeks to inform the first research question regarding federal and state budget and policy changes, as well as the second research question relating to existing funding streams.

Funding Sources for Direct Care Provision or Vouchers

The top section of Table 3.1 provides an overview of the public funding streams that supported ESAC in Santa Monica as of fiscal year (FY) 2011–2012. The bottom section includes several potential sources of federal or state funding for which no funds were available in Santa Monica in that year. Thus, the table captures both actual and potential funding streams. It also denotes whether funding comes from federal, state, or local sources and lists the child ages for which a given funding stream applies. The population eligible for each source is also indicated, along with the funding in Santa Monica for 2011–2012. Additional detail on the two funding line items from the City of Santa Monica general fund for ECE and OST programs are shown in Table 3.2, with the adopted budget figures shown for FY 2011–2012 and the proposed budget for 2013–2014.⁵

As shown in Table 3.1, there is a complex web of federal, state, and local funding streams that support or are potentially available to subsidize care for children from birth to age 12 through payments to providers (grants or contracts) or payments to families in the form of vouchers.⁶ Most funding streams target disadvantaged children, although the eligibility requirements vary. Several programs aspire to provide universal coverage, but funding limits

⁵ Table 3.1 excludes the employee child care subsidies line item included in the City’s Youth Budget for ECE, about \$30,000 in the two budget years shown. In contrast to the other programs listed in Table 3.1, these funds can be viewed as a fringe benefit for City employees, rather than as funding for subsidized care more generally available in the community.

⁶ Smaller funding streams not mentioned here include the Cal-Learn and California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) programs. See Karoly, Reardon, and Cho (2007) for details for all but the Santa Monica funding streams.

Table 3.1. Current and Potential Federal, State, and Local Funding Streams for ESAC in Santa Monica: Fiscal Year 2011–2012

ESAC Funding	Funding Source	Ages Served	Target Population	2011–2012 Funding in Santa Monica (1,000\$)
(a) Current Funding Streams				
Early Head Start and Head Start	Federal	0 to 5	Children with family income below the FPL	2,672
California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Child Care and Alternative Payment Program (APP)	Federal, State	0 to 12	Children in families participating in CalWORKs or with working parent and family income below 70% of SMI	473
Title 5 Child Development and California State Preschool	Federal, State	0 to 12	Children with family income below 70% of SMI	2,495
LAUP	Local	4	Universal (limited funding)	402
Santa Monica Child Care Subsidy and Growing Place Subsidy	Local	0 to 5	Universal or children in families with low income	950
City of Santa Monica OST Funding	Local	5 to 12	Universal or children in families with low income	5,681
(b) Potential Funding Streams				
Title I ^a	Federal	3 to 5	Children in high-poverty schools	–
21 st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)	Federal	5 to 12	Children in low-performing schools	–
After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program	State	5 to 12	Universal (limited funding)	–

SOURCE: Based on Karoly, Reardon, and Cho (2007), Table 3.1, and authors' analysis of other program documents.

NOTE: – = not applicable.

^a Title I funds may be allocated by districts for preschool services or services at later grades. SMMUSD receives Title I funding but no funds were allocated for preschool services.

Table 3.2. City of Santa Monica General Fund Budget for ESAC Programs: 2011–2012 and 2013–2014

ESAC Funding	Adopted Budget for 2011–2012 (\$)	Proposed Budget for 2013–2014 (\$)
ECE Funding		
Connections For Children (CFC) Child Care Subsidy and Family Support	752,363	851,172
Growing Place (Marine Park Child Development Center)	165,372	169,506
<i>ECE Subtotal</i>	<i>949,735</i>	<i>1,020,678</i>
OST Funding		
CREST (Childcare, Recreation, Enrichment, and Sports Together) ^a	1,904,664	3,333,317
Police Activities League (PAL)	1,735,062	1,605,342
Virginia Avenue Park (VAP)	1,484,157	1,706,593
Camps (Camp Santa Monica, Sports Experience, Rosie's Girls)	556,796	1,088,654
<i>OST Subtotal</i>	<i>5,680,679</i>	<i>7,733,906</i>
ESAC Total	6,630,414	8,754,584

SOURCE: Documentation provided by City of Santa Monica for FY 2011–2012 Youth Budget and FY 2013–2014 Youth Budget.

^a This line item includes the following programs: Upper CREST, CREST Enrichment, CREST Homework Club, CREST Playground Access, and CREST Sports.

mean that the programs are not able to provide care for all families that might want to participate. Based on funding in FY 2011–2012, the funding streams collectively provided \$12.7 million in subsidized ESAC in Santa Monica, with the bulk of the funding (52 percent) coming from the City's general fund. Federal and state sources provide much of the rest (45 percent), with a small residual from other local sources (3 percent). In the remainder of this section, we briefly describe each funding source and its current relevance for ESAC in Santa Monica.

Funding Streams for ECE and OST (Birth to Age 12)

Three funding streams provide care subsidies for the full birth-to-12 age range (second and third entries in the top section of Table 3.1). **Title 5 Child Development** programs, funded by the state of California, serve low-income children from birth to age three as well as school-age children in licensed FCCHs and center settings financed by federal and state funds (and parent fees), with an emphasis on developing the whole child. Parents must have a demonstrated need for care, which typically means they must be employed. Further, family income must be below 70 percent of SMI, currently set at \$42,216 for a family of three and \$46,896 for a family of four (CDE, 2011).⁷ These income ceilings are about 200 percent of the 2013 FPL for families of the

⁷ The CDE income ceilings for Title 5 and other state-administered programs, benchmarked against SMI, vary with family size, are updated only periodically (most recently in July 2011), and do not vary with the differential cost of living across the state. The minimum income threshold occurs for a family of two and was \$39,396; the maximum

same size (\$19,530 and \$23,550, respectively) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). At the same time, these income ceilings are far below estimates of the budget required for families of various sizes in Los Angeles County to meet their needs. According to the California Budget Project (2013), a single parent with two children is estimated to need an annual budget of \$77,546 to meet basic needs, a figure that rises to \$83,561 for a family with two adults and two children (and both parents working). In Santa Monica, Title 5 Child Development funding supports slots in one school-based infant/toddler center and eight elementary and middle schools offering before- and/or after-school programming, as well as one nonprofit center.

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (**CalWORKs**) **Child Care and Alternative Payment Program (APP)** funds are provided in the form of a voucher to parents that allows greater flexibility in selecting care options that meet the parents' need for care while they work. The voucher funds usually can be used for license-exempt care, as well as licensed care settings. **CalWORKs Child Care** provides vouchers for part- or full-time care to CalWORKs Stage 1, 2, or 3 recipients and is funded by federal and state sources. The time in subsidized care for children from birth to age 12 is based on parental need (i.e., working or engaged in other work-related activities); family fees or copayments may apply depending on the level of family income and the provider's rate (see Karoly, Reardon, and Cho, 2007).

The **Alternative Payment Program (APP)**, supported with federal and state funds, makes vouchers available to children in non-CalWORKs families who are receiving child protective services; at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; or have a family income below 70 percent of SMI with a parental work-related need for care—where, again, families may pay some of the cost. In Santa Monica, **Connections For Children (CFC)**—the resource and referral agency (R&R) for Santa Monica and surrounding areas of Los Angeles County (Westside and South Bay)—administers the CalWORKs and non-CalWORKs APP subsidies. As the local R&R, CFC also provides information on local providers to parents and has resources and information for child care providers.⁸

Funding Streams Specific to ECE (Birth to Kindergarten Entry)

Several funding streams are specific to children who have not yet entered kindergarten. Some cover the age span from birth to school entry, while others only support one or two years of preschool education. The first four funding streams we will now discuss award contracts or grants to specific providers for a certain number of slots. They place more emphasis on child development, rather than providing a subsidy for child care so parents can work. Consequently, some fund only part-day programs, a feature that may be less appealing to working parents who

threshold applies to a family of 12 and was \$70,356. See CDE (2011) for the income ceilings that apply for other family sizes between these end points.

⁸ CFC referral services during a year period in 2011–2012 were provided to 367 Santa Monica residents and 83 nonresidents who sought care in Santa Monica (of a total of 450 referral requests). A total of 161 Santa Monica children were served in the subsidy program for the same period.

need full-time care. The fifth funding source provides subsidies directly to parents in the form of a voucher that is used to pay for care at a qualifying provider.

Early Head Start (EHS) and **Head Start (HS)** are federally funded programs through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (first entry in the top section of Table 3.1). EHS provides grants to home- or center-based providers that offer fully subsidized part- or full-time care and other supports for pregnant women and children from birth to age three whose family income falls below the FPL. HS grantees offer fully subsidized part- or full-time care and early learning services in center- and home-based settings for children ages three to five in families below the FPL, along with comprehensive health, education, nutrition, and social services. In Santa Monica, EHS services were available at one public infant/toddler center, although federal funding cuts as a result of the 2013 budget sequestration led to elimination of this program. HS programs are available at seven public preschools.

Federal **Title I** Part A preschool funding is available to high-poverty schools to support school-wide programs or targeted assistance programs and can be used to support fully subsidized full- or part-day ECE programs (first entry in the bottom section of Table 3.1). Although there are four Title I elementary schools in Santa Monica (Edison, McKinley, Muir, and Rogers), Title I funding is not used for preschool programming; rather, it is allocated by SMMUSD toward programming in the elementary grades.

The **California State Preschool Program (CSPP)**, funded with state dollars under Title 5 child development funding, provides fully subsidized part-or full-time preschool programming one or two years before kindergarten entry for children whose family income falls below 70 percent of SMI (third entry in the top section of Table 3.1). CSPP is available at seven public preschools in Santa Monica.

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) offers financial supports to select providers in Los Angeles County to expand care access and raise program quality (fourth entry in the top section of Table 3.1). LAUP is funded through First 5 LA, a county-level agency established in 1998 with the passage of the Proposition 10 tobacco tax initiative. The goal of LAUP is to provide universal access to high-quality preschool for four-year-olds in the county.⁹ LAUP works with preschool providers and awards funding and technical assistance for the program, resulting in a low-cost preschool option for parents.¹⁰ There are four LAUP preschool sites in Santa Monica, three of which are at SMMUSD schools and one at a private provider. LAUP rates providers on a 1 to 5 scale; only providers with a 3 or higher may be LAUP programs. The ratings are not made public, but funding to providers varies depending on the rating.

The **City of Santa Monica Child Care Subsidy** augments the APP voucher-based funding available for families in Santa Monica and provides partially or fully subsidized care for children

⁹ See LAUP (undated) for more information.

¹⁰ For example, in SMMUSD, LAUP preschools cost \$90 a month or are free for income-eligible families (SMMUSD, undated); children of all income levels are eligible to participate.

from birth to kindergarten entry (fifth entry in the top section of Table 3.1, with additional detail in Table 3.2). The City of Santa Monica vouchers are administered by CFC and employ tiered reimbursement rates for providers participating in a CFC training program; with accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) or the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); or participating in LAUP or the Los Angeles Steps to Excellence Program (LA STEP).¹¹ City of Santa Monica general funds also subsidize care at the Marine Park site of **The Growing Place**.

In addition to the direct ECE funding listed in Table 3.2, the City of Santa Monica also has a history of using development agreements as a strategy for funding ESAC; this provides additional spaces and funding to community ESAC providers (see Chapter Four for more detail regarding development agreements).

Funding Streams Specific to OST (School Ages)

There are two potential sources of federal and state support for OST that are not currently utilized and have not been pursued for programs in Santa Monica (second and third entries in the bottom section of Table 3.1). **21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)** is a school-based program funded with federal dollars to offer after-school care to children in high-poverty and low-performing schools. The California **After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program** was funded by Proposition 49 in 2002. ASES funds are available to elementary and middle schools in California that meet specific requirements for program quality and community partnership in their before- and after-school programs. In principal, the program provides universal coverage but funding limits preclude achieving that goal.

City of Santa Monica OST Funding provides funds to school- and community-based providers offering partially or fully subsidized OST care before and after school, as well as during school-year and summer breaks on a universal basis or for children in families with low income (sixth entry in the top section of Table 3.1, with additional detail in Table 3.2). City-funded programs operate at ten elementary and middle schools offering before- and/or after-school programming. (Additional details on the OST programs listed in Table 3.2 are provided in Chapter Four.)

Child Care Subsidies Through the Tax Code

In addition to the publicly funded programs discussed above, two other mechanisms exist to subsidize the cost of care for children under age 13: federal and state income tax credits for child and dependent care and employer-based dependent care flexible spending accounts (FSAs). As summarized in Table 3.3, both mechanisms require that the care is provided so that the parent(s)

¹¹ LA STEP is a quality rating and improvement system in which ECE providers in select areas of Los Angeles County volunteer to be assessed and are given a publicly available quality rating from 1 to 5. Programs in Santa Monica are eligible to participate.

can work or look for work, and that parents have earned income that exceeds the qualifying child care expenses. Generally, the care provider must have a taxpayer ID, a requirement that can be an issue for informal sources of care (e.g., family, friend, and neighbor care). Although families may use one mechanism or the other to obtain a tax subsidy for their care expenses, it is possible to combine the two mechanisms (e.g., by claiming a tax credit for any portion of care expenses not covered by the FSA).

The tax credit is processed through the filing of an income tax return (National Women’s Law Center, 2011, 2012). The value of the tax credit depends upon adjusted gross income (AGI) and the number of children receiving care (see Table 3.3 for an illustration that accounts for both the federal and California credit). For the federal credit, the maximum care expense for one child is \$3,000 per year (\$6,000 per year with two or more children). For AGI below \$15,000, 35 percent of the allowable child care expenses can be claimed for the federal credit. The share of expenses that can be deducted declines on a sliding scale until it reaches 20 percent for those with AGI of more than \$43,000.

A percentage of the allowable federal credit can also be claimed as a credit for California state income taxes through the California Tax Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses.¹²

Table 3.3. Features of Tax-Based Subsidies for ESAC

Federal and State Income Tax Child and Dependent Care Credit			Employer-Based Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts	
Tax filers can claim a nonrefundable federal and state credit depending on AGI and number of children			Employees can exclude up to \$5,000 annually from household taxable income for qualifying care expenses	
Illustrative Maximum Federal and California Credit Amounts by AGI and Number of Children			Illustrative Maximum Credit Amounts by Marginal Tax Rate	
AGI	Maximum Credit with One Child	Maximum Credit with 2+ Children	Marginal Tax Rate (Federal / Total)	Maximum Credit
Less than \$15,000	\$1,575	\$3,150	15% / 28%	\$1,400
\$50,000	\$858	\$1,716	25% / 38%	\$1,900
More than \$100,000	\$600	\$1,200	28% / 41%	\$2,050
Requirements for Both Tax-Based Subsidies				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to dependent children age 12 or younger • Care must be provided so parent(s) can work or look for work • Both parents must have earned income that exceeds qualifying expenses • Care providers must have a taxpayer ID 				

SOURCE: National Women’s Law Center (2011, 2012).

NOTE: Examples are as of the 2012 tax year.

¹² If the federal AGI is less than \$40,000, the California credit is 50 percent of the federal credit; for AGI between \$40,001 to \$70,000, the share falls to 43 percent and then to 34 percent for AGI between \$70,001 and \$100,000. No state credit is allowed if AGI exceeds \$100,000.

With one child, a California resident with AGI below \$15,000 would have a maximum federal and state credit of \$1,575, but just \$600 when AGI is above \$100,000. The credit is doubled when there are two or more children. The federal credit and California credits are nonrefundable, which means it can only offset taxes owed but cannot be used to receive a refund. For this reason, low-income tax filers who do not owe taxes will not benefit from this subsidy.

When an employer offers a dependent care FSA, employees can exclude up to \$5,000 per year from their taxable income. The funds in the FSA can be used to pay for qualifying child care expenses in the specific tax year; any unused funds are not returned. Under this mechanism, as shown in Table 3.3, the value of the FSA depends upon the combined federal and state marginal tax rate. Taxpayers at the 15-percent federal marginal tax rate and a 28-percent combined federal and state rate would pay \$1,400 less in taxes through an FSA. The tax savings reaches \$2,050 for taxpayers in a 28-percent federal tax bracket. Thus, in contrast to the tax credit, the value of the FSA is highest for higher-income taxpayers.

Policy Environment Regarding Funding Streams

Public sector support for ESAC faces both favorable and unfavorable factors that may affect whether public funding for ECE and OST programs at the federal, state, and local levels expands in the future, stays the same, or contracts. Although the forecast is uncertain, in this section we review some of the factors that will likely shape the public sector investments in these services in the future. Table 3.4 provides a preview of the funding outlook that emerges from our brief review in the remainder of this section of the policy and funding environment for each of the major funding streams at the federal, state, and local level that support ESAC. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of this outlook for future funding of ESAC in Santa Monica.

Federal Funding and Policy Outlook

In the past several decades, federal funding for ESAC subsidies and direct services have been subject to shifts in policy priorities with changes in each administration, as well as fluctuations in response to the state of the economy and the budget outlook. Although there has been bipartisan support for ESAC services in recent years and the Obama administration has made a priority of such investments, especially early childhood programs, the outlook is tempered by the prospects of budget-cutting in order to reduce the size of the federal deficit.

In the decade leading up to the Great Recession in 2008–2009, funding for EHS and HS allowed for a relatively stable level of enrollment at 900,000 children per year, according to the Office of Head Start (2013a). Given concerns about the effect of the economic downturn on low-income families, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 added \$2.1 billion in funding for EHS and HS in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009 to be spent over two years. Those funds supported the addition of 61,000 slots. The FFY 2011 and 2012 appropriations included sufficient funding to support that higher enrollment level. However, with the federal budget

Table 3.4. Summary of Funding Outlook by Funding Source

Funding Source	Care Stage Covered	Funding Outlook
Federal Early Head Start and Head Start	ECE	Subject to cuts to reduce federal deficit
Federal Title I	ECE	Subject to cuts to reduce federal deficit
Federal 21st CCLC	OST	Subject to cuts to reduce federal deficit
Federal/State TANF and Child Care Development Fund	ECE, OST	Subject to cuts to reduce federal deficit
California Title 5	ECE, OST	Likely stable at current funding level
California ASES	OST	Likely stable at current funding level
City of Santa Monica	ECE, OST	Subject to cuts given projected future deficits
First 5 Los Angeles (LAUP)	ECE	Likely stable but tax source is declining
Federal/State Tax Subsidies	ECE, OST	Uncertain given potential tax reform
Private funds (families, employers, philanthropies)	ECE, OST	Depends on economic growth and other factors

sequestration that began on March 1, 2013, EHS and HS funding has been subject to automatic cuts that were estimated to eliminate as many as 70,000 spaces nationwide and 8,200 seats in California (Office of Head Start, 2013b; White House, 2013).

Most other federal funding streams related to ESAC are also facing cuts as a result of sequestration. Cuts to Title I funding were estimated to reach \$750 million nationwide and \$92 million for California. The CCLC initiative, funded at \$1.15 billion for FFY 2012, has also faced a 5-percent cut. The federal Child Care Development Fund, which supports child care subsidies, was projected to experience a reduction of 30,000 children receiving subsidized care as a result of sequestration (2,000 of these in California), although the FFY 2013 continuing resolution passed by Congress on March 21, 2013, provided for a 5-percent increase in funding to support care for 9,000 additional families.

Although much of the deficit reduction discussion is focused on spending programs, there is also the possibility that tax subsidies will be targeted as well. Thus, there is uncertainty about the future of the federal child care and dependent tax credit. For example, there may be future reductions in the amount of expenses that can be claimed and the credit rate. It is also unlikely that the credit would be converted to a refundable credit so that it would be more valuable for low-income families.

While the immediate focus is on sequestration, the Obama administration has made ECE programming a priority during the president's first and second term. The addition of the Early Learning Challenge to the federal Race to the Top (RTT) initiative provided the impetus for states to put early learning programs at the front of the policy agenda. Those states that won the Early Learning Challenge grants, including California, are using the funds to make investments in more effective ECE systems and in improving ECE program quality. In his 2013 State of the

Union message, President Obama expanded the administration's ECE agenda even further with his call for making high-quality preschool available to all children. Through this new proposed funding stream, the administration clearly plans to promote policies to use federal resources in partnership with the states to increase the number of low- and moderate-income children who have access to quality early learning programs. If this initiative receives congressional support, there may be an influx of federal money into those states that meet the requirements for the federal-state cost-sharing approach.

State Funding and Policy Outlook

The California budget outlook in recent years has been equally challenging. California has had a long history of state-funded child development and early learning programs and had one of the first state preschool programs in the country. Yet the Great Recession and the ensuing state fiscal crisis led to a significant erosion in both the amount of state funding available to support Title 5 child development programs and the state contribution to CalWORKs and non-CalWORKs APP child care subsidies. As of state fiscal year (SFY) 2012–2013 compared to SFY 2008–2009, funding for child care and early learning programs in the state had fallen by almost \$1 billion, representing 110,000 spaces (25 percent of the total), a cumulative disinvestment in excess of \$2 billion over four years (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2012). Although the fiscal outlook for the state is starting to improve with the rebound in the California economy and the passage of Proposition 30 (the governor's 2012 ballot initiative to raise certain taxes to close the budget gap), the funding cuts for child development (including CSPP) and subsidized care are unlikely to be quickly restored. Indeed, the state budget signed by Gov. Jerry Brown on June 27, 2013, increased funding for child care and development programs in SFY 2013–2014 by a modest \$50.8 million, a small restoration of the cuts experienced since the state's fiscal crisis (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2013).

The passage of Proposition 30 raises the prospect of an infusion of state funds into local school district coffers, as about half of the funds raised from higher sales and income taxes are slated to go to K–12 education. Although Proposition 30 was motivated by a need to restore cuts to public education funding as a result of the Great Recession, some school districts are using the funds to set new education priorities, rather than just restoring the pre-recession status quo. Fresno, for example, is directing Proposition 30 funds into an expansion of their public preschool program, a goal they could not achieve prior to the infusion of the new funds (Mongeau, 2013).

California is also one of 28 states that supplements the federal child care and dependent tax credit with a state tax credit or tax deduction. Prior to 2011, California was one of the few states with a fully refundable tax credit, which made it more valuable for low-income families. In March 2011, the legislature passed SB 86, which repealed the refundable portion of the state tax credit; it is possible that the tax credit could be scaled back further in the future.

Local Funding and Policy Outlook

Local impacts of federal and state funding cuts and policy changes have been felt in Santa Monica in recent years. In 2011, SMMUSD took over the 127 HS slots provided by Delta Sigma Theta Pre-School, which stopped providing services (Los Angeles County Office of Education, 2011). However, HS funding was reduced by 60 slots from October to December 2012 as SMMUSD was not able to fill available slots with eligible children; as of early 2013, SMMUSD had 216 Head Start slots and further reduced their slots to 160 for FY 2013–2014. The federal sequester is expected to reduce HS funding and other federal funding sources to SMMUSD. For HS, reductions of 5 percent will begin in the 2013–2014 school fiscal year for SMMUSD; the current school fiscal year will not be affected. Title 1 funding is expected to be cut by approximately 8 percent and those cuts may begin to occur during the 2012–2013 SMMUSD fiscal year.¹³

Enrollment projections for SMMUSD show annual increases of 1 to 2 percent in the next three to four years (DecisionInsite, 2013). SMMUSD cut \$2.2 million in their 2012–2013 budget and are showing deficits for future fiscal years. Due to state policy changes, SMMUSD is expecting a \$2 million increase in revenue for FY 2013–2014 and is planning to institute across-the-board cuts of \$2 million; this will still leave a \$2 million deficit. A \$1.6 million deficit is projected for FY 2014–2015; a \$1.1 million deficit is projected for FY 2015–2016.¹⁴ Past state budget cuts did affect SMMUSD: In 2011, cuts at the state level to child development programs resulted in SMMUSD cutting their care program for two-year-olds.¹⁵

The local funding streams of First 5 (through the Proposition 10 tobacco tax) and the funding provided by the City of Santa Monica for ECE and OST programs also face some uncertainties. In the case of First 5 California, given reductions in smoking rates over time, the Proposition 10 revenue stream is projected to continue its gradual decline (First 5 California, 2013). This could affect the First 5 Los Angeles portion of the funding for LAUP and other related initiatives in the county serving children from birth to age five. The funding outlook for the City of Santa Monica, while stable at present, is uncertain in the longer term. The city faces a potential budget deficit ranging from \$5.8 million to \$13.2 million by 2017–2018 and is considering instituting budget cuts and revenue increases to avoid these projected deficits (Decavalles-Hughes, 2013). This may result in a less stable outlook for local ECE and OST funding and programming over the next few years.

¹³ Jan Maez, Chief Financial Officer of SMMUSD, interview with the author, April 25, 2013.

¹⁴ Maez interview, 2013.

¹⁵ From key informant interview.

Implications for Santa Monica

Taking the policy and fiscal trends into account and the relevance of each funding source, Table 3.4 provides insight into the potential for the major sources of public support for ECE and OST to be a source for expanded funding in the future. Regardless of whether funding shrinks to lower levels as a result of fiscal austerity or rebounds as the economy and budget outlook improve, the available federal and state funding streams are unlikely to be a major source of new funding for ESAC programming in Santa Monica. There may be some scope for redirecting Title I funding to preschool services and for obtaining CCLC and ASES funding for OST programming, but these programs would likely only reach a small proportion of the Santa Monica population, given the share of the city's population that would be eligible to participate (in the case of Title I and CCLC) or the limits on available funding (in the case of ASES). At the same time, while any one funding stream may not be a significant source of new funds, it may be possible to combine several sources to increase the pool of public funding available for ESAC in Santa Monica.

There may be scope for expanding the dollar value of the tax benefit that Santa Monica families receive through the federal and state child care tax subsidies (tax credit or FSA) by increasing the share of families that take up one or both subsidies, although these funds are a private transfer to families and would not be available for direct service provision.

Although our primary interest in this section has been public funding for ESAC, the final entry in Table 3.4 acknowledges that private dollars from families, employers, and philanthropies also support ESAC. The funding outlook for such private support will be closely tied to the state of the economy as a primary driver. Especially for families, their ability to afford the cost of care is tied to the unemployment rate and the growth in family income. Beyond the obvious link to the level of economic growth, the willingness of employers to subsidize child care costs may also depend on their ability to recruit workers with the skills they require: When skilled workers are in short supply, employers may offer more generous and more varied benefits to attract the workers they seek (Károly and Panis, 2004). This may be especially relevant for Santa Monica given its more educated workforce (see Table 2.1). Support for ESAC from the business community and private philanthropies may also be influenced by their perceptions of the social benefits to investing in ECE or OST programming. In that regard, there has been a marked uptrend in the last decade in support from the private and philanthropic sectors, particularly for investments in ECE (Committee for Economic Development, 2012).

4. Landscape of ESAC Providers in Santa Monica

In this section, we describe the ESAC programs and providers available in Santa Monica and discuss their capacity, funding sources, and other aspects of service delivery. We also use information from Chapter Two regarding cohort size, together with estimates of available capacity, to estimate potential participation rates. We consider ECE providers first, followed by OST providers, although some providers serve children from birth to age 12. As with the rest of our report, our focus is on licensed home- and center-based programs and on license-exempt, public, school-age, care providers. We do not consider license-exempt home-based care, such as hiring a nanny or having a friend, neighbor, or relative provide child care. This section seeks to inform the first and third research questions by providing information about the current system.

ECE Providers in Santa Monica

As summarized in Table 4.1, Santa Monica has an array of licensed programs serving children before they enter kindergarten, including FCCHs, private centers, and public preschools. In this section, we begin by summarizing the numbers of different types of programs and the capacity they provide. We then use those figures to estimate potential ECE participation rates. We also highlight the available information on program quality, as indicated by accreditation and program ratings. We then discuss the role of the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD in ECE provision in the city and the role of CFC, the resource and referral agency for Santa Monica.

Family Child Care Homes

FCCHs are owned by the operator and are considered a for-profit business. Small FCCH licenses allow capacities of up to eight children; large FCCH licenses permit up to 14 children at any one time. FCCHs may serve school-aged children in addition to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

In Santa Monica, as shown in Table 4.1, there are 17 small FCCHs, four of which accept CFC subsidies. At least 76 percent of the 134 available slots are private-pay only, although it is possible that a provider that does not accept CFC subsidies may offer a sliding scale or tuition assistance to low-income families.¹⁶ The primary funding sources for FCCHs are parent fees and vouchers administered by CFC.

¹⁶ We considered all licensed slots at a facility that accepts CFC subsidies as being subsidy slots in our calculation of private-pay only. This likely underestimates the percentage of private-pay slots, as most programs that accept subsidies have a mix of full-fee and subsidy parents.

Table 4.1. Summary of ECE Providers in Santa Monica by Type

Type	Ages Served	Number of Providers				Licensed Capacity (number of slots)	Funding Sources	Accept CFC/ Subsidy (number of providers)	Private Pay Only (percent of slots)
		Total	By Type						
			For-profit	Nonprofit	Public				
Small FCCH	0–12	17	17	0	0	134	Fees CFC	4	76%
Large FCCH	0–12	18	18	0	0	250	Fees CFC LAUP	8	55%
Infant/ toddler centers	0–2	11	2	8	1	208	Fees CFC HS Cal-SAFE	8	21%
Preschool-age centers	3–5	50	18	22	10	2,536	Fees CFC HS Title 5/CSPP LAUP	25	50%
Total	–	96	55	30	11	3,128	–	45	–

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of program documents and key informant interviews.

NOTE: As of January 2013. The count of 11 infant/toddler centers includes nine centers also counted as preschool-age centers. Licensed capacity for infant/toddler centers include only slots licensed for that age group. Licensed capacity for preschool slots exclude infant/toddler slots. Licensed capacity may not correspond with desired capacity. CFC/Subsidy providers may be for-profit, nonprofit, or public. – = not applicable.

There are 18 large FCCHs in Santa Monica, with a total licensed capacity of 250 slots. Eight of the FCCHs accept CFC subsidies, making at least 55 percent of the available slots private-pay only. In addition to the funding sources available to small FCCHs, as of January 2013, there is an LAUP program at one large FCCH in Santa Monica.

Infant/Toddler Centers

Santa Monica has 11 infant/toddler centers serving children from birth to age two. In all but two cases, the centers also serve preschool-age children. Two centers are for-profit and eight are not-for-profit. One center is operated by Child Development Services (CDS) and located on the campus of Santa Monica High School (Samohi). Eight of the centers accept CFC-administered subsidies.

The Samohi center serves the children of teen parents, teaching faculty, and staff at the high school, and Santa Monica residents eligible for EHS. The Samohi center also receives funding to serve the children of enrolled teen parents through the Cal-SAFE program, operated through CDE.

Santa Monica has a total of 208 licensed slots available (considering only slots licensed for the range of birth to age 2), at least 21 percent of which are private-pay only. Some of the providers may offer tuition assistance programs outside of the CFC subsidy; such financial assistance is not reflected in the private-pay calculation. Seven of the ten private infant/toddler

centers in Santa Monica accept subsidies, but may only offer a small number of subsidy slots in relation to their total enrollment (which is not reflected in Table 4.1, as we do not have access to the desired number of full-fee and subsidy slots at each provider). There may be a lack of subsidy spaces for the low-income parent population; this group likely needs infant/toddler care at higher rates as they may need to continue working while their child is very young. In the western portion of Los Angeles County (which includes but is not limited to Santa Monica), only one in five infants and toddlers from low-income families have access to a subsidized slot (Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee, 2012).

Preschool-Age Centers

Preschool-age centers typically serve children ages three to five who are not yet kindergarten-eligible, though specific age ranges accepted may differ by program or center. There are 50 preschool-age centers in Santa Monica, 22 are nonprofit, 18 are for-profit, and the remaining 10 are public. Some private centers have a religious affiliation, while others may follow a specialized curriculum such as Reggio or Montessori. The public programs operate at elementary-school sites, with funding from HS or CSPP; often funds from the two sources are blended together. Three of the public programs also have LAUP classrooms. One nonprofit center receives state Title 5 funding. A total of 25 centers accept CFC subsidies. Of the estimated 2,536 licensed slots, at least 50 percent of these are private-pay only. Funding sources for preschool-age centers are parent fees, CFC-administered subsidies, HS, Title 5/CSPP, and LAUP. Some preschools offer tuition assistance; this is not included in the calculation of private-pay only slots.

Potential ECE Participation

Given the demographic data assembled in Chapter Two and the inventory of available slots in Table 4.1, we can estimate the potential ECE participation rate in nonparental care, assuming that children in Santa Monica enroll only in programs located in the city. We focus on licensed slots available through center-based programs, as a lower-bound estimate of the ECE participation rate, given that slots in FCCH may serve older children as well. Since the demand for care differs by age group, we consider the potential participation rate separately for infants and toddlers (those under age 30 months) and for preschool-age children (assumed to cover ages 31 to 60 months).

As shown in Table 4.2, with roughly 700 children in each single-year age cohort, there are approximately 1,750 children under age two and a half and an equal number from age two and a half to five. For the infants and toddlers, with just 208 slots in center-based programs (see Table 4.1), approximately 12 percent of the city's infants and toddlers can be served in a center setting. Statewide data for California as of 2005 (the most current data available) show that about 13 percent of all infants and toddlers were in center programs (Károly, 2012b). Thus, the available

Table 4.2. Potential ECE Center-Based Program Participation in Santa Monica

Age Group	Estimated SM Cohort Size	Estimated SM Center Slots	Potential SM Resident Participation Rate	California Center Participation Rate (2005)
Infants/toddlers (0 to 30 months)	1,750	208	12%	13%
Preschoolers (31 to 60 months)	1,750	2,536	145%	64%

SOURCE: Karoly (2012b) for statewide participation rates as of 2005.

center-based slots for this age group in Santa Monica are consistent with the statewide participation rate. Infants and toddlers not served by a center-based program have access to slots in the 35 FCCHs in the city, though not all FCCHs serve infants and toddlers (this depends on the policy of the provider).

For preschool-age slots, these calculations produce a participation rate of 145 percent, which reflects the fact that there are approximately 2,500 center slots for children at that age (see Table 4.1) but probably no more than 2,000 age-eligible children in the city. The excess supply allows Santa Monica to provide spaces for preschool-age children living outside the city, a feature of the ECE market that should be attractive to parents who commute to Santa Monica to work and would like to have their preschool-age child in a nearby program. This feature is specific to the preschool-age group, however; there is likely to be considerably more competition for the limited infant and toddler spaces. Also, many of these slots may be in part-day programs that are not designed for use by working families; we do not have an estimate of how many slots are full-day or part-day.

Quality Indicators for ECE Programs

Information on program quality is not routinely collected for FCCHs or center-based programs in Santa Monica. However, accreditation by NAFCC or NAEYC indicates that an FCCH or center has met or exceeded a series of standards designed to ensure that a program is high-quality. Information provided by CFC indicates that 11 of the 61 unique center-based programs represented in Table 4.1 are accredited by NAEYC; one large FCCH is NAFCC-accredited.

In addition, although California does not have a statewide quality improvement (QI) system initiative, several counties are developing local quality rating and improvement systems (QRISs). LA STEP is a relatively new QRIS operating in select areas of Los Angeles County. Programs volunteer to be assessed and are given a rating from 1 to 5 that is publicly posted. According to the LA STEP ratings report as of June 2011, there were five FCCHs, four private centers, and ten public preschools participating in LA STEP in Santa Monica (or 20 percent of Santa Monica

ECE providers).¹⁷ Although the ratings are not made public, LAUP also rates programs based on a number of quality elements, as a 3-star (minimum level to participate), 4-star, or 5-star program.

Given that ECE programs may be both accredited and rated by either or both LA STEP and LAUP, Table 4.3 summarizes the number of providers by type in terms of whether they have only one of these quality indicators or some combination of two or more. CFC offers a tiered reimbursement rate based on participation in the quality rating initiatives (see Table 4.5). Of the 11 centers that are accredited, just two have also been rated by LA STEP. The one FCCH and three centers participating in LAUP have also been rated by LA STEP, but four FCCHs and eight centers have only the LA STEP rating. There were no providers with all three indicators. Overall, among small FCCHs, two of 17 (or 11 percent) are covered by at least one quality initiative. Those shares reach 17 percent for large FCCHs (three of 18 providers) and 43 percent of ECE centers (22 of 61 centers).

Local Public Sector Role in ECE Provision

Both SMMUSD and the City of Santa Monica are involved either directly or indirectly in the provision of ECE services.

SMMUSD

The 11 public ECE programs listed in Table 4.1 are under the auspices of SMMUSD CDS. Together, those programs provide care and early learning services for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children. CDS preschool programs tend to serve lower-income families, although those programs accept full-fee parents as well.

Table 4.3. ECE Providers in Quality Rating Initiatives or Accredited by Provider Type

Initiative(s)	Small FCCHs	Large FCCHs	ECE Centers
Accredited only	–	1	9
LA STEP only	2	2	8
LA STEP and accredited	–	–	2
LA STEP and LAUP	0	1	3
Total participating in at least one initiative	2	3	22
Total number of providers	17	18	61

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of program documents and key informant interviews.

NOTE: As of January 2013. Accreditation is by NAEYC for centers and NAFCC for FCCHs. There were no providers participating only in LAUP, none in LAUP and accredited, and none with all three indicators (LAUP, LA STEP, and accreditation). – = not available.

¹⁷ For more information on LA STEP and the individual program ratings, see the rating guide (Los Angeles County, 2011).

Table 4.4 provides a closer look at the current allocation of public preschool spaces across the SMMUSD elementary schools in the city limits and how those slots compare with kindergarten enrollment. Preschool spaces are shown two ways, accounting for the fact that some classrooms are used for two half-day sessions. Thus, available preschool seats are first calculated as the number of child sessions based on the current schedule. This figure captures the total number of children that can be served with at least a half-day schedule. The second figure converts slots into full-time equivalents (FTEs), so two half-day sessions in the same classroom count as one FTE slot. This is the number of children that could be served if all seats were on a full-day schedule. Each of these figures is compared with kindergarten enrollment to show what share of the kindergarten class could be served by the onsite preschool program, either based on the current schedule of half- and full-day programs or by a schedule of only full-day programs. Overall, the 586 CDS preschool child sessions shown in Table 4.4 represent 23 percent of the total preschool slots reported in Table 4.2. As shown in Table 4.4, the CDS preschool child sessions would serve 82 percent of the kindergarten class of 2011–2012 or 63 percent of the kindergarten class if all slots were converted to a full-day schedule.

Table 4.4. Kindergarten Enrollment and Preschool Spaces for Sites with Public Preschools

Public Preschool Site	K Enrollment 2011–2012	Preschool Spaces (Number)		Preschool Spaces as a Percent of K Enrollment (%)	
		Child Sessions ^a	FTE Slots ^b	Child Sessions ^a	FTE Slots ^b
Sites with K enrollment					
Roosevelt	136	0	0	0%	0%
Franklin	123	38	19	31%	15%
Grant	115	68	48	59%	42%
McKinley ^c	97	88	64	91%	66%
Will Rogers ^c	89	37	37	42%	42%
Edison ^c	78	68	44	87%	56%
John Muir ^c	53	20	20	38%	38%
Santa Monica Alternative Schoolhouse (SMASH)	25	0	0	0%	0%
Sites without K enrollment					
Lincoln (preschool)	0	24	24	–	–
Pine Street	0	107	83	–	–
Washington West	0	88	64	–	–
John Adams Middle School (JAMS)	0	48	48	–	–
Total (N) / Average (%)	716	586	451	82%	63%

SOURCE: Documentation provided by SMMUSD and CDE (undated).

NOTE: Preschool spaces are as of January 2013. – = not applicable.

^a Counts half-day sessions as a slot and full-day sessions as a slot.

^b Counts half-day sessions as 0.5 FTEs and a full-day session as 1 FTE.

^c Title I elementary school.

Table 4.4 clearly illustrates that the allocation of preschool slots is not in alignment with kindergarten enrollments. Roosevelt, despite having the largest kindergarten enrollment, has no preschool slots. And three of the preschool programs are at sites where there is no kindergarten enrollment. McKinley comes closest to being able to serve most of its kindergarten class in its onsite preschool program, at least using the current schedule. These allocations are largely driven by the nature of the space constraints on each elementary-school campus. For some schools, there is limited space to house the preschool classrooms, so only a fraction of the kindergarten class could be served.

City of Santa Monica

Although the City of Santa Monica is not an ECE service provider, it supports the provision of ECE services in several ways. It provides an incentive to be accredited or to participate in LAUP and LA STEP by linking provider reimbursements under the Santa Monica Child Care voucher program to the provider’s accreditation or rating status (see Table 4.5).¹⁸ The starting point is the county regional market rate that applies to providers receiving CalWORKs or non-CalWORKs APP subsidies. Providers receiving a subsidy through the Santa Monica Child Care program receive a reimbursement rate higher than the regional market rate: the Santa Monica base rate. The next tier, Santa Monica First STEP, applies to those participating in LA STEP with a STEP 1 rating or those in the CFC training program. The third tier, Santa Monica STEP-ping Up, goes to those with a STEP 2 or STEP 3 rating or LAUP participants with a 3-star rating. The highest reimbursement tier, Santa Monica Top STEP, is for those in STEP or LAUP at the top two rating tiers or for those with NAEYC or NAFCC accreditation.

Table 4.5. Tiered Reimbursement Structure Available to Santa Monica ECE Providers Accepting SM Child Care Subsidies

Santa Monica Reimbursement Tier	Qualifying Providers	Number of ECE Providers Accepting City Subsidies (2012–2013)
Base rate	Providers receiving SM Child Care subsidies	16
First STEP	LA STEP rating of 1 or in CFC training program	2
STEP-ping Up	LA STEP rating of 2 or 3 or LAUP rating of 3	0
Top STEP	LA STEP rating of 4 or 5 or LAUP rating of 4 or 5 or Accredited by NAEYC or NAFCC	7

SOURCE: CFC (2013).

¹⁸ The tiered reimbursement program was proposed and developed by CFC in tandem with the City of Santa Monica.

From the midyear status report from CFC for FY 2012–2013, 25 ECE programs were participating in the tiered reimbursement system at that time (CFC, 2013). As seen in Table 4.5, 16 LA STEP-active providers were at the base rate, two were at the First STEP tier, and seven were at the Top STEP level. Most of the base rate participants are FCCHs; four are center-based programs. Two of the Top STEP participants are FCCHs; the remaining five are center-based programs.

In addition, the city provides funding to CFC through the Santa Monica and Pico scholarship programs to fund subsidies for Santa Monica residents, to increase the child care access of low-income Santa Monica families (see Chapter Three). The city has also negotiated agreements with developers for ECE capital funding, subsidies, and third-party funding; variations of these development agreements include a developer building a child care facility at their site for employees and the provision of subsidies for low- to moderate-income families at existing child care facilities. The City of Santa Monica works with CFC to manage subsidy programs resulting from these agreements, which further extend the investment in early education programs on the part of the community. The city also provides subsidized facilities to several ECE agencies. In addition, it has established the child care linkage fee that hotel, retail, office and multi-unit housing developers pay, which is pooled into a fund for child care facilities. This child care linkage fee, for example, will be used to provide capital to a new Early Childhood Education Center that is a partnership between the city and SMMUSD.

Role of Connections For Children

CFC is one of ten nonprofit R&R agencies in Los Angeles County and serves Santa Monica, the Westside, and the South Bay areas. R&R agencies exist in all counties in California and provide information to parents on local child care options and provide training and other support programs to child care providers and teachers.¹⁹ An example of a current initiative is CFC's partnership with Family Services of Santa Monica; this program offers coaching, technical assistance, and funds for materials to FCCHs with the goal of increasing provider knowledge of developmental screening and how to address challenging behaviors. CFC also coordinates subsidies for the community, collects data (including quality indicators) on providers, and provides workshops for parents.

CFC coordinated the 2011–2012 EDI data collection initiative in SMMUSD kindergarten classrooms. As discussed in Chapter Two, this tool collected information recorded by the kindergarten teacher for their students midway through the school year on the following domains: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. The EDI is not meant to be a child assessment but rather a classroom-, school-, or community-level assessment of

¹⁹ For more information on the R&R network in California, see California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (undated).

school readiness and child development. The City of Santa Monica provided funding for this effort, while SMMUSD provided in-kind support. The UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities analyzed the data and produced a community-level report (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, 2013). The results from this effort can be used to determine the state of child development in different subgroups in Santa Monica and to plan efforts to increase school readiness across the community.

OST Providers in Santa Monica

In addition to the capacity of the FCCHs to serve school-age children before or after school or during the summer months (listed in Table 4.1), there are a variety of programs in Santa Monica tailored to provide school-age care during the academic year and during the summer and other school breaks. There are on-campus options for elementary- and middle-school students. Many free and low-cost programs exist, and many private programs offer scholarships or financial assistance.

Table 4.6 lists the most commonly used programs, capturing both public and private providers. Programs are grouped into three categories: full-time enrollment programs, part-time enrollment programs, and full- or part-time drop-in programs. We did not include private enrichment options or informal care arrangements and did not include high-school-only options, as the population for the school-aged focus of the study was kindergarten through eighth grade. Full-time enrollment programs are those that provide care for children from school until approximately 6 p.m. on school days and provide a full day of care during the summer and school breaks. These programs do not allow children to “drop in” or sign themselves out; there is a scheduled start time and parents must pick their children up. Part-time enrollment programs have the same requirements, but these programs only provide care on certain days of the week or for limited hours. Full- or part-time drop-in programs refer to those that do not necessarily have a scheduled start time (children can “drop in”) or to programs where children may sign themselves out. Full-time care is available at the three programs listed in this category, but given that they are drop-in programs, it is possible these programs are only being used for part-time care.

For each program, Table 4.6 shows the program auspices and location; whether it serves children before school, after school, and/or during the summer; the ages of children served; the primary funding sources; and approximate capacity and enrollment/average daily attendance as of August 2012–March 2013 (date depends on the program). Many private providers not listed here offer classes or care for school-age children, with activities including language instruction, sports, academic support, drama, cooking, and art. The City of Santa Monica also offers classes and programs for youth at the Santa Monica Public Library and through recreation classes offered at the Annenberg Community Beach House and other public sites throughout the city.

Table 4.6. Major OST Programs in Santa Monica

Name	Auspices	Location	Offerings	Ages Served	Funding	Capacity	Enrollment
a. Full-Time Enrollment Programs							
Primary CREST	SMMUSD	School sites	B, A	TK–third grade	Title 5, CFC, Fees	480	382
Upper CREST	City of Santa Monica	School sites	B, A	fourth–fifth grade	City Fees	350	205
YMCA	Nonprofit CBO	YMCA site	A, S	first–12th grade	Fees Donations	200	115 (A) 200 (S)
Coastal Kids	SMMUSD	School sites	S	TK–third grade	Title 5, CFC, Fees	480	225
Camp Santa Monica / SM Sports Experience	City of Santa Monica	School sites	S	fourth–fifth grade	City Fees	240	188
Total	–	–	–	–	–	1,030 (A) 920 (S)	702 (A) 613 (S)
b. Part-Time Enrollment Programs							
CREST Enrichment	City of Santa Monica	School sites	A	first–fifth grade	City Fees	2,500	1,400 ^a
CREST Homework Club	City of Santa Monica	School sites	A	first–fifth grade	City Fees	180	164
CREST Playground Access	City of Santa Monica	School sites	A	first–fifth grade	City	1,800	1,407
CREST Sports	City of Santa Monica	School sites	A	K–eighth grade	City Fees	975	819 ^b
Rosie’s Girls	City of Santa Monica	School sites	S	sixth–eighth grade	City Fees	not available	32
YWCA	Nonprofit CBO	YWCA site	A, S	K–eighth grade	Fees Donations	400 ^c	300 ^c
Summer Adventure	Nonprofit CBO	School sites	S	K–eighth grade	Fees, Ed Foundation, PTA	not available	750
Total	–	–	–	–	–	not available	4,090 (A) 1,082 (S)
c. Full-Time or Part-Time Drop-In Programs							
Boys & Girls Club	Nonprofit CBO	Boys & Girls Club site, CC housing, JAMS	A, S	first–12th grade	Donations Grants	not available	705 ^d
Police Activities League (PAL)	City of Santa Monica	PAL Youth Center and Fitness Gym	A, S	first–12th grade	City PAL Board	400	220 ^d
Virginia Avenue Park (VAP)	City of Santa Monica	VAP	A, S	first–12th grade	City	250	120 ^d
Total	–	–	–	–	–	not available	1,045

SOURCE: Authors’ analysis of program documents and key informant interviews.

NOTE: As of 2012–2013 school year. Capacity shown is approximate maximum. B = before school; A = after school; S = summer; PTA = Parent-Teacher Association. – = not applicable.

^a Enrollment represents total number of children enrolled in all classes; children may be counted more than once in this total, given that some children enroll in multiple courses.

^b Enrollment represents average number of children enrolled in all sports over the three annual seasons; children may be counted more than once in this total, given that some children participate in multiple sports and seasons.

^c Estimated.

^d Represents average daily attendance, as enrollment numbers include members who do not regularly use services.

There are 15 private schools in Santa Monica; of these, at least six offer before-school care and eight offer after-school care. Typically, these programs are only open to students enrolled at the private school. However, many private schools host summer camp programs that are open to children who do not attend the private school. We do not have access to capacity or enrollment numbers for these programs.

The main providers for before-school care are Primary and Upper CREST (Childcare, Recreation, Enrichment, and Sports Together). Primary CREST is operated by SMMUSD CDS and serves children in transitional kindergarten (TK) through third grade. Upper CREST is operated by the City of Santa Monica and serves children in third through fifth grades. Both CREST programs operate before- and after-school care programs on elementary-school campuses. In addition to Primary and Upper CREST, the other large after-school programs, all at nonschool locations, include two drop-in programs run by the City of Santa Monica: Police Activities League (PAL) and Virginia Avenue Park (VAP), as well as two programs run by community-based organizations (CBOs): the Boys & Girls Club (drop-in) and the YMCA. There are several other options that provide partial- to full-afternoon care on campus after school, including CREST Enrichment, CREST Homework Club, CREST Playground Access, and CREST Sports. Most CREST programs offer full-fee and subsidized options, while CREST Playground Access, PAL and VAP are free. Santa Monica also has a number of off-campus full-fee private programs and classes open to school-age children for parents with the ability to pay and to provide transportation.

For older children, the Boys & Girls Club operates a center at JAMS, providing an after-school option for those students and a summer option for middle-school children from any campus. Primary CREST operates a program on Lincoln Middle School's campus called CREST Teen Center that provides after-school care. Sports classes and other programs exist for middle and high-school students, as well. The Pico Youth and Family Center offers homework space and programming for high-school students, for example.

During the summer, Coastal Kids (Primary CREST), Camp Santa Monica and Santa Monica Sports Experience (Upper CREST), Boys & Girls Club, and the YMCA provide full-day care, with programs organized like summer camps. PAL and VAP offer summer programming as well. Summer Adventure is a summer camp run on school sites; funding is provided by the Ed Foundation and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). There are a number of other camp programs in the area, including those run by private schools.

As seen in Table 4.6, a number of funding sources in addition to parent fees cover the cost of care across the programs listed. Title 5 funds and CFC-administered vouchers are used to pay for some of the Primary CREST slots, while the other CREST programs are partially or fully subsidized by the City of Santa Monica. The CBOs such as the Boys & Girls Club and the YMCA also tend to subsidize the cost of programs through fundraising efforts.

Potential After-School Participation

Using the same approach we applied for ECE, Table 4.7 presents estimated participation rates for after-school care considering two age groups that might be served: students in grades kindergarten through fifth and those in grades kindergarten through eighth. It is likely that non-Santa Monica residents are using OST programs, particularly those run by private organizations that are open to non-residents and children who do not attend SMMUSD. However, we use the age cohort size for Santa Monica to estimate participation rates, as we are interested in understanding the capacity of local programs to serve residents. We benchmark the Santa Monica participation rate against the national rate where possible. However, the national rate should not be viewed as the desired participation rate as each community’s needs for OST care are different. Our calculations are performed using the combined capacity for after-school care in Primary CREST, Upper CREST, VAP, PAL, Boys & Girls Club, and YMCA; these programs were selected as they represent the largest full-time after-school options for care in the community, either enrollment-based or drop-in.

As seen in Table 4.7, if the available full-time after-school spaces (including enrollment and drop-in programs) were used to serve just those in the elementary grades, about 49 percent of the age cohort could be served (2,075 slots for about 4,200 children in grades kindergarten through fifth). Expanding the age range covered to include those in middle school, we estimate a potential participation rate of 37 percent, a rate close to the national participation rate of 40 percent as of 2005. As with ECE, children who could not access the group of programs captured in Table 4.7 could be served by the other programs listed in Table 4.6, as well as by FCCHs. Thus, the participation rates shown in Table 4.7 should be viewed as a lower bound of the number of Santa Monica children who could be served by an OST program in the city, as Table 4.7 shows only the full-time after-school capacity and does not include part-time programs. Moreover, it is likely that some programs could expand their capacity to meet demand. Many programs are not represented in the estimated program slots in Table 4.7 as they provide only part-time care; families may be using multiple part-time programs to provide care for their school-age child.

Table 4.7. Potential OST Center-Based Program Participation in Santa Monica

Age Group	Estimated SM Cohort Size	Estimated SM Program Slots	Potential SM Resident Participation Rate	National Participation Rate (2005)
K-5	4,200	2,075	49%	–
K-8	5,600	2,075	37%	40%

SOURCE: Karoly (2012b) for statewide participation rates as of 2005.

NOTE: Figures for full-time after-school program slots combine enrollment for Primary CREST, Upper CREST, VAP, PAL, Boys & Girls Club, and YMCA. National participation rate is for children in grades K-8 from the 2005 National Household Education Survey.

Local Public Sector's Role in OST Provision

SMMUSD provides full-time, enrollment-based, before- and after-school care under the umbrella of Primary CREST (which serves kindergarten through third grade at elementary-school sites and sixth through eighth grade at one middle-school site). Summer camps are offered by SMMUSD as well, and are open to a wider range of ages. For these programs, SMMUSD manages all staff and curriculum through CDS.

In contrast to its role in ECE provision, the City of Santa Monica provides direct services for OST and serves a large number of children with its programs. The city funds and manages Upper CREST, serving children in fourth and fifth grades with its full-time, enrollment-based, before- and after-school programs and its summer camp programs. Enrichment classes in a variety of subjects, homework clubs, and sports programs are also offered at SMMUSD schools as part of CREST. The city also provides funding for VAP and PAL programming; it is the sole funder for VAP, while PAL has funding support from an active board. For CREST, VAP, and PAL, the city oversees all program management, including personnel decisions, curriculum, and scheduling. The City of Santa Monica also provides funding to nonprofit providers such as the Boys & Girls Club, which also provide OST services to children at multiple sites.

Summary of ESAC Inventory in Santa Monica

Overall, the landscape of ESAC care in Santa Monica is complex both in terms of providers and funding. Public and private providers and funding streams exist for both ECE and OST. For ECE, SMMUSD provides public infant and toddler care as well as preschool care. The City of Santa Monica provides funding to CFC for subsidies but does not directly provide early care. CFC, the local nonprofit R&R, plays an important role in ECE, connecting parents with care, providers with training and support, and distributing subsidies. For OST, both SMMUSD and the city are providers of care along with numerous private providers, and there is no organization that plays a similar role to CFC for OST.

Access to care for low-income families is an issue of concern to stakeholders in the community. In early care, less than half of available slots in FCCHs and preschools are potentially subsidized, while nearly 80 percent of available slots in infant/toddler centers are potentially subsidized. However, this likely overestimates the availability of subsidies at these care locations (as the locations may only offer a small number of spaces to families paying with a subsidy), and it could be that there is a need for additional subsidies and spaces for low-income families. The potential Santa Monica resident participation rate is similar to the California rate for infant and toddler care, but for preschoolers, there are excess slots compared to the population, indicating that many who live elsewhere but work in Santa Monica are using care in the community. It is unlikely there is a shortage of preschool slots for residents, though there may be a lack of affordable, high-quality, or full-day care. There are quality rating systems in use in Santa Monica for early care, but data are not collected comprehensively across all care

providers, which makes it challenging to draw conclusions about the quality of care in the community.

There are numerous options for OST in Santa Monica, with many free or low-cost and offered on school campuses. SMMUSD and the city offer programs on school campuses both before and after school as well as during the summer. A number of private providers offer full-time care as well as classes. Subsidized programs are typically offered through the public providers (with funds from the City of Santa Monica, Title 5, and CFC-administered vouchers), though some nonprofit providers subsidize their costs or offer scholarships through private fundraising. The City of Santa Monica provides direct services in OST (unlike in ECE), managing programs on school campuses and at local parks.

Looking at the potential participation rate in full-time care of K–8 children in Santa Monica, we find a rate of 37 percent, which is similar to the national participation rate. There is a variety of OST care in Santa Monica, but many options are private-pay and would require transportation for the child to attend, making them harder for low-income and/or working families to access.

5. Parents' Experience with ESAC in Santa Monica

In this section, we explore the parent perspective on ESAC in Santa Monica in terms of their experience with care availability, offerings, quality, and use. From the parent perspective, we sought to inform the third research question, regarding how the current ESAC system could be improved or redesigned. Although ESAC programs serve children, it is their parents who make decisions about which programs to use. In many cases, an important program goal is to provide parents a safe and developmentally appropriate setting for their child so that the parent can work or attend school. The ability of a program to meet these parental needs is a critical factor in their use. In addition, all of these programs aim to provide children with a range of learning and social opportunities; how well they do this also matters a great deal in terms of both children's development and parental support for the programs. Finally, meeting the needs of parents, especially with respect to understanding their care options, is a core element of the SMC2C initiative.

For these reasons, it was obviously important to include parental voices in our review of ESAC programs and in our consideration of recommendations about how to move forward. We believed that parents, as consumers of the current slate of programs, could point to gaps in services, identify challenges they have faced in accessing and using ESAC programs, and help us better understand their preferences and needs.

To achieve this objective, we had three opportunities to learn about parents' experiences and viewpoints. As part of this project, we had access to newly collected parent survey data from two anonymous surveys that the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD designed and fielded during the course of the project. The first was fielded in July 2012 and surveyed parents using summer programs; the other was fielded in December 2012 and focused on ESAC programs more generally. The survey data were made available to the RAND team for analysis, as many of the questions related directly to issues of concern to this study. We also conducted several focus groups with parents in the community to gain perspectives beyond what we could learn from the surveys.

We begin our discussion with the results of the December 2012 parent survey on ESAC, given its broader focus. We then turn to input regarding summer programs based on the July 2012 survey. We conclude with a summary of what we learned from the parent focus groups. Where possible, we differentiate between types of ESAC: care in the early years versus school-age care; and, for OST, summer-time programs versus school-year options. It is also important to note that the data presented in this section represents parent perceptions of ESAC and not necessarily the actual state of ESAC in the community. For the parent surveys, we provide summary statistics for the responses and explore the open-ended responses through counts of common themes that surfaced. For the focus groups, we analyzed the data based on common

themes that surfaced and were discussed in the groups but did not conduct qualitative data coding and analysis.

Parent ESAC Survey

To learn more about the use of ESAC among Santa Monica families with children under age 13, the City of Santa Monica administered a brief online survey (via Survey Monkey) from December 5 to December 21, 2012 (see Appendix A for the English-language survey instrument). The survey instrument was developed by the City of Santa Monica with input from the RAND team. The survey collected information on the following topics:

- *Care use patterns:*
 - For the youngest child under 13, age of that child and use of nonparental care
 - For those not using care, the reasons for nonuse
 - For those using care, the types of nonparental care used, hours spent in care, and importance of various factors in selecting care arrangement
- *Experience with care availability:* Existence of good choices, inability to find care, changes in care arrangement
- *Financial support for care:* Receipt and sources of financial assistance for child care, participation in employment tax-free spending account for child care, use of child care tax credits
- *Household characteristics:* Annual household income, ZIP code of residence.

The ESAC survey targeted parents of children under 13 years of age. The links to this online survey (in both Spanish and English) were emailed to parents through local PTA contact lists, SMMUSD contact lists (including CDS), and city contacts such as care providers and relevant committee members (e.g., education-related City of Santa Monica committees). The survey link was also posted on school websites. Paper versions were made available upon request of the teacher, head of program, or PTA parent, and were distributed to certain schools and CDS sites. The city administered the survey and shared the data with RAND.

Survey Sample

For the online survey component, 589 respondents began the survey in English; 485 finished the survey, although we are able to use some of the partial responses. Another 13 respondents completed the online survey in Spanish. Of these totals, 19 surveys were submitted on paper (four of them in Spanish). Of the 621 surveys received, 40 respondents had no child under age 13 and another 47 did not continue the survey after responding that they had a child under age 13. An additional 16 cases did not report on the age of the youngest child. Thus, we limit our

analysis to the 518 cases with a child under age 13 and with information about the age of the respondent’s youngest child and that child’s current care arrangements.

It is important to keep in mind that the survey results pertain to a convenience sample, so we are not able to calculate a response rate and the sample is not necessarily representative of the population of Santa Monica.²⁰ Parents who were not involved in the PTA or otherwise involved with their child’s school may have been less likely to participate. Those who did not have Internet access may have also been less likely to participate. Those who took the time to fill out the survey were likely more highly motivated to provide feedback on the subject, either positive or negative. Nevertheless, the information presented here can provide some insights into the experience of parents as consumers of ESAC for their children.

Before presenting the results, we consider the reported household income and ZIP code to compare with external data. However, family income and ZIP code were the final questions on the survey, so they were only answered by those respondents with a child in a source of care other than their parent(s). For the 345 parents whose youngest child under age 13 was in a source of nonparental care, Table 5.1 shows that more than half of the respondents reported household income above \$100,000 per year, but income was not reported at all by about one in five respondents with a child in care. Even if all those respondents had income below \$100,000, the median survey respondent would be above that threshold and well above the median income for the city of about \$107,000 (Table 2.1). Thus, the survey is likely to overrepresent higher-income families. At the same time, in the comments at the end of the survey, more than one parent mentioned that the penultimate income bracket of \$100,000 to \$250,000 was too large and encompassed too many financial situations.

Table 5.1. Household Income for Parent Survey Respondents with Youngest Child Under 13 in Care

Annual Household Income Before Taxes	Number of Respondents	Percent
Under \$15,000	15	4.3
\$15,000 up to \$25,000	10	2.9
\$25,000 up to \$50,000	34	9.9
\$50,000 up to \$75,000	32	9.3
\$75,000 up to \$100,000	29	8.4
\$100,000 up to \$250,000	116	33.6
Above \$250,000	42	12.2
Don't know, refused or missing	67	19.4

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample size is 345. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

²⁰ According to the ACS, there are approximately 7,200 households in Santa Monica with one or more children under the age of 18 (U.S. Census Bureau, undated-a). We are unable to calculate the number that would have at least one child under age 13, the population that who would have been eligible to complete a parent survey. However, the nearly 600 returned surveys are likely to represent 10 to 15 percent of the eligible parent population.

For these same respondents, the distribution across city ZIP codes shows that the most frequent ZIP code given was 90405 (31 percent), followed by 90403 (21 percent), 90404 (16 percent), 90402 (10 percent), and 90401 (2 percent). The residual 20 percent of respondents gave a ZIP code outside of Santa Monica.

Children in Nonparental Care

As noted above, 518 survey respondents had a child under age 13. Parents were asked to respond with respect to their youngest child under age 13 as the focal child for the survey. To start, parents were asked about their use of nonparental care for the focal child: “Are you currently using any type of child care arrangement for your youngest child other than care by a parent (for example, in your home or a family child care provider's home, child care center, preschool, or a before- or after-school program)?” As shown in Table 5.2, 28 percent of parents overall reported they relied only on parent care as their only source, i.e., they did not currently use any nonparental care. The table also stratifies responses by child age using four groups: ages zero to two, ages three to four, ages five to eight, and ages nine to 12. As expected, parent-only care is highest for infants and toddlers and again for those ages nine to 12. Just 12 percent reported parent-only care for their three- or four-year-old and fewer than 30 percent rely on parent-only care for their child age five to eight.

Table 5.2 also reports on the reasons parents gave for not using a care arrangement; parents could select one or more explanations. The most frequent response across all age groups was that the respondent did not need care (60 percent), followed by couldn’t afford care (25 percent). Finding an available space did not seem to be a common issue for this group of respondents, although it was mentioned in the open-ended comments. However, the nearly 25 percent reporting that they could not afford care can be interpreted as a shortage in the supply of affordable infant/toddler care options. Nearly one in ten reported some other reason, which

Table 5.2. Percentage with Parent-Only Care and Reasons by Child Age Group

Measure	Ages 0 to 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 8	Ages 9 to 12	Total
Parent-only care (%)	34.5	11.8	28.8	37.5	28.4
Reasons for no care use among those with parent-only care (%)					
Don't need care	63.4	*	60.8	66.7	59.9
Couldn't find space	2.4	*	3.9	0.0	3.4
Available hours/location did not meet need	2.4	*	9.8	2.4	5.4
Couldn't find quality of care wanted	2.4	*	5.9	7.1	4.8
Couldn't afford	24.4	*	29.4	21.4	25.2
Other	7.3	*	5.9	11.9	9.5

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample size is 518. Sample with no nonparental care is 147. Percentages may exceed 100 because respondents could select more than one reason for nonparental care.

* Number of cases in age group is below 20.

respondents could specify in an open-ended response. Some respondents noted that another family member watches the child while the parent is at work. Others stay at home with their children, or reported that their child is old enough to stay at home alone. One parent said it is “more cost-effective to provide care myself,” while another said, “No one can care for your child better than yourself.” In general, the explanations for not using care are similar at each age. (Given the small sample sizes for those with no care within each age group, differences in the percentage distributions should be interpreted with caution.)

Table 5.3 shows the share of parents using care for their child, again stratified by age group (100 minus the percentages shown in Table 5.2). Overall, 72 percent of parents reported having a nonparental source of care for their child under age 13, as did 66 percent of those with a child from birth to age two and 88 percent of those with a preschool-age child. The rates of ECE use for this Santa Monica sample exceed figures available for children statewide: As of 2005, 46 percent of infants and toddlers and 75 percent of preschool-age children in California were in regular care (Karoly, 2012b). The higher rates of ECE participation shown in Table 5.3 may reflect the higher income level among the respondents or the differences in wording in the survey question (any use of nonparental care for the Santa Monica survey versus regular use of nonparental care in the statewide survey).

Those parents who reported using care answered a number of questions about this use for their focal child and their experience with care in Santa Monica. First, they were asked to specify what type(s) of care they use, with the option to select one or more of the nine arrangements

Table 5.3. Percentage with Non-parental Care and Types of Care by Child Age Group

Measure	Ages 0 to 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 8	Ages 9 to 12	Total
Nonparental care (%)	65.5	88.2	71.2	62.5	71.6
Type of nonparental care (%)					
Care by a relative	6.7	12.6	19.3	11.5	13.3
Care by a nonrelative	38.7	16.8	34.2	19.7	27.8
Licensed family child care home	8.0	7.4	0.9	0.0	4.1
Center-based care for children ages five and under (center or preschool)	54.7	78.9	4.4	1.6	35.4
Child care or preschool program located at a public-school site	4.0	16.8	6.1	3.3	8.1
Before- or after-school program at your child's elementary- or middle-school site	0.0	0.0	69.3	60.7	33.6
Community-based after-school program from City of Santa Monica	1.3	1.1	2.6	8.2	2.9
Other after-school program for children not at a school site	1.3	2.1	10.5	29.5	9.6
Other care arrangement	1.3	3.2	5.3	8.2	4.3
Sample	119	110	177	112	518

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample size is 518. Sample with nonparental care is 345. Percentages may exceed 100 because respondents could select more than type of nonparental care.

shown in Table 5.3. Here we would expect differences by child age and that is indeed evident. Center-based care is most common for infants and toddlers (55 percent), followed by nonrelative care (39 percent). For the preschool-age group, nearly 80 percent are in private centers or preschools and another 17 percent are in a center program at a public-school site. Children at this age are also cared for in home settings. Since the sum of shares across care types exceeds 100, parents are clearly combining multiple sources of care for their children in this age group. For the school-age children, the use of OST programs on the school campus is most common, followed by non-school-based programs. Some respondents specified the other care arrangements they used that were not listed; these included STAR programs, JAMS theater company, and Santa Monica community classes. It is important to keep in mind that these distributions may not capture the average care patterns for all children in the city, but instead reflect choices made by the self-selected parents who were made aware of and completed the survey.

Parents were asked to report the number of total hours in nonparental care for their focal child in a typical week. Here, again, we would expect differences by child age, so the distribution of hours across all age groups combined will mask these varied patterns (see Table 5.4). The distribution of hours for infants and toddlers, for example, has high proportions at both low and high weekly hours, with about 19 percent spending 15 or fewer hours per week in care, while 48 percent spend 36 or more hours per week in care. The distribution is somewhat more even for three- and four-year olds, with the modal value being 41 to 45 hours per week (19 percent), but there are also sizable shares of parents reporting 15 or fewer hours (15 percent), 16 to 25 hours (17 percent), and 31 to 40 hours (28 percent). For school-age children, most children are in care for 20 hours or less per week among those ages five to eight (86 percent) and ten hours or less per week among those ages nine to 12 (89 percent).

Table 5.4. Hours in Care for a Typical Week in Current Care Arrangements by Child Age Group

Measure	Ages 0 to 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 8	Ages 9 to 12	Total
Hours in care for a typical week (% distribution)					
Less than 10	6.7	8.4	32.5	29.5	19.7
10 to 15	12.0	7.4	34.2	59.0	26.4
16 to 20	5.3	10.5	19.3	4.9	11.3
21 to 25	9.3	6.3	6.1	1.6	6.1
26 to 30	8.0	11.6	2.6	3.3	6.4
31 to 35	9.3	13.7	0.9	0.0	6.1
36 to 40	26.7	14.7	1.8	0.0	10.4
41 to 45	13.3	18.9	1.8	1.6	9.0
46 to 50	6.7	6.3	0.0	0.0	3.2
More than 50	1.3	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.9
Sample	75	95	114	61	345

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample with nonparental care is 345. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Selecting Care Arrangements

Parents were asked to rate the importance of various program characteristics in choosing the program or care arrangement where their youngest child spends the most time in a typical week (see Table 5.5). Across all age groups, parents were nearly unanimous (94 percent) in rating reliability as a very important factor in care choice. Location (about 90 percent or more) and days or hours of availability (about 87 percent) were runners-up for parents of school-age children. Among parents with children under age five, parents of preschoolers in particular placed a priority on the learning activities of the program, a factor not rated quite as highly by parents of infants and toddlers. With a few exceptions, all the factors were mentioned by at least half of respondents as being very important in their choice of arrangements. The patterns for parents with preschool-age children are very similar to those found for a representative sample of California families with children in the same age group surveyed in 2007 (Karoly, Ghosh-Dastidar, et al., 2008).

Parents could write in other reasons for selecting care, and 78 respondents chose to do so. Some parents mentioned cleanliness and appearance of care arrangement; safety was commonly mentioned. Many parents noted that they looked for care that fit their educational philosophy, e.g., allowing children to play and socialize and providing opportunities for outdoor time and exercise. Others mentioned that they look for teachers who are passionate about education and who interact with their child in a respectful manner. One parent explained that they look for “the feeling of the situation, the quality of the adult supervision, type of guidance given by adults, activities and, if there are other kids there, the behavior of those other children and the way issues are dealt with by anyone there. In addition, quality and fun factor of any adults and teachers there.” Some parents look for diversity; others look for a community of parents like

Table 5.5. Factors Rated as Very Important in Choice of Current Care Arrangement by Child Age Group

Measure	Ages 0 to 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 8	Ages 9 to 12	Total
Percent rating factor as very important (%)					
Location of arrangement	69.3	73.7	88.6	95.1	81.4
Cost of arrangement	44.0	54.7	64.0	75.4	59.1
Reliability of arrangement	90.7	95.8	93.9	96.7	94.2
Learning activities of the arrangement	62.7	81.1	58.8	57.4	65.5
Child spending time with other children their own age	49.3	73.7	55.3	60.7	60.0
Time during the day or week that program provides care	72.0	75.8	87.7	86.9	80.9
Education, training, experience of teachers	62.7	76.8	54.4	67.2	64.6
Number of adults compared to number of children	69.3	60.0	50.9	70.5	60.9
Sample	75	95	114	61	345

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample with nonparental care is 345.

themselves. Referrals from other parents, transportation offerings, and the ability of adults to help with homework were all mentioned. Only one parent mentioned NAEYC accreditation. Overall, parents seem to place a high value on many aspects of the care arrangement.

Care Availability and Change

Parents were asked if they felt there were good choices for child care for their youngest child near where they live. As Table 5.6 shows, 74 percent responded in the affirmative, although there is some indication from the open-ended questions that parents of infants and toddlers are somewhat less enthusiastic about their options compared with parents with older children. More than 100 parents wrote additional comments in response to this question. Some parents commented that the options could be better or can be “great or not so great depending on staff.” Other parents mentioned there was a good program available, but no space for their child. Some parents noted they are in a great program but feel they were lucky to get in because of limited availability. Other parents complained about wait lists and the long lead time necessary to get into a program; cost and lack of affordable options were also mentioned frequently, as exemplified by this comment: “There are great choices if you have the money.” Many programs were mentioned by name, with the overall impression being that the ratings of school campus programs varies greatly by site. The lack of infant/toddler care was frequently cited in the open-ended question responses; as one parent said, “Infant care is limited and it would have been nice to have more options . . . but I'm grateful for the few good options available.”

Parents using care were also asked if there was a time in the past 12 months that they could not find care when they needed it for their youngest child for a week or longer. This was an issue for about one in five parents overall—again, with some indication that it is even more of an issue for parents with an infant or toddler (see Table 5.6). Those who responded yes were then asked for the reasons were they were unable to find care, with multiple reasons allowed. The most frequent response, at 41 percent of respondents (not shown), was that the available hours and location didn’t fit their needs. The second–most frequent response, at 37 percent, was that parents couldn’t afford the quality of care they wanted. Fewer parents mentioned problems with finding a space (27 percent), not being able to find the desired quality of care (28 percent), or not being able to afford their current care arrangement (23 percent). Among the 15 open-ended

Table 5.6. Experience with Care Availability and Change by Child Age Group

Measure	Ages 0 to 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 8	Ages 9 to 12	Total
Good choices for care (%)	61.3	78.9	76.3	77.0	73.9
Time could not find care in past 12 mos. (%)	29.3	20.0	19.3	19.7	21.7
Changed arrangement in last 12 mos. (%)	48.0	33.7	43.0	37.7	40.6
Sample	75	95	114	61	345

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample with nonparental care is 345.

responses received, four parents mentioned that the problem arose because their care arrangement closed (either for a planned break or rainy day situation) and they couldn't find alternative care. Others mentioned that their child's age restricted available options, that the care options available during breaks from care are too expensive, and that the caregiver "flaked" or had an emergency.

In addition, parents were asked if they had changed care arrangements for their youngest child in the past year, and if so, what reasons contributed to the change. Overall, slightly more than 40 percent of parents reported such a change (see Table 5.6). The share experiencing a change was highest for those with an infant or toddler (48 percent) and lowest for those with a preschooler (34 percent). The most frequently reported reason for making a change (not shown) was that a more preferable option became available (30 percent). A close second was cost (27 percent), followed by a change in the parent's schedule (21 percent). Other factors with lower incidence were dissatisfaction with the program (14 percent), wanting a more educational program (14 percent), a program closure or schedule change (13 percent), a change in eligibility for assistance (7 percent), and the child was asked to leave (1 percent). Among the 20 parents who added an explanation, seven mentioned that their child's care arrangement changed because of a structural transition (e.g., a planned change due to aging out of the current arrangement, such as preschool to kindergarten or elementary to middle school) or because of winter or summer break in work or school. Other parents indicated they had to change their nanny or sitter, that there were conflicts with transportation, and that they changed or extended care based on their child's preferences. One parent said, "I couldn't find anything acceptable and practical, so I reduced my work hours." Another parent mentioned that they seek alternatives to their current care arrangement constantly, which results in "piecemeal" care.

Subsidies and Other Financial Supports for Care

Respondents were asked several concluding questions related to sources of public or private support to pay for care and the use of tax-based subsidies. Overall, as Table 5.7 shows, 16 percent of respondents indicated they received some form of financial assistance to pay for care. Parents were asked if they received support from six specific sources, but no source was relevant for more than 4 percent of respondents overall (breakdown by age group not shown because of small sample sizes). If the respondent sample is skewed toward higher-income households, these figures may be an underestimate. Six parents wrote in a reason for the "other" option, with one parent mentioning they have help through their employer, another that they use student loans to pay for child care, and another mentioning they have a discount for multiple children at their care arrangement.

Table 5.7. Financial Aspects of Care by Child Age Group

Measure	Ages 0 to 2	Ages 3 to 4	Ages 5 to 8	Ages 9 to 12	Total
Receive any financial assistance (%)	14.7	20.0	11.4	19.7	15.9
Sources of financial support (%)					
Head Start	*	*	*	*	1.4
City of Santa Monica financial assistance	*	*	*	*	3.5
SMMUSD subsidy	*	*	*	*	2.6
CFC	*	*	*	*	3.8
Scholarship or reduced fee from child's school	*	*	*	*	3.8
Relative helps pay for care	*	*	*	*	2.3
Employer offers financial assistance (%)	*	*	*	*	4.6
Participate in employment tax-free spending account for child care (%)					
Yes	32.0	28.4	28.1	24.6	28.4
No	54.7	60.0	61.4	60.7	59.4
Don't know, refused, or missing	13.3	11.6	10.5	14.8	12.2
Claim child care tax credit (%)					
Yes, federal income tax credit	20.0	9.5	16.7	9.8	14.2
Yes, state income tax credit	2.7	4.2	2.6	1.6	2.9
Yes, both federal and state	24.0	29.5	28.9	36.1	29.3
No	28.0	28.4	28.1	27.9	28.1
Don't know, refused, or missing	28.0	29.5	22.8	19.7	25.2
Sample	75	95	114	61	345

SOURCE: Online and paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in December 2012.

NOTE: Sample with non-parental care is 345.

* = Number of cases in age group is below 20.

Respondents were asked separately about employer-based support (Table 5.7). Overall, just under 5 percent reported receiving financial assistance from their employer or their spouse's or partner's employer. More prevalent was participation in an employer-based tax-free spending account for child care (see the discussion of this vehicle in Chapter Three). About three in ten respondents said they participated in such a plan through their employer or their spouse's or partner's employer. This mechanism was not familiar to about 12 percent of parents, who indicated they did not know if they had a tax-free spending account for child care. Parents were even less knowledgeable about whether they claimed a child care tax credit on their federal or state income taxes. While nearly half stated they claimed such a credit on their federal return (14 percent), state return (3 percent), or both (29 percent), another 25 percent did not know if they had taken advantage of this subsidy.

Other Comments

Parents were asked to provide any additional comments in an open-ended form at the end of the survey and 116 did so. Many wrote in comments about their satisfaction with specific programs, including CREST and Playground Access. Others wrote in complaints about problems they have

experienced with different programs. Here we briefly summarize several of the key themes; many also resonated with the issues we heard during our focus groups (which we discuss next).

Access. A number of parents wrote in comments related to access and participation issues. For ECE, a lack of spaces for infants and toddlers was mentioned by three parents, echoing concerns expressed by stakeholders. Another parent remarked that the holiday breaks in ECE mirror school breaks, and finding replacement care for these times is challenging. One parent mentioned the absence of on-campus ECE at SMC, commenting “It would be nice if SMC offered child care for their employees and students at affordable prices.”

Eight parents commented on the inflexibility of OST programs and how some OST options don’t match the SMMUSD early dismissal/break schedule, creating gaps in care. Some OST programs do not facilitate drop-in or occasional care (e.g., daily options—particularly during school breaks or for early dismissal days), which some parents said they would like to have because it is challenging to find care just for the break or early dismissal day without paying for more care than is needed. Two parents mentioned that it is problematic when OST programs are canceled because of weather. Six parents remarked that on-campus programs often fill up quickly and that it can be challenging to find a space and register their child. Transportation issues to off-campus programs were mentioned as well, with two parents remarking they would like a transportation option from school to various OST programs in the community.

Three parents mentioned they would like to see more options for middle-school children, echoing remarks from the stakeholder interviews we discuss in Chapter Five. As one parent said, “I would like to see more programs for children 13 and over. The assumption seems to be that these children stop needing supervision, but for working parents, this means there may be three to four hours of unsupervised time (from 3:15 to 6:15 or 7) and that is not great for teenagers.”

Safety. Five parents remarked on safety issues, including two who mentioned OST staff handling food allergies. Another commented on a specific incident that occurred in their OST program that has made them question their child’s safety. One parent reported displeasure that children are not supervised as closely between activities in first grade as they are in kindergarten (no one walks their child to and from class as before). Another parent made a positive comment regarding OST program safety: “I love the fact that the programs are located on the school grounds. The familiarity with the counselors and the rapport they have established with the children, parents, and school faculty gives me comfort that my child is safe.”

Quality. Only four parents commented explicitly on the need for high-quality care. However, 30 cited issues relating to quality of care—although, as already mentioned, those comments ranged from praise to complaints regarding specific programs. Regarding curricula in OST, one parent mentioned a preference for more homework support beginning with kindergarten; another discussed the need for additional math help in OST, particularly for middle-school children.

Other parents commented on staff quality, with one parent stating: “Staff bios . . . should [be] a standard part of the information provided to . . . parents/guardians. The children should be survey[ed] to determine if they think a staff member is engaging or just a person who thinks of

the time with the children as . . . a means to a paycheck.” Another parent commented, “All of the child care options in Santa Monica that you mention don't pay enough and don't require the right type of training. Most of the staff are young and seem less than excited about the work. They just seem like they would rather be doing other things than watching or engaging with young kids.”

Cost. Sixteen parents commented on the high cost of programs in Santa Monica. One parent remarked, “The high cost of housing and child care together in Santa Monica is an important nexus to consider.” Another said that they “need more affordable options for preschool-aged children . . . half our salary goes to child care.” Others commented that they are just over the income level to qualify for subsidies or reduced child care fees and that “the financial aid requirements need to be adjusted to reflect the cost of living.”

Parent Survey Regarding Summer OST

In July 2012, at the close of the Intensive Intervention Summer School (IISS) program (SMMUSD’s summer school program for students in need of academic support), a very brief self-administered survey was sent home with the approximately 300 participating children for their parents to complete. Students were asked to return the surveys to their classroom teacher, who then turned the surveys in to the IISS principal. The English and Spanish versions were on either side of a single sheet of paper, so parents could choose the language they were more comfortable with. The survey instrument was developed by the City of Santa Monica with input from the RAND team.

Survey Sample and Programs Represented

The survey was designed to ask about participation in a range of nonschool summer programming that parents used outside of IISS. Of the 165 surveys that were returned, 63 parents indicated that their child had not participated in any nonschool summer programs (49 in English and 14 in Spanish) and either left the remainder of the survey blank or answered a few questions. These surveys for nonparticipants are not included in our tabulations below. Of the remaining 102 surveys that were returned, three (two in English and one in Spanish) did not indicate which summer programs their child had participated in, so they were considered incomplete. Another survey was excluded because the parent marked participation only in IISS—which, as a summer school program, was not the target of the survey. The resulting sample consists of 98 respondents; 69 using the English version and 29 using the Spanish version. Like the parent ESAC survey, this is a convenience sample and it is not possible to calculate a response rate. In addition, no demographic information was collected to determine how representative the parents might be. In general, families with children participating in IISS may not be representative of SMMUSD families as a whole.

For the 98 surveys we analyzed, a wide range of programs was represented, as shown in Table 5.8. Parents were allowed to report use of more than one program. Indeed, 13 parents

Table 5.8. Programs Represented in Parent Summer OST Survey

OST Summer Program	Number of Surveys
CREST	8
CREST Coastal Kids	6
CREST Sports Experience	5
Police Activities League	5
Virginia Avenue Park	3
Boys & Girls Club	67
Other	22

SOURCE: Paper survey administered to Santa Monica parents in July 2012.

NOTE: Sample size is 98.

reported using at least two programs. Of this group, two parents reported using a third program, while one parent reported a third, fourth, and fifth program. The largest number of respondents represented those using the Boys & Girls Club (46 English, 21 Spanish),²¹ 19 reported using one of the CREST programs (including CREST Sports), and a few others used PAL and VAP. Additional programs tallied in the other category include other sports camps (two parents), swimming (three parents), generic summer camp (two parents), the library typing program, sailing camp, and dance (one parent). Some of the less-specific programs (such as “art camp”) may well refer to programs run by VAP or CREST. Approximately 17 different programs or types of classes were cited. Given that this was a convenience sample, these counts do not reflect differences in participation rates. But it does mean that the experience of families in the Boys & Girls Club program will make up much of the total.

The survey had five questions that asked about the nonschool summer program(s) in which their child participated in the summer of 2012, focusing on issues with safety or boredom, as well as overall satisfaction as evidenced by a rating and willingness to refer other families. The English-language survey instrument is included in Appendix B.

Parent Responses

Table 5.9 shows parents’ responses to the question, “During this summer, about how often have you worried about the safety or supervision of your child while in the nonschool summer program(s)?” More than half responded they have never worried, while 9 percent reported worrying often. We explored the open-ended responses for the latter group. Some did not give a detailed explanation of their concerns, but others mentioned they were concerned about field trips, the number of chaperones/supervisors, safety while on walks, and the use of lifejackets/flotation devices at the pool. One parent mentioned that it makes them worry when they see the clause in the registration agreement saying “Not responsible for fatal accidents.”

²¹ In addition to regular summer programming at their sites, the Boys & Girls Club in 2012 offered after-school care for elementary IISS students at the school site.

Table 5.9. Frequency of Issues with OST Summer Programs

Measure	Percentage Distribution				Total
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	
Worried about safety or supervision (%)	52.0	15.3	25.3	9.2	100.0
Child complained about being bored (%)	61.2	21.4	15.3	2.0	100.0

SOURCE: Paper survey administered to parents in July 2012.

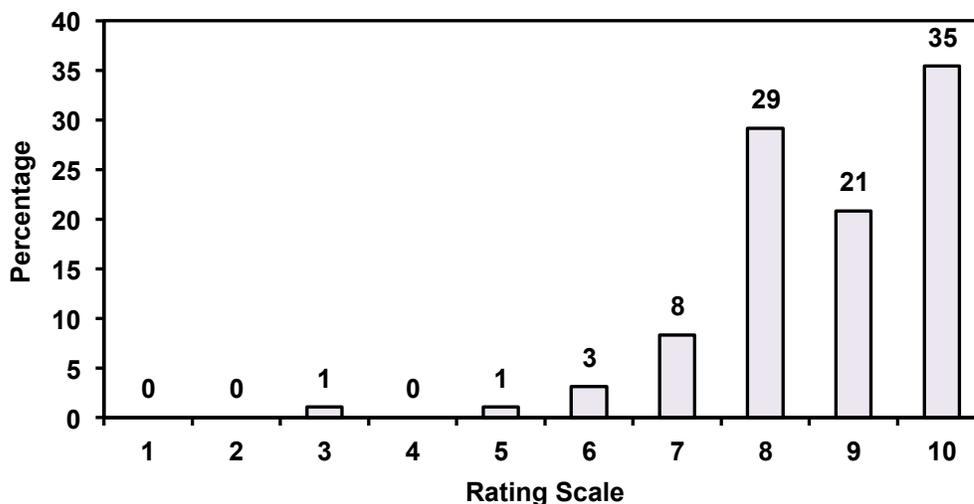
NOTE: Sample size is 98. Row totals may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Other parents who provided more detail about their concerns raised issues similar to those already mentioned, as well as concerns with nutrition, sun exposure, and use of the Internet.

To get at possible concerns with a lack of stimulation, parents were also asked, “During this summer, about how often has your child complained of being bored in their nonschool summer program(s)?” More than 60 percent of parents reported their child has never complained of boredom; only 2 percent reported their child complained often (see Table 5.9).

To gauge satisfaction with the summer programs, respondents were asked, “Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst possible program and 10 is the best possible program, what number would you use to rate your child’s summer program(s)?” As seen in Figure 5.1, most parents (82 out of the 96 who provided a rating, or 85 percent) rated the program(s) they used in the summer of 2012 as an 8 or higher. Respondents were asked to elaborate on their rating. We examined the few ratings that were below 8 and found two parents mentioned not enough time was spent on homework. Others mentioned that their child found the program boring or wasn’t put in the same group as their friends.

Figure 5.1. Parent Ratings of Nonschool Summer Programs



SOURCE: Paper survey administered to parents in July 2012.

NOTE: Sample size is 98 but two respondents did not provide a rating. One case recorded as a 7.5 rating was recoded as a 7. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

As another measure of satisfaction, parents were asked, “Would you recommend your child’s summer program(s) to other families?” All but three (97 percent) said probably or definitely yes. One who said he or she would definitely not recommend the program also rated the program a 10, so this is likely a respondent error. The two parents who said they would probably not recommend the program said their child did not enjoy the experience and that the program could have been more extensive.

Parent Focus Groups

We conducted five focus groups between August and October 2012 to gain an understanding of parent perspectives. Early discussions with key stakeholders informed the protocol used. Each group was limited to a specific segment of parents to facilitate discussion of issues unique to that group and to make parents more comfortable. Two focus groups consisted of parents who were using ECE programs; one included parents receiving financial assistance or subsidy and the other included unsubsidized parents. Two more groups consisted of parents using OST programs: one included parents using a program during the school year and the other was for parents using a summer program. The fifth group was conducted in Spanish and included parents who were eligible for subsidized ESAC. We supplemented the focus groups with the two parent surveys previously described to gain a wider range of perspectives and include the opinions of more parents.

The City of Santa Monica used its network of providers to identify and request the involvement of parents in the focus groups. The city attempted to reach a variety of providers, who in turn were asked to recruit a diverse group of parents; however, the focus group attendees were not necessarily representative of parents in Santa Monica. Providers were asked to invite a certain number of parents to the focus group and to confirm attendance numbers with the city. For the early care focus groups, the city contacted a mix of providers (FCCHs, infant/toddler centers, and preschools). For the OST program groups, both public providers (the city and SMMUSD) and private providers were contacted. Each group was held in a community setting (e.g., library, elementary-school meeting room) and lasted approximately an hour and a half. Parents were provided with child care and a meal, as most groups were held at the end of the day.

Focus Group Participants, Programs, and Topics

As shown in Table 5.10, 36 parents participated in the focus groups. Together, they had a total of 54 children ages 0 to 18; three were special-needs children. Slightly fewer than half of the parents in the groups were eligible for some form of ESAC subsidy. About two-thirds were either working or in school.

Focus group participants were using a wide array of ECE and OST programs at the time of their participation; 21 different programs were represented in all the major types of programs

Table 5.10. Family Characteristics of Parent Focus Group Participants

	Focus Group					Total
	ECE Subsidy	ECE No Subsidy	OST School Year	OST Summer	Spanish Language	
Total participants (N)	6	5	8	13	4	36
Children ages 0 to 18 represented						
Number	8	7	13	17	9	54
Age range	3 to 13	1 to 11	4 to 11	5 to 18	3 to 18	1 to 18
With special needs (N)	1	1	0	1	0	3
Parents eligible for subsidy (N)	6	2	3	–	4	15
Parent status						
Working full time (N)	3	5	3	–	3	14
Working part time (N)	1	0	4	–	–	5
Student (N)	2 (full-time)	0	2 (part-time)	–	–	4

NOTE: – = not available.

serving children from birth to school-age years in both public and private center- and home-based settings (see Table 5.11). Among ECE programs, 11 were in settings that were publicly subsidized or accepted vouchers. Six private preschools were represented, along with six FCCHs. Among the OST programs, CREST and VAP had the highest representation among participants; 11 parents were using CREST and ten were participating in programs at VAP.

The focus groups were guided by a protocol that included six general topics (see Appendix C for a copy of the protocol). These included what parents look for in selecting a program, their views of programs available in the community, and how they negotiate the process of identifying and enrolling in appropriate programs. We then asked each parent to talk more about the program(s) in which their child or children were currently enrolled, including how they learned of the program, what they thought of its quality, what features were most and least appealing,

Table 5.11. ESAC Programs Represented in Parent Focus Groups

ECE Program (Number)	Number of Parents	OST Program (Number)	Number of Parents
Head Start (1)	3	CREST (2)	14
Public-school preschool (1)	1	PAL or VAP	11
Private, nonprofit ECE center (5)	5	Boys & Girls Club	4
Private, for-profit ECE center (1)	1	YMCA/YWCA	5
FCCH (6)	6	Other OST programs (2)	2
		Camp Santa Monica or Summer Adventure	4

and whether they planned to stay in the program. When parents mentioned problems or care gaps, we asked more specifically about what, if anything, they were able to do to address the problem. We also asked if there were any issues in getting their child to the program, and whether they had experienced gaps in care since they began to use the program. Finally, we asked if their child enjoyed the program, whether there had been any concerns about safety or conflicts with program staff, and whether their child reported being satisfied with program offerings. For those parents receiving subsidies, we also asked about the degree to which a subsidy affected their choice of programs and whether they had been forced to reject a program that seemed like a good match for their child because of inability to cover program cost.

In the discussion that follows, we summarize the material we learned from the focus groups.

Summary of Parent Discussions

Our focus groups included parents with varying numbers of children and from differing economic circumstances, but they are in no sense representative of all Santa Monica families. Nevertheless, their views are a useful input as the City of Santa Monica considers new ways to deliver services to children and families. On almost every issue, parents expressed a wide range of views; here, we summarize these views and the issues they raised.

Need. Parent needs vary tremendously, and those needs often are linked to employment status and income. Higher-income parents may not work outside the home; if they do, they may have control over their hours of employment, which means they may not need to find programs that cover all of the hours they work that are not covered by school. Parents who can afford to pay for care may have more options available; this allows them to focus on program quality and on meeting their own and their child's needs. Lower-income parents often do not have as many program choices. For example, higher-income students may attend after-school enrichment classes but are less likely to use after-school programs that cover the hours from dismissal until the end of the workday. Said one parent, "at [school campus], there's almost like there are two social classes, the people who get picked up after school, and there's [after-school care] kids." To the extent that the city seeks to achieve economic diversity in its ESAC programs, meeting the needs and preferences of higher-income/full-pay parents takes on more importance; programs need to appeal to those higher-income parents who can choose among programs. Many parents noted that high quality is an attractive lure to all parents and indicated that they seek quality in programs; focusing on QI may serve to increase economic diversity as well as other city goals.

Access. Parents in the focus groups were generally grateful for the variety of affordable ESAC programs available to them in the community. But for those parents of school-age children who are working and who are not able to leave work to transport children after school, program choices are severely limited by the need for transportation (nearly all parents in one group mentioned transportation concerns and all parents in another group commented that transportation drove program selection). These transportation challenges are exacerbated for

parents with multiple children at different program sites. As one parent remarked, “I think there are a lot of after-school programs, but if you can’t pick up your kid or take them there, that’s the challenge.”

A number of parents described the program search process as time-consuming and often frustrating. New parents, who may not have established parent networks, often rely on formal sources for finding programs, but such formal sources of program information are often limited and incomplete. Once children are enrolled in a program, ECE providers help parents find resources; in elementary schools, OST programs present at school open houses. One parent remarked, “Santa Monica has so many different programs . . . it’s almost as if they are competing against each other. We’re all residents. It would be nice if they could establish a city liaison that would gather information and make a link, so all the different (program) websites would link to a central city website.”

Safety. In general, parents reported few problems with regard to issues of safety, but some safety policies and practices worried parents. Parents are unhappy with policies in some OST programs that allow participants of any age to leave the program whenever they want to. As one parent expressed, “I’m not sure exactly why . . . your kid is free to leave any time they want to . . . it makes me nervous as a parent, I can’t control or keep tabs on exactly where [he/she] is.” Several parents expressed concerns about some programs’ use of public buses to transport children. One parent mentioned, “Sometimes I get worried when I see [program staff and participants] getting on the bus . . . no one controls who gets on the city bus.” Other parents worried about a lack of transportation, which meant that their children had to walk to the program (parents picked up at the end of the day). Finally, safety concerns were raised by some parents about park-based programs that lack dedicated facilities, meaning that program participants use playgrounds and restrooms open to the public. Said one parent, “I’m concerned about programs in [location]. . . . The kids go to the bathroom alone. They should have a separate bathroom for kids in the program.”

Quality. Many parents expressed satisfaction with program quality, but others were less sanguine; nearly all parents commented on quality as we probed on this issue. Two parents described substantial quality differences across sites in multi-site OST programs (one described quality as “random” across sites); several other parents noted marginal quality in several sites while others noted good quality at several sites. Comments focused on high child-to-staff ratios, lack of staff training, and in a few cases, lack of English fluency. Eleven parents in total across three different focus groups noted that an important need they have for an after-school program is that homework time is provided and homework is done, or at least started. But this does not always happen, despite repeated requests. One parent remarked, “The [staff] person needs to have the confidence and skills to be engaging with their homework. I think that the people you have in [program], I’m not sure if they could do it.”

Cost. Parents reported a range of views about the cost of care. One parent who was using a summer program was pleased about how affordable programs are, and especially liked the free

classes. Two parents (in two different groups) using OST care expressed unhappiness about policies that charge them for a fixed time regardless of whether their child attends that whole time. One parent commented that the activities don't always fit what she wants for her child, "so I bring her one day of the week, and have to pay for the whole week."

Subsidies. Those parents who receive child care subsidies are grateful, but the process of getting the subsidy often takes a lot a time and may preclude enrollment in programs that fill up while parents wait for subsidy approval. One parent remarked, "[The program] fills up fast, even before the school year begins . . . we had a problem with it filling up while my [subsidy] paperwork went through." Several parents reported challenges in working with the subsidy system due to eligibility rules, difficulty in estimating when a spot will be available, and unexpected budget cuts. One parent summarized the frustrations of two others in the same group, saying, "It's hard to get in . . . [there are] waiting lists on many programs."

Summary of Parents' Experiences with ESAC

This section discussed parent perspective on ESAC in Santa Monica informed by the parent ESAC survey, the summer program survey, and the focus groups. From the parent ESAC survey, we found that 72 percent of parents in our sample reported they rely on some form of nonparental care; parent-only care is higher for infants and toddlers and those ages nine to 12. We asked about the reasons parents did not rely on nonparental care and found that the most frequent response was that they did not need it; the second-most frequent response was that they couldn't afford it. Parents were also asked about what they considered important factors in making their care choices; we found that reliability was cited with parents of all age groups. Location and days or hours of availability were two of the more commonly noted factors for school-age care, while parents of preschoolers highly ranked the importance of the program's learning activities. Most parents reported feeling that there were good choices for child care for their youngest child near where they live, although the open-ended responses indicated that parents of infants and toddlers may be less enthusiastic about their options compared with parents of other age groups. One in five parents overall reported they were unable to find care when they needed it for a week or longer, with parents of infants and toddlers seeming to have particular difficulty. Few parents reported receiving financial assistance from an employer; slightly more (approximately 30 percent) reported participation in an employer-based tax-free spending account for child care. About 12 percent of parents were unaware of this option. 25 percent did not know if they had claimed a child care tax credit on their federal or state income taxes; nearly half of parents reported claiming the federal and/or state credit.

For the summer program survey, a wide range of programs was represented. Few parents reported concerns with safety and fewer than 40 percent reported their child complaining of boredom. Most parents (85 percent) rated the summer program(s) highly and said they would recommend participation to other parents.

We conducted five focus groups with 36 parents (two ECE groups, with one focusing on subsidy parents, two OST groups, with one focusing on summer programs, and one group in Spanish that combined all ECE, OST, and subsidy-eligible parents). We found that parents who can afford to pay for care may have more care options, while lower-income parents often do not have as many program choices. High quality is an attractive program attribute for all parents. Many parents were grateful for the affordable ESAC programs in the community. However, parents of school-age children who are not able to leave work to transport children from school to program sites find that their program choices are limited. The program search process was described by a number of parents as time-consuming and often frustrating. In general, parents reported few problems with regard to issues of safety, but some safety policies and practices worried parents, such as using public buses and bathrooms, or policies that allow children to leave the program without being signed out by an adult. Many parents seemed satisfied with program quality, but others mentioned quality differences across sites in multi-site programs. Parents had mixed feelings about the cost of care, with one parent pleased by affordability and free classes and a number of others dissatisfied about policies that charge them for a fixed time in care whether or not their child attends the entire time. Parents appreciated subsidies, but remarked that the long process of subsidy processing and wait times for approval can result in missing program enrollment windows. Overall, parent views are mixed on many issues, but there are some concerns with need, access, quality, and cost that we explored further in our provider and stakeholder interviews in the next chapter.

6. Perspectives from Providers and Other Stakeholders

Since the ultimate purpose of this study was to develop options for ESAC programs in Santa Monica, it was evident from the project's inception that it would be critical to elicit the views of a wide range of ESAC stakeholders in our study. Our project framework identifies a wide range of nonfamily stakeholders, including ESAC providers, staff of relevant city agencies, school district staff, resource and referral agency staff, and providers of training and workforce development. Talking to people who oversee and manage programs, deliver K–12 educational services to children, work with parents to find appropriate care, and educate the ESAC workforce would provide us with varied perspectives on how well current programs are working and suggest options for improving the ESAC system.²²

Interviewing these stakeholders could help to identify gaps in services, identify challenges they see parents facing in accessing and using ESAC programs, and identify key policy and funding issues and constraints that we needed to consider as we analyzed current program offerings, examined best practices that might inform options for Santa Monica, and studied ways to provide a more effective ESAC system (linking to the third research question). To do this, RAND interviewed a wide range of stakeholders. For these interviews, we analyzed the data based on common themes that surfaced in response to our questions, but did not conduct qualitative data coding and analysis.

Interview Participants, Topics, and Procedures

We conducted 27 interviews: 22 were individual interviews and five were group interviews. We interviewed a principal group, three teacher groups (with combined grade levels), and a group composed of three SMMUSD senior-level staff. We spoke with elected officials, elementary-school teachers at three Santa Monica schools, principals representing six schools, City of Santa Monica program administrators, SMMUSD leadership, SMMUSD PTA, private and public ESAC providers, SMC staff, representatives of various city boards and councils, and representatives of the Santa Monica Malibu Classroom Teachers Association (SMMCTA).

These key informants were selected through discussions with the City of Santa Monica and with SMMUSD; interviewees were selected who had a history of involvement with ESAC in Santa Monica and could provide a variety of perspectives on care in the community. With the exception of the group interviews, the city emailed these contacts, explaining the purpose of the study and that the person would be contacted by a member of the research team. RAND then followed up through email and phone calls to schedule the interview. The individual interviews

²² Although in the case of OST programming our study focus was on grades K–8, a number of interviewees referred to the K–12 system more generally. For accuracy, we retain those references in this chapter.

took place between July 2012 and January 2013; the group interviews took place between December 2012 and March 2013. Early discussions with city and SMMUSD staff and other key stakeholders informed the protocol used for these interviews. The majority of these interviews occurred after the parent focus groups and the summer OST survey; the ESAC survey occurred after the majority of the interviews had been conducted. Our understanding of Santa Monica's issues continued to be shaped by our data collection, but the protocols used for the interviews did not change as a result of the focus groups.

We asked interviewees a set of questions regarding the ESAC services about which they were most knowledgeable; whether they believe that available programs cohere into a system of care in the community; and whether they perceive gaps in services. We asked about perceived quality, strengths, and weaknesses of available care in Santa Monica, and solicited interviewees' suggestions for improving care and the ESAC system. We also asked interviewees to talk about issues of funding, including the cost of care, cost to families, and subsidy availability and application processes. When there was time, we asked interviewees to talk about other ESAC issues of concern to them. Five of the interviews focused more on ECE, eight emphasized OST, and in 14 interviews, both ECE and OST were discussed.

In our interviews with principals and teachers, we prioritized questions relating to alignment among programs housed in schools and asked for suggestions about how to improve these connections. For elected officials, we focused questions on policy and system functioning. Questions were designed to facilitate open-ended discussion; interviewees were encouraged to bring up related issues and concerns. (See Appendix D for the master interview protocol; for each interview, we chose to ask selected questions that would draw on the stakeholder's knowledge and expertise.)

Interviews typically took place at either the stakeholder's place of business or at RAND; one interview took place over the phone but all others were conducted in person. Interviews with individuals typically lasted one hour to an hour and a half. Interviews with SMMUSD senior-level staff, principals, and teachers were held in groups; these interviews varied in length from ten minutes to two hours, depending on the amount of time available. The group interviews allowed us to take advantage of previously scheduled staff meetings and gave us access to a wider range of participants. Shorter group interviews were typically held before regularly scheduled meetings to increase participation rates and reduce respondent burden. It is important to note that many interviewees fill additional roles to the one that led us to include them among our interviewees. For example, some are Santa Monica residents and parents; they would have responded to some questions from these other perspectives in addition to their professional one.

Notes were taken during the interview and were audio recorded; the recording of the interview was used only when the notes were unclear. The findings below focus on interviewees' views on access and participation, quality, service delivery, and funding. Recommendations that were offered during the interviews are incorporated into the presentation of policy options and

recommendations in Chapter Nine. Information about the specifics of individual programs collected from providers was used to inform our inventory of programs (see Chapter Four).

Access and Participation

Four themes pertain to our discussions of issues regarding access to ESAC services and participation in ESAC programs: gaps, schedule and hours, transportation, and diversity. The first three topics pertain primarily to issues of access, while the fourth addresses a concern with participation.

Gaps

Interviewees described a number of gaps in the course of our interviews. Gaps were noted in the availability and affordability of care (particularly for low- and middle-income families), and in outcomes for young children who do and do not attend ECE programs. Gaps were also noted in the use of available programs.

Two-thirds of stakeholders described gaps in service or access, or mentioned a gap at some point during the interview; a small number of interviewees responded that there were no groups not being served by the current system. A few interviewees asserted that there are not enough infant and toddler care programs (for children ages zero to two) in Santa Monica to serve parents; the gap between availability and demand was reportedly greatest for young infants, a conclusion that resonates with the parent survey data presented in Chapter Five.

About one in five interviewees expressed concerns about access for middle-income families who do not qualify for financial assistance but cannot afford the full price of many ECE programs. As one interviewee said, “[It is a] ...blend of lower-income and middle [families] that aren’t being served.” The particular financial access issues of single-parent middle-income families were highlighted by two interviewees; it was noted that a single middle-income parent would have trouble affording full-day preschool but would not be able to use more affordable half-day programs if working full time.

A number of stakeholders suggested that low-income and minority families may have some unique issues around access to and use of ESAC programs. Several teachers reported less preschool participation among Latino families and less school readiness among children who did not attend preschool. A number of teachers asserted that preschool and OST experiences can help lessen gaps they find in children’s experiences in the larger world, e.g., never having been to a zoo. A few interviewees speculated that lower participation rates of Latino children in ESAC may reflect language barriers that interfere with learning about program options and available subsidies.

Language differences may also make it more difficult for parents of older children to connect to their children’s schools around OST programming. However, a handful of other interviewees noted that bilingual community liaisons and committees work hard to connect Spanish-speaking

families to the schools, so that Spanish speakers should not have serious problems in accessing and using ESAC programs. A clear distinction was made between Spanish-speaking parents and those parents who speak other languages at home: More than one stakeholder argued that it is these parents who speak neither English nor Spanish at home who encounter serious barriers in connecting to the school and to OST programs. A handful of interviewees suggested that support for parent advocacy efforts would be very helpful in ensuring that Latino and African-American families have easier access to ECE programs. Indeed, it was suggested that now that SMMUSD has shifted to a centralized fundraising model through the Education Foundation, it may be possible for PTAs to return to their traditional work of providing parental education and support for advocacy.

One stakeholder who argued that there are no gaps pointed out that many OST programs are accessible to families of all income levels, and particularly noted that sports programs are quite inclusive; kids participate on the basis of their skills and not on the basis of how much money their family has. However, another interviewee mentioned that at middle schools, it feels like the only options available are sports, which may not appeal to all children: “[The] only thing at middle school is [the] sports program.” Two interviewees pointed out that as children age, they become more particular about the activities in which they are willing to participate, so variety in programming is important for OST. One suggestion for increasing participation in OST programs from underrepresented groups was “dual outreach”—reaching out to both parents and children and having personal contact with the child in hopes of interesting him or her in a given program.

One interviewee mentioned that there aren’t programs at the middle- and high-school levels that allow children to “hang out” in an unstructured but supervised way. Indeed, a few interviewees suggested that it would be great if there were programs for older children that provided structured options in the context of a program that was safe but less structured. Another stakeholder complained that there are not enough programs available for middle-school students, particularly those with working parents.

One provider talked about school-age children who are “quiet D students”, speculating that some of these children may be going home to older siblings while others may just be “hanging out.” Consistent with these concerns, interviewees noted that state funding only provides subsidies through age 12, so those 13 and older almost certainly have program access issues.

The particular needs of gifted children were mentioned by two interviewees, with one stakeholder pointing out that gifted children are often bored with traditional academic and OST offerings. They felt that an OST program could be designed to provide acceleration for high-achieving children.

Schedule and Hours

Several interviewees and one group of teachers discussed how issues of scheduling and hours of care available for ECE affected access to, and participation in, these programs. It was noted that

some ECE options provided on school campuses were affordable for working parents but that program hours were not compatible with a typical full-time work schedule. Two interviewees said the problem of limited hours is more widespread beyond campus-based ECE programs; many ECE programs (including subsidy programs) do not provide the hours of care needed by parents who work full time, and instead offer only half-day schedules or limited hours. Another timing issue that creates problems for ECE parents is that programs may close for holidays or breaks, leaving working parents with no care for their child. Veteran’s Day was given as an example; some centers are closed but many parents still have to work. More drop-in centers could help to ameliorate this issue.

Interviewees described analogous problems with OST programs. One group of teachers noted that before-school programs may not offer the schedule parents need (and may be seen as too costly), leading many parents to drop children off at school early; this leaves children unsupervised and possibly without having eaten breakfast. Two stakeholders mentioned the timing of summer camps, which often end in the middle of the day. This schedule makes it challenging for working parents to use them and potentially serves as a barrier to access. More broadly, when winter, spring, and summer breaks from school occur, lower-income families may have trouble accessing OST programs, as they may not be able to afford the specialized programs offered during breaks. One interviewee discussed the possibility of extended hours for OST care, particularly to serve single working parents while acknowledging the fiscal and staffing challenges of providing evening care.

Transportation

Several interviewees talked about how transportation and location affect OST access and participation. One interviewee (and many parents—see Chapter Four) noted that on-site care is strongly preferred because it avoids transportation issues. Parents may be unable to use off-campus programs because children cannot get from school to those programs, which may leave some children without access to a preferred program. One suggestion was to have a youth bus route (potentially operated by public transportation or by SMMUSD) that could pick up from schools and drop off at youth sites. One stakeholder noted that such routes might enable the establishment of a few specialized programs in a limited number of sites, which would be preferable to programs that need to meet all needs in many sites. One interviewee raised a related issue of parking for both ECE and OST programs on school campuses—if parking is limited, parents may not be able to be as involved on-campus when they pick up their children from programs.

Diversity

At least four interviewees or interview groups told us that both racial-ethnic and economic diversity in ESAC programming is important but challenging to achieve. As one interviewee said, “Diversity is important, but hard to put into practice.” One barrier cited was that parents

tend to self-select into programs; those families in which one parent doesn't work may forgo any OST programs or choose options that are time-limited, such as enrichment classes. Other parents simply don't want their children participating in programs located in certain parts of the city. In addition, children who have the option of going home after school often make this choice, particularly if friends are doing the same.

One issue in achieving diversity is that programs that primarily serve subsidized and low-income children may be perceived to be of lower quality. Several interviewees argued that such programs are, in fact, lower-quality programs; serving low-income parents provides few incentives to improve quality because program participants have few choices.²³ (See the related discussion in Chapter Four on parent focus groups.) These interviewees argued that improving program quality would likely increase diversity, as families that could afford other programs would choose these newly high-quality options. Several interviewees also noted that other program features could promote diversity as well. For example, immersion pre-kindergarten language programs would be attractive to full-fee parents, as would enrollment in school-based ECE if such enrollment came with guaranteed admission into the school's kindergarten. If programs were considered to be high-quality and provided desirable programming, it might be possible to pursue one suggested solution to the lack of diversity—that of combining full-fee and subsidized children in the same program, which would also make program funding more sustainable through cross-subsidy.

Quality of Care

A number of stakeholders asserted that high-quality care should be a goal of the ESAC system—low-income families should have the same opportunities to enroll their children in high-quality programs as parents who can afford to pay fees in private programs. More than one interviewee noted that the programs serving low-income students don't look the same as those serving full-fee, higher-income students. This is a tall order, as one provider noted: “I think all of us, including me, can improve quality. It would take a lot of effort and resources.” Interviewees talked about a number of quality issues; we review those here.

Safety

Like parents (see Chapter Four), interviewees raised a number of concerns regarding safety in OST programs. One interviewee mentioned that children walking to off-campus programming sometimes have to cross busy streets; some parents who are uncomfortable with this don't permit their children to participate in those programs. Another common concern was the minimal levels of supervision available in playground access programs. These open-play programs serve a need for unstructured play and can be fun for children, but more than one interviewee described them

²³ Such programs, if they depend on subsidies, may also have limited funds to undertake quality improvements.

as also providing opportunities for bullying and violence. One group of teachers mentioned that they hear about conflicts that occur at these programs from children, not from the program staff.

Another safety concern that several interviewees raised concerned staff-to-child ratios in OST programs. Staff is a program's largest cost item; some OST programs are not required to meet specified ratios, which saves money. It may also allow the program to expand to meet identified need without additional funding. One interviewee mentioned that at one OST program, maintaining an accepted ratio proved difficult as the program developed a waiting list and parents begged for slots. The program decided to shift to a drop-in program format (with no ratio requirement) that enabled more children to participate, even though this decreased the ratio of staff to children.

Staff Qualifications and Training

Several interviewees raised concerns about the qualifications of ECE program staff. More than one said programs that accept subsidies and serve low-income children have less-qualified staff because they cannot afford to pay them as much. As one said, "I don't think you need lots of degrees to have quality relationships. But that doesn't mean you don't need training."

Interviewees also raised concerns about OST staff qualifications. One interviewee noted wide variations in OST staff capacity, saying there are "some that are amazing and some that are (barely) breathing." Teachers in one group interview remarked that many OST staff are part-time and have other jobs and commitments, leading them to be less engaged in their OST work. Comments were also made about how some programs' poor working conditions may lead to high turnover of adult staff, which may be detrimental for children. More than one interviewee suggested an evaluation system for ESAC staff. Another noted that the quality of FCCH providers, which is largely unknown, might be improved if the city decided to provide subsidies in exchange for quality efforts, such as participation in training. Another suggestion involved working with SMC to develop specialized training, classes, and/or certificate programs for ECE providers that would enable them to identify and screen for developmental problems, in addition to the ECE classes and degree programs already offered.

Program Curriculum and Activities

Quality issues relating to program curricula and activities were raised by many interviewees. One mentioned that with the advent of the Common Core curriculum, the level of rigor for kindergarten is increasing, making communication and curriculum alignment between preschools (both private and public) and elementary schools more important as a tool to increase children's readiness for kindergarten. The group of school principals remarked that the variety in quality of preschools and the exposure to different experiences is apparent in the level of school readiness

that children demonstrate upon kindergarten entry. One interviewee noted that the Report Card found that only 30 percent of entering kindergarten students are [very] school-ready.²⁴

Suggestions for OST activities included having more engaging, fun programming, such as language and music programs, and having older and younger children work together. Another suggestion was to use OST to practice on computers and with technology; as one interviewee said, “kids don't ignore screens.” A group of teachers echoed the call for more language programs in OST and mentioned that a variety of programming is needed to keep children engaged—particularly older children. Another group of teachers mentioned concerns with some of the OST curriculum, remarking that for children in the early grades it seems more like babysitting than engaging programming.

Homework completion in OST was cited as a concern by three interviewees. One said parents often want children to have completed their homework during an after-school program, but that it can be difficult for OST providers to get children to focus on homework. An interviewee commented that “tutoring should be available [in OST] for those who need it, particularly [for] those from families where parents can't help as much with homework.” One interviewee suggested that OST programs create opportunities for parents to supervise homework when they arrive to pick up their children. However, based on the parents we heard from in our focus groups, this may not be very appealing: They were clear in our focus groups that they wanted the programs to make sure that homework is finished, or at least begun.

Service Delivery

We asked stakeholders to talk about ESAC care in Santa Monica, and whether it seemed to cohere into a system. For interviewees, system coherence included a number of dimensions: shared curriculum among programs serving the same age groups, alignment among programs serving children at different times of the day, and communication across programs designed to improve families' program access and meet family care needs. Most said that an ECE system and an OST system existed in some form but that neither system is thought out carefully. More than one interviewee noted that an ESAC system should be data-driven; several noted that the Report Card could be a valuable resource in providing needed data. Indeed, as already noted, more than one interviewee referred to Report Card data on school readiness as an example of the sort of data that could help drive a system. Nearly all said both systems could use additional coherence and alignment.

²⁴ The Report Card states that only 30 percent of entering kindergarteners are “very ready in communication skills and general knowledge” (Cradle to Career Working Group, 2012). This distinction between ready and very ready was not always mentioned by the interviewee.

System Coherence

Multiple interviewees mentioned that, compared to OST, ECE benefits from the presence of CFC, which could serve as a hub for ECE care and could promote system coherence and cooperation. One interviewee suggested that increased collaboration between CFC and SMMUSD would help to improve ECE system coherence. A handful of interviewees mentioned the Early Education Task Force; some noted that it could also play more of a linking role, and this could include ECE and OST. But one interviewee pointed out that the task force schedule does not accommodate participation from FCCH, which leaves an important part of the ESAC care system out of the discussion.

Some interviewees remarked that an ECE system has to contend with the inherent fragmentation of the ECE world, where different funders impose different rules and policies, thus contributing to silos by funding source. Smaller siloes also exist within the private provider world; for example, for-profit, nonprofit, and religiously affiliated programs have their own rules and policies and may not communicate with other types of programs. More than one interviewee suggested that fragmentation in the ECE world is increased because there is sometimes competition for enrollees. One person we spoke with noted that the lack of coherence in ECE care is even greater for children ages zero to three; several noted that the existing ECE system doesn't serve single-parent families very well (one example cited was the lack of extended hours that might present particular challenges for a single parent). One interviewee suggested that another contribution to the lack of a coherent system is the absence of a common curriculum in preschool. Closer communication between SMMUSD and pre-K programs on the Common Core standards would improve cross-funder alignment and increase the likelihood that pre-K students would be kindergarten-ready. Said one interviewee, "So many pieces . . . are fantastic, but we need to lay out a plan to link them and make them more accessible."

According to one stakeholder, navigating available ESAC program information represents a real challenge for families; parents who "don't have the time or relentlessness [to investigate options] end up feeling exasperated and shortchanged." The goal of centralizing information about high-quality available programs was mentioned by more than one interviewee (and parents too), which would contribute to system coherence. One interviewee said parents who have access to technology can navigate the system but those without access may have challenges.

Multiple providers (both private and public) mentioned that sharing waiting lists would help them (as well as parents). These lists change quickly, as parents who really need care seek out and enroll in other programs. One provider said, "If we knew which programs were offering spaces and which were low on enrollment . . . it would be great. We'll get families looking for care . . . and we don't know where to tell them to go." The shared waiting list could be shared only among providers, or could be made available to parents, as well; the latter option would allow parents to search for programs with more knowledge about available spaces, particularly if lists were frequently updated. This approach would be consistent with suggestions that parents

offered in focus groups to post all programs in a central location, with links to each. Adding vacancy information would be even more helpful as parents search for care.

System Alignment

A number of interviewees focused their discussion of system issues on the need to better coordinate and ensure coherence of ECE and OST programs operating on school campuses with K–12 programs. As it is now, these programs generally operate independently of each other. As already noted, these separations often reflect different funding streams and their policies and regulations. For example, ECE programs are subject to stricter safety regulations (e.g., locks and gates) that complicate cooperation. Principals, although the public face of these programs, have limited control over them—and, some interviewees argued, do not view these programs as “theirs” for several reasons; e.g., they have no role in choosing staff. As one interviewee commented, “they are a separate entity with a separate budget.”

Enrollment policies in ECE programs exacerbate the lack of coordination and ownership. For example, most of the children in ECE programs will not continue in kindergarten on the same campus. This makes principals feel that ECE children are not “their” children, according to one stakeholder. Another interviewee said several activities could more closely link ECE and OST staff with K–12 teachers on campus by including them in on-campus trainings, professional development, or other activities, such as fire drills. Typically, they are not included on rosters or email notifications for schoolwide events and issues; their program calendars are not considered when the school is planning events. While including them in training clearly has cost implications, some of the other recommendations could be implemented with little effort. Also noted was limited articulation between on-campus OST program staff and teachers; for example, there is little or no communication between teachers and OST program staff about student performance or homework expectations. This separation both contributes to and reflects a “fundamental lack of respect” among teachers for pre-kindergarten and OST staff, according to one interviewee. A culture change is needed, so that OST programs on campus function as an extension of the school day. This would involve ensuring that OST staff on school campuses are familiar with school policies around conflict resolution, anti-bullying efforts, and education philosophy. Alignment could improve if OST programs follow the same rules as those that apply during the school day (such as how to behave on the playground) and share the same philosophies (such as closing the achievement gap). A significant barrier to doing this is a lack of funds for joint training and other cooperative activities.

School principals suggested that having one point person for all on-campus OST programs would improve the system from their perspective. Some mentioned that the lack of a CFC-like organization meant the OST system was not as well-developed as ECE; competition between OST programs was cited as an example of lack of system development. One interviewee said there is almost no connection between private OST providers and the system formed by the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD, with the exception of the few private providers who operate on

school campuses; they mentioned that this was particularly noticeable for summer programs. One interviewee noted that multiple OST providers on a single school campus lead to an incoherent OST system. But some interviewees welcomed the choices that multiple programs implied. Indeed, the diversity of program options was cited as a strength of the system by five interviewees, although one qualified this by saying that while program diversity can be positive, it can also be stressful for parents, who must choose among the options. One interviewee suggested that a centralized database of children that could be accessed by all OST providers and K–12 teachers would help to align school-day and OST programs. Some small efforts are currently made to forge these links; for example, one OST program has procured a set of school texts for referral. But more than one interviewee noted that there is no substitute for coordination among the staff of K–12 and OST programs.

One stakeholder suggested that the city should “wipe the slate clean” and imagine what kinds of programs should be offered, then build a system from that perspective. Certainly, there are efforts to link programs, and to link parents to them. A recent example was cited by an interviewee: SMMUSD held a kindergarten information night for parents with preschool-age children that involved private ECE providers, SMMUSD, the City of Santa Monica, and OST providers.

We asked stakeholders to discuss the strengths of ESAC in Santa Monica. One said that institutions in the area (such as the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, and SMC) collaborate often and well, and that ESAC program staff also work together. Another interviewee argued that there are many dedicated people in Santa Monica who protect and stand up for ECE. A third mentioned that the level of support from the community for ECE is strong, and that collaboration and networking are present due to the Early Education Task Force. Another interviewee also cited the task force, saying it helps forge a strong ECE provider network. But this network is limited by lack of a FCCH presence. One person we spoke with noted that FCCHs often are not included in the ECE provider network because they must be with the children all day and care for their own families in the evening: “It is a built-in problem, given their schedules.” Another interviewee noted that the City of Santa Monica is particularly supportive of ECE in contrast to other local cities, and yet another said the SMC2C Working Group has recently improved communication and provided networking opportunities for the OST world in Santa Monica.

Financing

Issues associated with financing revolved around two key themes: sustainability of funding sources and the role subsidies play in the affordability of care.

Sustainability

Recent cuts to ESAC and K–12 funding, and anticipated cuts going forward, led some interviewees to worry about sustaining the programs already in place. A frequent suggestion to

improve sustainability was to structure programs to include both full-fee and subsidy children, so that full-fee families can cross-subsidize programs. It was noted by one stakeholder that such programs would have more flexibility, being less reliant on outside funding sources. Declining enrollments might provide additional space for such programs in elementary schools. To engage full-fee children would require informing parents that these programs are open to families who are not using subsidies. However, as one interviewee noted, creating such economically blended programs may be challenging in ECE, as there are many existing private options for families who can pay full fees. To attract them, it might be necessary to improve the quality of these programs, which might involve offering unique curricula, such as Spanish immersion, or establishing a policy that pre-kindergarten enrollment ensures kindergarten enrollment at the site. Another interviewee suggested that programs could be better sustained if fees were raised for those who can afford to pay; this policy would particularly apply in some low-flat-rate fee or free programs in OST.

A few interviewees expressed hope that programs could reach a point where outside funds would not be required to sustain them. This would increase program flexibility because, as several interviewees noted, self-sustaining programs would allow providers freedom from the different rules and requirements associated with funding streams—which, in turn, would encourage alignment and cooperation.

One interviewee said that while making programs self-sustaining is an important goal, Santa Monica shouldn't walk away from federal and state funding. The city's focus should be to "adjust our whole system to use this funding in the most efficient way." It was pointed out that Santa Monica may have challenges in seeking grant money, as some funders may view Santa Monica as a wealthy community and therefore prefer to fund potential recipient communities demonstrating greater need.

More than one stakeholder argued that city funding should be used more strategically to further important goals. For example, in the past there was a program that allowed teen parents who went from Samohi to SMC to continue to use the Samohi infant/toddler center; restoring such a program might encourage more attendance at SMC among young parents. Another goal worth pursuing is improved program quality. Some ECE programs are already being rated on their quality (through STEP) and receiving tiered reimbursement based on their level of quality; interviewees suggested that this effort be expanded. Another example of linking funding to QI would be grants to FCCHs in return for required training or other improvement activities.

Affordability of Care and Subsidies

Seven interviewees expressed concerns about the large number of middle-income families who earn too much to receive subsidies but cannot afford full fees. One suggested that at least some of these families would benefit from a sliding scale or partial subsidy program. This could be facilitated through development agreements between the city and developers that fund providers. Also noted was that programs with very low or no fees (e.g., to participate in sports programs)

subsidize large numbers of children, many coming from families that do not need subsidies. One interviewee noted that the economic downturn has created a paradigm shift in thinking about public programs: Maybe fees should be raised for parents who can afford them, and “people who don’t need subsidies shouldn’t get subsidies.” One interviewee pointed out that some private ECE programs offer scholarships and tuition assistance for lower-income families, although eligibility rules vary from year to year. Another mentioned that LAUP is a good option for middle-income families, as it is a low-cost program with no income restrictions for participation. A third suggestion was to increase awareness of tax benefits for parents who pay for ECE or OST care.

We heard from one interviewee that the City of Santa Monica subsidy gives flexibility to families regarding the schedule of care, and that much of that funding goes to infants and toddlers. Two providers mentioned that it is challenging to find children who qualify for the subsidized programs in Santa Monica; one said the problem is that the geographic area has gentrified. This makes it harder for providers to find families that meet the low poverty guidelines for federal and state programs. Another provider pointed out that, for subsidy programs, one has to plan ahead for the number of children they expect to serve; this can be challenging and may result in a surplus or deficit of subsidy slots.

One stakeholder noted that some low-income parents who qualify for subsidies or scholarships may not be able to afford the extra fees that programs often charge, such as registration and application fees or material fees. Financial assistance for these extra fees may be needed to encourage subsidy-eligible parents to apply for these programs.

For OST, school principals pointed out that those working to enroll students in programs must be sensitive to income and documented status (citizenship/immigration status). Flexibility for families without documentation could increase participation in subsidy programs; for example, some families may not have a recent paycheck to document income. Being clear ahead of time about what documents are needed may also alleviate issues related to documented status at the time of enrollment. Other stakeholders pointed out that the differences in subsidy eligibility among OST programs, as well as eligibility changes from year to year, can confuse parents and complicate the enrollment process. Lastly, the issue of some parents having trouble asking for subsidized help was raised; stakeholders emphasized the need for sensitivity on the part of staff.

Summary of Provider and Other Stakeholder Perspectives

We interviewed 22 individual providers or other stakeholders and conducted five group interviews (a principal group, three teacher groups, and a group of SMMUSD senior-level staff). We spoke with a variety of stakeholders, including elected officials, elementary-school teachers at three Santa Monica schools, principals representing six schools, City of Santa Monica program administrators, SMMUSD leadership, SMMUSD PTA, private and public ESAC

providers, SMC staff, representatives of various city boards and councils, and representatives of the SMMCTA.

A number of gaps were described in the course of our interviews, notably in the availability and affordability of care (particularly for low- and middle-income families), and in outcomes for young children who do and do not attend ECE programs. Gaps were also noted in the use of available programs. Some interviewees expressed concerns about access for middle-income families who do not qualify for financial assistance but cannot afford the full price of many ECE programs. Interviewees also discussed issues of scheduling and hours of care available for ESAC, as these affect access to and participation in programs. Transportation also may be an issue, as parents may be unable to use off-campus OST programs because children cannot get from school to those programs.

We heard from interviewees that racial, ethnic, and economic diversity in ESAC programming is important, but challenging to achieve. Some mentioned that improving program quality would likely increase diversity, as families that could afford other programs chose these newly high-quality options. Stakeholders asserted that high-quality care should be a goal of the ESAC system and that low-income families should have the same opportunities to enroll their children in high-quality programs as parents who can afford to pay fees in private programs. Some stakeholders raised concerns regarding safety in OST programs, about the qualifications of ECE program staff, and quality issues relating to program curricula and activities.

For interviewees, system coherence included shared curriculum among programs serving the same age groups, alignment among programs serving children at different times of the day, and communication across programs designed to improve families' program access and to meet family care needs. Most said an ECE system and an OST system existed in some form but that neither system is well orchestrated. Some interviewees focused their discussion of system issues on the need to better coordinate ECE and OST programs operating on school campuses with K–12 programs.

Issues associated with financing revolved around two key themes: sustainability of funding sources and the role that subsidies play in the affordability of care. Recent cuts to ESAC and K–12 funding and anticipated cuts going forward led some interviewees to worry about sustaining the programs already in place. A frequent suggestion to improve funding sustainability was to work to include both full-fee and subsidy children together in programs so that full-fee families can cross-subsidize programs. It was noted by one stakeholder that such programs would have more flexibility, being less reliant on outside funding sources. Some interviewees expressed concerns about the large number of middle-income families who earn too much to receive subsidies but cannot afford full fees.

Overall, we heard from these providers and other stakeholders that the system has many positive aspects, but that ESAC care in Santa Monica is often fragmented. There are opportunities to improve quality, access, and participation, as well as funding sustainability.

7. Cost of Care in Santa Monica ECE and OST Settings

Data for California show that the average annual cost for center-based care in 2011 was \$11,823 for full-time infant care, \$8,237 for full-time care for a four-year-old, and \$2,736 for before- and/or after-school care (Child Care Aware of America, 2011). Similar figures to serve children at these ages in family child care stood at \$7,187, \$6,916, and \$3,015, respectively. However, such estimates of what California parents pay for care on average are unlikely to be a useful yardstick for Santa Monica, given the large differences in costs of living across California's communities. Indeed, information on fees charged by Santa Monica-based ECE centers, collected by CFC, indicate that the average annual cost for full-time care tops \$17,500 for infant care and \$12,500 for preschool-age care.²⁵

In order to support decisionmaking regarding ESAC services in Santa Monica, it is important to have accurate information about program costs in the community. Our analysis of the cost of care in Santa Monica ESAC in this section informs all three of the research questions presented in Chapter One. Understanding the structure of cost in Santa Monica for a sample of providers will help inform how state and federal budget and policy changes might affect the system, as well as how the current system of care can be improved for a stronger funding structure (research questions 1 and 3). Exploring the cost of care is central for answering research question 2, regarding how new funding streams can be integrated with existing funding streams.

While a large-scale representative data collection effort was beyond the scope of this study, we did endeavor to collect comprehensive cost information for a small group of providers in Santa Monica, with representation from a range of licensed ESAC provider types. In the following analysis, our goal is to obtain a comprehensive measure of the cost of delivering ESAC services. Ideally, the cost measure will reflect the expenditures for a given accounting year, including staff salaries and benefits, facilities, program materials and other supplies, and other items. Our estimate of costs will also reflect the economic value of in-kind goods and services that programs employ, such as donated or subsidized space, or volunteer time. Moreover, these cost figures are distinct from budgetary data, which reflect planned expenditures, rather than actual expenditures. Our estimates of program costs are also different from the fees that providers charge to participating families.

We begin in the next section with a brief discussion of the sample of providers for which we collected cost data and the data and analysis collection methods. (Additional detail on the methods for data collection and the survey instrument are provided in Appendix E.) Next, we summarize key characteristics of the providers in our sample, including a number of program

²⁵ Key informant interview.

features that have implications for program costs. We then proceed to detail our estimates of provider costs. We also summarize the information we collected on the sources of program revenues and on provider fees.

Provider Sample and Data Collection and Analysis Methods

We collected detailed program and financial information for a small number of providers operating in Santa Monica serving infants, toddlers, preschool-age, and school-age children. Because such data are time-consuming to collect, our budget afforded a target sample of 16 providers. The ESAC programs in our sample were selected to capture the range of providers in terms of home settings versus centers, public ownership versus private (either for-profit or not-for-profit), and those providing services for children under age five versus school-age children.²⁶ Given the small number of providers we could sample, the sampling strategy was not intended to provide a statistically representative sample, but to capture the variation in provider types—and thus, some of the likely variation in program costs.

We originally allocated the 16 providers across four strata designed to capture the desired variation, specifically four FCCHs, three infant/toddler centers, five preschools, and four OST programs (see Appendix E for a more detailed description of our sampling method). As part of assembling the provider inventory for Chapter Four, names and contact information for all Santa Monica-based ECE providers was made available by CFC; for OST programs, the research team created a list of programs in the community and their features with input from the City of Santa Monica. The final sample frame for OST providers consisted of the six larger full-time enrollment-based or drop-in after-school programs. Within each stratum, providers were randomly selected within subgroups to ensure variation in other features, such as being accredited by NAEYC or NAFCC, accepting children with public subsidies, and participating in LAUP.

Because there was interest in examining cost differences for public versus private providers, we redefined our strata (for purposes of reporting) to the following five groups:

- FCCHs (both small and large)
- Private (either for-profit or not-for-profit) center-based ECE programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children
- Public center-based ECE programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children
- Private (not-for-profit) OST providers serving school-age children
- Public OST providers serving school-age children.

²⁶ For purposes of sampling public OST programs, the summer programs offer by CREST were combined with their academic year program.

These strata capture variation along three key dimensions for ESAC delivery: home versus center, public versus private, and ECE versus OST. In discussing our findings, all results are aggregated within the five strata in order to mask the figures for any given provider in our sample.²⁷

Table 7.1 shows the total number of providers in Santa Monica within each of the five strata, the target number of providers for interview in each stratum, and the number of providers in each stratum in our completed sample of 14 providers. Table 7.1 also indicates that the two OST private providers and two OST public providers together represented multiple center-based sites.

Our data collection and analysis methods follow those adopted by Schwartz and Karoly (2011) in their analysis of 12 providers in the Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program (Minnesota). The survey instrument was adapted from that study to reflect features of the child care market specific to Santa Monica and to capture data for programs serving a wider age range. Between November 2012 and January 2013, semistructured interviews were conducted in person with each provider. Information on program revenues and expenditures, as well as subsidized space, volunteer labor, and other in-kind resources, was collected for the most recent completed fiscal year. Other information collected pertained to program structure, fees, enrollment, and staffing. The accuracy of information varied among programs, with some programs providing detailed financial records and others providing “ballpark” estimates. We worked with providers to obtain the most accurate data possible during the timeframe of the interview and, particularly for the cost data, asked providers for a list of possible categories to help increase accurate recall.

The analysis of program costs was also based on Schwartz and Karoly (2011) and a modified version of the resource cost model developed by Levin and McEwan (2001). During the provider interviews, we collected expenditure data for up to 42 categories, including personnel, facilities, classroom supplies, and office supplies. Many providers had financial systems in place that

Table 7.1. Santa Monica ESAC Providers by Type: Total and Study Sample

Category	Program Type					Total
	FCCHs	ECE Private Centers	ECE Public Centers	OST Private Centers	OST Public Centers	
Total programs (N)	35	41	10	2	4	93
Programs selected for interview (N)	4	5	3	2	2	16
Programs in final sample (N)	3	4	3	2	2	14
Sites in final sample (N)	3	4	3	7	14	31

²⁷ In some cases, when information was missing for a particular provider, it was omitted from the aggregated figures. All such cases are marked in the table notes.

provided expenditure amounts in more aggregated categories, so detailed data were not collected in those cases.²⁸ To fully account for all resources employed to provide care, providers were asked to report about any goods or services received in-kind, such as volunteer labor, subsidized space, or donated food and supplies. In the case of volunteer labor, volunteer hours were valued at \$8 an hour, the California minimum wage. For other goods and services received in-kind, we relied on the estimated values given by the provider. Finally, in the case of donated space and other facilities costs (e.g., utilities), we did not have sufficient information for the public sector programs—where space and other facilities operating costs were provided by the school district—to generate an estimated economic value of the occupancy cost. For this reason, in our cost analysis, we report results for all costs (exclusive of donated space and related occupancy costs) and results for nonoccupancy program costs. The latter treats all programs on an equivalent basis and is our preferred basis for comparing costs across programs.

The 14 programs reported data for four different fiscal years: calendar year 2011 (five programs); July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012 (seven programs); September 1, 2011, to August 30, 2012 (one program); and July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011 (one program). Because the fiscal years are overlapping, we did not attempt to adjust for inflation over the 26-month period covered by the data (July 2010 to August 2012), especially since the plurality of programs had data covering January 2011 to June 2012.

Our estimates of program costs account for differences in the number of hours per day and days per year that the program operates. In the case of several of the OST programs, we also needed to account for the fact that they combine part-day academic-year programming with full-day programming during the summer months and major school breaks. Thus, in order to best compare costs, all cost figures are reported as *cost per hour per child*, defined as total annual cost divided by total annual child hours (i.e., number of children served times the average annual hours for each child).

Provider Characteristics

As noted earlier, all of the programs in our sample are licensed as either small FCCHs (one provider), large FCCHs (two providers), or centers (or are centers exempt from licensing; 11 providers). Most of the providers have been operating for multiple decades; just one provider had been in business fewer than 10 years. Tables 7.2 and 7.3 summarize a number of key characteristics of the providers in the sample that are indicative of program structure and the nature of the services offered, as well as other features that are potentially relevant for understanding program costs. Where the characteristic is a quantity (e.g., FTE enrollment), we

²⁸ In the case of two of the public ECE programs, financial data were available only in aggregate across all ECE programs operated by the school district. For these two programs, all financial figures are based on the average across the sites.

report the average or range for the providers in each stratum (or table column). Where a characteristic is an indicator (e.g., for-profit status among private providers), we summarize the number in each of the strata with that feature, such as “1 of 2.”

Table 7.2. Characteristics of Sampled ESAC Programs in Santa Monica

Characteristic	Program Type				
	FCCHs	ECE Private Centers	ECE Public Centers	OST Private Centers	OST Public Centers
Program structure					
For-profit (vs. not-for-profit)	3 of 3	1 of 4	–	0 of 2	–
Offer year-round (vs. academic year)	3 of 3	3 of 4 ^a	2 of 3	2 of 2	2 of 2
Offer full-day program (vs. part-day)	3 of 3	4 of 4	3 of 3	–	–
Offer before-school care	–	–	–	0 of 2	2 of 2
Offer after-school care	–	–	–	2 of 2	2 of 2
Offer summer program	–	–	–	2 of 2	2 of 2
Public subsidies available					
EHS/HS	1 of 3	0 of 4	3 of 3	–	–
LAUP	1 of 3	0 of 4	1 of 3	–	–
Title 5 (including CSPP)	0 of 3	0 of 4	3 of 3	0 of 2	1 of 2
Vouchers	3 of 3	3 of 4	1 of 3	2 of 2	1 of 2
Program enrollment and staffing					
Licensed capacity (range) ^b	8 to 14	40 to 120	30 to 65	–	–
Enrollment (average) ^c	11	58	36	298	314
Enrollment per site (average) ^c	11	58	36	98	45
FTE classroom staff (average)	6	12	5	29	31
Child-to-staff ratio (average)	2	5	7	9	10
Waiting list	1 of 3	4 of 4	1 of 3	0 of 2	1 of 2
Demographics of enrolled children (average %)					
By age					
Infants	18	12	19	0	0
Toddlers	28	25	14	0	0
Preschoolers	37	63	67	0	0
School-age	18	0	0	100	100
By race and ethnicity					
White	37	52	29	38	not available
Hispanic	12	17	56	24	not available
African-American	33	8	10	22	not available
Asian	5	12	4	5	not available
Other	13	12	0	5	not available
Other child characteristics (average %)					
With special needs	9	8	not available	13	not available
Receiving public subsidies ^d	55	23	76	2	57
Santa Monica resident	51	66	53	83	not available
Sampled programs (N)	3	4	3	2	2

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data collected from 14 programs.

NOTE: Percentage distributions may not add to 100 because of rounding. – = not applicable.

^a One program follows an academic calendar but also offers a summer program.

^b Capacity numbers are rounded with the exception of FCCH column.

^c Enrollment for FCCHs and ECE centers is FTEs, adjusting for children on part-time schedules.

^d Does not include private subsidies in the form of reduced fees or other scholarships.

Table 7.2 shows that all of the home-based providers and one of the ECE private centers are for-profit, while the three other private ECE centers and the two private OST centers are classified as not-for-profit. The remaining centers are operated by SMMUSD or the City of Santa Monica. In terms of schedules, with two exceptions, the providers we sampled operate year-round programs. One private center offers an academic-year program but also runs a summer program. Most of the ECE programs operate five days a week and have at least a full-day option. One of the FCCHs indicated that they operate seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The OST programs in the private sector have sessions both after school and during the summer. The public OST programs also offer before-school care.

With the exception of one of the private ECE centers, all of the providers have some form of government subsidy, either in the form of a direct contract or grant to provide a specified number of slots or through the acceptance of voucher payments. At least one program in the sample receives funding from each of the major federal, state, and local funding streams relevant for Santa Monica, including EHS, HS, Title 5 (including CSPP), LAUP, Santa Monica Child Care subsidies, and CalWORKs or non-CalWORKs APP vouchers (detail not shown).

Given the mix of providers, it is not surprising that Table 7.2 shows considerable variation in program size—from the FCCHs with licensed capacity of eight to 14 children, to the OST private and public providers serving hundreds of children (usually across multiple sites). The ECE centers fall between these extremes with an overall range of 30 to 120 licensed slots. FTE enrollment and FTE classroom staff likewise show variation across provider types that mirrors licensed capacity. The average child-to-staff ratio ranges from about 2-to-1 in FCCHs, to 5-to-1 or 7-to-1 for the ECE programs, and 10-to-1 or 12-to-1 for the OST programs. Half of the providers in the sample maintain a waiting list, suggesting that there is excess demand for their programming.

Information on the demographic characteristics of the enrolled children was available for most of the providers. The FCCH providers in the sample serve children across the four age groups delineated in Table 7.2. Together, the private and public ECE centers cover the three youngest age groups, although there is some segregation of just infants and toddlers or just preschool-age children for specific providers. Of course, the OST providers all serve school-age children.

Keeping in mind that the providers are not representative of all ESAC programs in the city and that the demographics are a simple average across providers (rather than weighted by the number of children), the figures in Table 7.2 indicate that the providers in the sample serve a diverse racial and ethnic mix of children. Likewise, with one exception among those providers with data, all reported serving at least one child with special needs. Among the providers in the sample, ECE public centers have the highest share of children receiving some form of public subsidy (over 75 percent), while the lowest share is among the OST private centers. In general, the subsidy rate is higher for ECE than OST. Finally, the share of children that are Santa Monica

residents (where that information is available) is highest among the OST programs, consistent with the expectation that those programs are closely tied to SMMUSD schools.

Although we did not collect observational data on program quality, accreditation can be one indicator that a program has met a set of stringent requirements consistent with high quality. In addition, rating under LA STEP is another indicator that a program has achieved a given set of quality benchmarks and may be working to move up the ratings scale. The sample of 14 providers includes accredited and nonaccredited programs, as well as STEP-rated and non-STEP-rated programs (not shown).

Table 7.3. Classroom Staff Qualifications, Staff Fringe Benefits, and Program Offerings and Services for Sampled ESAC Programs in Santa Monica

Characteristic	Program Type				
	FCCHs	ECE Private Centers	ECE Public Centers	OST Private Centers	OST Public Centers
Classroom staff qualifications (average %)					
With bachelor's degree or higher	16	58	33	27	51
With associate's degree or CDA	23	20	48	0	5
With CDA	11	20	10	0	0
Without degree or CDA	49	2	10	73	44
Staff benefits					
Partially or fully paid health insurance	1 of 3	4 of 4 ^a	3 of 3	2 of 2 ^a	2 of 2
At least partially paid dental insurance	1 of 3	4 of 4 ^a	3 of 3 ^a	2 of 2 ^a	2 of 2 ^a
At least partially paid retirement plan	1 of 3	3 of 4 ^a	3 of 3 ^a	2 of 2 ^a	2 of 2 ^a
Paid sick leave or personal leave	1 of 3	4 of 4 ^a	3 of 3	2 of 2 ^a	2 of 2
Paid vacation	2 of 3 ^a	4 of 4	3 of 3 ^a	2 of 2 ^a	2 of 2 ^a
Reduced child care fees	0 of 3	4 of 4 ^a	0 of 3	1 of 2	0 of 2
Paid to attend staff meetings/training	2 of 3 ^a	4 of 4	0 of 3	2 of 2	1 of 2
Compensation for overtime	1 of 3	3 of 4 ^a	0 of 3	2 of 2 ^a	1 of 2
Program offerings and services					
Bilingual education	1 of 3	2 of 4	1 of 3	0 of 2	1 of 2
Vision and hearing screening	1 of 3	2 of 4	2 of 3	1 of 2	0 of 2
Dental screening	1 of 3	0 of 4	2 of 3	2 of 2	0 of 2
Speech screening and services	1 of 3	4 of 4	3 of 3	0 of 2	0 of 2
Developmental assessments	3 of 3	3 of 4	3 of 3	0 of 2	1 of 2
Height/weight measurement annually	1 of 3	1 of 4	2 of 3	1 of 2	0 of 2
Counseling services for children/parents	1 of 3	3 of 4	3 of 3	0 of 2	0 of 2
Referral for parents to social services	2 of 3	3 of 4	3 of 3	0 of 2	1 of 2
Transportation provided to/from program	3 of 3	0 of 4	0 of 3	2 of 2	0 of 2
Meals provided	3 of 3	4 of 4	3 of 3	2 of 2	2 of 2
Sampled programs (N)	3	4	3	2	2

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data collected from 14 programs.

NOTE: Percentage distributions may not add to 100 because of rounding.

^a Sometimes limited to certain staff (e.g., full-time employees).

Table 7.3 focuses on three other aspects of program structure that have cost implications: the educational attainment of the classroom staff, the employment-related benefits available to program staff, and special program offerings and ancillary services provided to children and their families. Again, keeping in mind that the set of programs we sampled is not intended to be representative of all programs in the city, the FCCHs in the sample are less likely to have classroom staff with an associate's or bachelor's degree than the center-based programs. Among the center-based providers in the sample, the highest share of degreed staff occurs for the ECE providers, although the set of private providers has a higher share of bachelor's-level staff (versus associate's-level staff) compared with the public providers. In contrast, the public OST centers in the sample rely to a greater extent on degreed staff compared with their private OST counterparts.

Considering the set of fringe benefits detailed in Table 7.3, the FCCHs are the least likely to offer such benefits. ECE and OST providers in both the private and public sectors are about equally likely to offer the range of benefits shown in the table. A somewhat similar pattern is evident for special program offerings and child and family services. With the exception of meals, transportation and developmental assessments, the list of offerings is smaller at the FCCHs compared with the center-based programs. The set of service offerings is more extensive for public ECE centers compared with private ones, and more prevalent (and somewhat more relevant) for ECE centers compared with OST centers.

Provider Costs

We now consider the relative importance of various components in program cost as well as the cost per child-hour, defined as total annual costs divided by total annual child-hours. For each program type, Table 7.4 shows total cost per child-hour, as well as cost per child-hour disaggregated across cost categories. In addition, the share of cost in each category is reported. (As a reference, average enrollment per site is repeated from Table 7.2.) For each program type, the cost shares are averaged across the providers in that category. Likewise, the costs per child-hour are a simple average across providers. The results are presented two ways: first, where cash occupancy costs are included, and second, where cash occupancy costs are excluded. The former reflects cost figures based on cash outlays, but programs that do not pay for all or some of their space costs will appear to be lower-cost providers relative to those that pay a higher share or the full cost of their space. In particular, the public programs included in the sample did not have cash outlays for facilities because they are school-based programs. Several of the private programs received partial or full rent discounts, as well. As noted earlier, in each case, there was insufficient information to generate a valid estimate of the value of the space used so that a full measure of economic cost could be generated. Given the differences in the way facilities costs are treated, by removing the occupancy cost component, we obtain a more appropriate comparison across programs of all nonoccupancy program costs. For that reason, we focus our discussion on the second panel in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4. Cost Per Child-Hour and Cost Shares and for Sampled ESAC Programs in Santa Monica

Measure	Program Type									
	FCCHs ^a		ECE Private Centers		ECE Public Centers		OST Private Centers		OST Public Centers	
	Cost per child-hour (\$)	Percent share (%)	Cost per child-hour (\$)	Percent share (%)	Cost per child-hour (\$)	Percent share (%)	Cost per child-hour (\$)	Percent share (%)	Cost per child-hour (\$)	Percent share (%)
a. With cash occupancy costs included										
Classroom and nonclassroom staff	\$2.00	30%	\$8.11	67%	\$5.58	65%	\$2.07	41%	\$5.45	71%
Staff benefits (including child care)	1.05	16	1.47	12	1.95	23	0.50	10	1.22	16
Professional development	0.19	3	0.10	1	–	–	0.02	0 [†]	0.01	0 [†]
Other labor ^c	0.25	4	0.24	2	0.27	3	0.14	3	0.19	2
Food service (excluding donations)	0.83	13	0.13	1	0.15	2	0.00	0	0.13	2
Other cash expenses ^d	1.16	18	0.99	8	0.64	7	1.69	33	0.68	9
Value of donated goods and services ^e	0.03	0 ^f	0.43	4	0.02	0 ^f	0.37	7	0.02	0 ^f
Facilities	1.06	16	0.61	5	not available	not available	0.27	5	not available	not available
Total	6.57	100	12.09	100	8.62	100	5.06	100	7.70	100
b. With cash occupancy costs excluded										
Classroom and nonclassroom staff	\$1.95	37%	\$ 8.04	71%	\$5.58	65%	\$2.02	43%	\$5.45	71%
Staff benefits (including child care)	1.02	19	1.44	13	1.95	23	0.48	10	1.22	16
Professional development	0.18	3	0.10	1	–	–	0.02	0 [†]	0.01	0 [†]
Other labor ^c	0.25	5	0.24	2	0.27	3	0.15	3	0.19	2
Food service (excluding donations)	0.78	15	0.13	1	0.15	2	0.00	0	0.13	2
Other cash expenses ^d	1.12	21	0.97	9	0.64	7	1.70	36	0.68	9
Value of donated goods and services ^e	0.03	1	0.43	4	0.02	0 ^f	0.36	8	0.02	0 ^f
Total	5.32	100	11.34	100	8.62	100	4.73	100	7.70	100
Ratio of all benefits ^b to salaries (x100)	66%		20%		35%		23%		23%	
Enrollment per site (average)	11		58		36		98		45	
Sampled programs (N)	2		4		3		2		2	

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data collected from 14 programs.

NOTE: – = breakdown not available, included in another category. Percentage distributions may not add to 100 because of rounding.

^a One provider could not give detailed breakdown, so average is over two of three providers.

^b The measure of benefits in the numerator includes health insurance, pensions, professional development, and staff child care discount.

^c Includes subcontractors and central administration.

^d Includes cash outlays for classroom supplies, office supplies and equipment, transportation, and insurance.

^e Includes volunteers and donated services, supplies, equipment, and food.

^f Less than 0.5 percent.

Panel (b) of Table 7.4 shows the relative importance of different cost components, exclusive of occupancy cost, both in absolute terms as the cost of that component per child-hour and then as a share of total cost. As expected, personnel costs are the largest cost component for all providers. The average share of expenses accounted for by classroom and nonclassroom staff salaries and benefits in the sample is lowest for the OST private centers (53 percent) and FCCHs (56 percent). The share is about equally as high for the private ECE centers (84 percent) as it is for the public ECE and OST centers (88 and 87 percent, respectively).

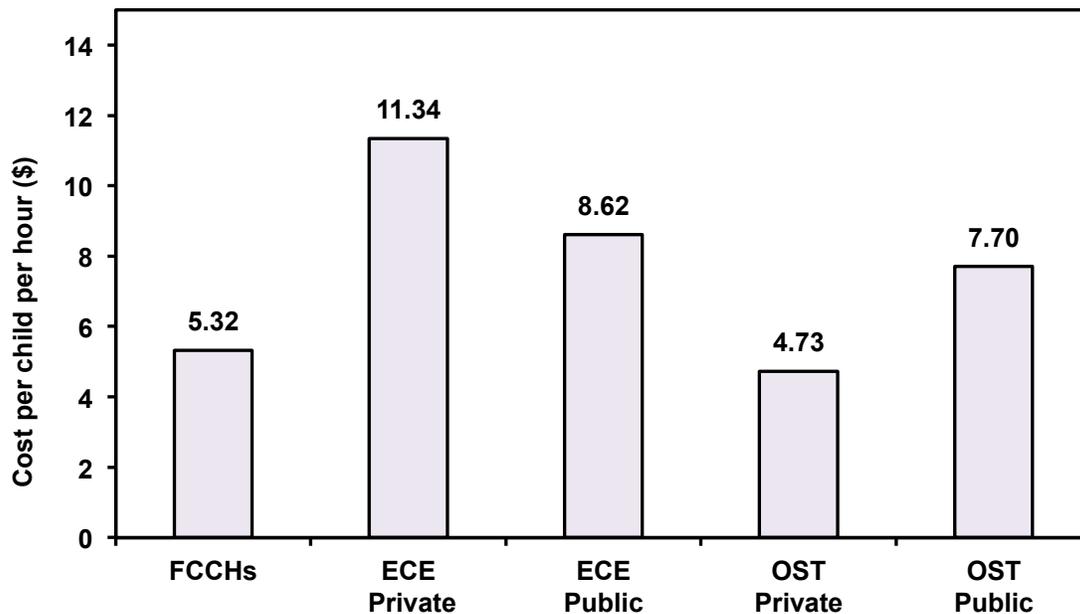
At the bottom of the table, we also report the ratio of all employee benefits (health insurance, pensions, professional development, and employee child care discounts) to salaries as a measure of the fully loaded fringe benefit rate. The rate is highest for the FCCHs, as providers often care for their own children, an implicit benefit. Among the centers, the fringe rate is highest for the public ECE centers (35 percent) compared with the private ECE and OST centers and public OST centers (20 to 23 percent).

Setting aside personnel costs, there are other differences in the relative importance of food service costs, exclusive of donated food (highest average share for FCCHs in the sample at 15 percent) and the residual cash expense category, which captures classroom supplies, office supplies and equipment, transportation, and insurance costs (highest share for private OST centers in the sample at 36 percent). We do not have sufficient detail for each provider regarding the individual cost components that make up the other cash expense category to explain the large differences evident in the expense share. Finally, there is a small residual value associated with donated goods and services (other than facilities costs), which is highest for the private OST centers (8 percent), as they have a greater reliance on volunteer labor and donated food.

Table 7.4 also reports the average cost per child-hour for each provider type in aggregate and by cost category. Again, focusing on costs net of occupancy (the lower section of Table 7.4; see also Figure 7.1), there are clear differences in that summary metric. The highest hourly costs occur for the ECE programs, with higher cost on average for the private ECE centers (\$11.34 per child-hour) compared with the public ECE centers (\$8.62). The lowest cost per child-hour is associated with the private OST programs (\$4.73), a figure similar to that for the FCCHs (\$5.32). The public OST providers, on the other hand, have higher costs (\$7.70) than the private OST centers, largely explained by a higher cost per child-hour of classroom and nonclassroom staff and associated staff benefits.

The lower hourly cost for OST centers compared with ECE centers would be expected, given the higher child-to-staff ratios in the former compared with the latter (see Table 7.2), a difference that reflects both licensing standards and other program regulations, as well as differences in the supervisory needs of children by age. Considering the two types of ECE centers, the higher hourly cost for the private centers could be attributed to several of the features summarized in earlier tables, including their lower average child-to-staff ratio (calculated as 5-to-1 versus 7-to-1) and the higher proportion of staff with a bachelor's degree (58 versus 33 percent). There may

Figure 7.1. Cost Per Child-Hour Excluding Occupancy Costs for Sampled ESAC Programs in Santa Monica



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data collected from 14 programs. See panel (b) of Table 7.4.

be other differences in program offerings or other features, but they are not evident in the information reported in Tables 7.2 or 7.3, except to note that most of the private ECE centers were accredited by NAEYC, whereas none of the public ECE centers had this distinction. Whether such cost differentials are truly reflective of differences in quality would require more careful assessments of differences in the program offerings and classroom environments. Finally, the public-private cost differential for the ECE centers may reflect the particular programs that were selected in each category. For example, the four ECE private centers were selected among 41 possible providers, whereas the number of public ECE centers is much smaller (see Table 7.1). It is possible that a larger and more representative sample of the ECE private centers would show a lower average cost per child-hour than the four centers we selected, although it may still be higher than the cost per child-hour for the public ECE centers.

As already noted, the higher cost for OST public centers compared with private centers is largely the result of a higher personnel cost per child-hour. Notably, the program personnel costs inclusive of benefits, on a per child-hour basis, are more than twice as high for the public OST programs (\$6.68 versus \$2.52). This likely reflects the difference in the staffing mix. The two types of centers have very similar ratios; in fact, the ratio is slightly higher in the public centers (10-to-1 versus 9-to-1), which should lower their cost relative to private programs. However, about half the staff in the OST public centers have a bachelor's degree, on average, almost twice

the share for the private centers. Put another way, almost three out of four staff members in the private OST centers have no postsecondary degree or child development associate (CDA) credential, a factor that should lower personnel costs. In addition, holding credentials constant, we would also expect higher personnel costs (salaries plus benefits) for public-sector employees, given their access to collective bargaining.

In drawing these inferences, it is important to keep in mind that these data are for a sample of providers that is not necessarily representative of providers within each type, nor of providers overall in Santa Monica. It is also important to note that the averaging of cost shares and the estimated cost per child-hour across programs in each of the five provider categories masks considerable variation in the cost structure *within* several of the program types. For example, exclusive of occupancy costs, the cost per child-hour varies by more than a factor of three within the FCCH group and by a factor of two or more within the private ECE centers group, the private OST centers group, and the public OST centers group. The variation in cost within the public ECE provider type is not as large.

Provider Revenue Sources

Table 7.5 explores differences in the sources of revenue across the providers in the sample, further illustrating the considerable variation across providers by type. Revenues are aggregated into four key sources: parent fees, public subsidies that families take to providers (vouchers), public subsidies that are paid directly to providers or through direct provision, and all other sources of revenue (e.g., contributions from employers, donations). Consistent with the data in Table 7.2, FCCHs are the most diversified in obtaining support from all four sources. Among the center providers, private programs are the most reliant on parent fees, and, in the case of the OST centers, on contributions, donations, and other sources, as well. The public ECE centers rely on about 21 percent of revenues from parent fees and most or all of the rest from public sources.

Table 7.5. Sources of Revenue for Sampled ESAC Programs in Santa Monica

Measure	Program Type				
	FCCHs ^a	ECE Private Centers	ECE Public Centers	OST Private Centers	OST Public Centers
Share of revenue and other support (average %)					
Parent fees	45	85	21	48	32
Public subsidies to families (vouchers)	26	5	0	1	0
Other public funds (grants, contracts, direct service)	20	4	71	7	68
Contributions, donations, and other revenue	9	6	7	44	0
Sampled programs (N)	2	4	3	2	2

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data collected from 14 programs.

NOTE: Percentage distributions may not add to 100 because of rounding.

^a One provider could not give detailed breakdown, so average is over 2 of 3 providers.

The equivalent share for parent fees in the public OST centers is 32 percent, with the remainder derived from public funds. Not shown is the fact that the share of revenue from various sources can also be quite different among providers within the same program type. Thus, there is almost as much variation among providers of the same type as there is across the different types.

Provider Fees

Provider fees are primarily relevant for the FCCHs and private ECE centers in our sample. Average fees for these two provider types are shown in Table 7.6. Using either the reported weekly, monthly, or annual fees, the fee was converted to an hourly rate (accounting for weekly, monthly, or annual hours) and also as an annualized amount. If fees are consistent with a program’s cost structure, we might expect fees to be highest on an hourly basis for infants and lowest for preschool-age children. Fees for school-age children may not follow that pattern, given the part-time schedule and the implications for scale economies, as well as specialized services that may be provided for older children (e.g., transportation, extra activities).

The patterns in Table 7.6 generally bear out this expectation, with the highest hourly and annual fees for infants, and, with one exception, lower fees for the preschool-age children. On average, for children of the same age, fees tend to be higher in the private centers than the FCCHs. The one exception is infant care in the sampled FCCHs, which is higher because of one high-fee provider in the sample. Although not shown, there is again considerable variation in the fee structure within the two provider groups. It is also worth noting that the annualized fees for

Table 7.6. Hourly and Annualized Fees for Full-Time Year-Round Care by Child Age for Selected Sampled ESAC Programs in Santa Monica

Measure	Program Type	
	FCCHs ^a	ECE Private Centers ^b
Full fees: Hourly (average \$)		
Infant	7.97 ^a	7.07
Toddler	5.81	6.43
Preschool-age	5.14	6.08
School-age	6.61	not available ^c
Full fees: Annualized (average \$)		
Infant	18,800 ^a	15,400
Toddler	12,817	14,200
Preschool-age	11,217	13,460
School-age	5,983	not available ^c
Sampled programs (N)	3	3

SOURCE: Authors’ analysis of data collected from 6 programs.

^a One provider does not offer infant care, so average is over two providers.

^b One provider does not offer full-time care, so average is over three providers.

^c Fees apply for just one of three providers, so they are not reported.

the sampled providers reported in Table 7.6 accord well with the city's estimates cited earlier, based on their informal survey of providers in Santa Monica, of the average costs of full-time care for infants and preschool-age children.

As a share of median household income for Santa Monica of \$106,992 (see Table 2.1), the annualized fee estimates in Table 7.6 indicate that the cost of full-time infant care through a private provider (for-profit or not-for-profit) ranges from 14 percent of median income to 18 percent, toddler care is approximately 12 percent to 13 percent, and care for a preschool-aged child ranges from 10 percent to 13 percent. These figures can be compared with estimates that have been made by the California Budget Project (2013) of the cost of living for California as a whole and in particular counties. For Los Angeles County, assuming a single-parent family with one infant requiring full-time care and second child requiring after-school care, the California Budget Project estimated that a basic family budget (based on the cost of housing, food, child care, health care, and other necessities) in 2013 would be \$77,546 and that child care costs would account for 18 percent of the budget, or \$13,740. Since this estimate assumes two children in care, it indicates that the costs of unsubsidized care are higher in Santa Monica than in the rest of the county.

Summary of Cost of Care

Although we must be cautious about drawing strong conclusions on the basis of the small number of providers in our sample for which we collect financial data, several findings are likely to generalize to a more complete and rigorous analysis of the cost of providing ESAC in Santa Monica:

- There is considerable diversity across ESAC providers in terms of their features, such as their size, the nature of their program offerings, their staffing patterns, and other aspects of program services. These differences are likely to explain at least some of the variation in program costs across providers based on the ages of the children they serve, their setting (home versus center), and their public versus private status.
- Among cost components, the largest cost driver by far is personnel, both wages and salaries and the associated fringe benefits. Across the providers in our sample, these factors accounted for at least 50 percent of costs and typically up to 85 percent of costs. Beyond personnel, the significant cost components varied by provider type, but included food service and cash outlays for classrooms supplies, office supplies, and so on. Facilities costs, not available for all providers, also appear to be an important cost component, especially for FCCHs.
- On a per child-hour basis, there was considerable variation in cost across the five types of providers in our sample, some of which can be attributed to differences in child-staff

ratios (for ECE versus OST care) and the staffing mix (the share of staff with postsecondary degrees). Overall, costs per child-hour were generally higher for ECE providers than for OST providers. The private ECE providers in the sample had higher cost per child-hour compared with their public counterparts, whereas the reverse was true for the public versus private OST providers. Such differences may reflect different choices regarding staff qualifications, program offerings, and other features that may affect program quality—and, therefore, program costs.

8. Models for ECE and OST in Other Communities

This section provides a summary of strategies and best practices being implemented as part of a variety of ECE and OST initiatives that we identified. This summary informs the second and third research questions regarding ways to integrate funding streams and improve and redesign the ESAC system. The ESAC models and initiatives profiled in this section were identified in three ways: 1) through conversations with City of Santa Monica staff and other community stakeholders; 2) through review of recently published reports from ECE and OST programs and organizations; and 3) through the knowledge and experience of members of the RAND team. We included initiatives that we judged to be good examples of best practices in action, and paid particular attention to those implemented in communities similar to Santa Monica (either demographically or in terms of the structure of early care and OST systems). In addition to looking to specific initiatives, we also drew on the broader literature regarding ECE and OST programming in terms of best practices regarding program access, quality, and system design. These research-based findings are integrated with our discussion of specific community initiatives.

Most of the initiatives underway in other communities, and the research literature more generally, do not cut across the traditional boundary between the early years and the school-age years: Most initiatives and research either focus on ECE or OST, but not both. Consequently, we adopt this distinction in our discussion below, although we do highlight efforts to combine the two. As with other chapters, we organize the initiatives and best practices in terms of their approach to access and participation, quality of care, service delivery, and financing. It is important to keep in mind that the vast majority of ECE and OST initiatives (and the strategies) lack any empirical evidence of their effectiveness. Nevertheless, these efforts are worth noting, as they may spur Santa Monica to consider and learn from others' experiences.

ECE Models from Other Communities

There are a host of ECE initiatives being implemented around the country; they vary in size, scope, funding levels, and funding source. In ECE (as opposed to OST), states are a major player, both in terms of promulgating regulations and standards and in terms of designing and supporting statewide QI initiatives, from QRISs to ECE professional development (PD) systems. When there is scope for local efforts, initiatives may also be undertaken by counties, cities, or school districts.

In this chapter, we discuss a number of ECE initiatives that, through expertise and review, we determined will provide the City of Santa Monica with useful insights as it pursues its ESAC

goals. Box 8.1 provides a short summary of a select number of these initiatives, as a way to illustrate the various objectives and approaches. In addition, Box 8.2 highlights a promising local effort that has transitioned to a high-quality and financially stable model. Table 8.1 summarizes the demographics of the sites in which each initiative was implemented. Although most of the featured communities are more populous than Santa Monica, several share a similar age composition and have similar levels of economic well-being. One site is more affluent than Santa Monica as measured by income levels and the poverty rate, while another is considerably less well off.

ECE initiatives typically seek to achieve one or more of the following goals: extending access to early learning programs, improving quality, devising or strengthening a system of care, and pursuing sustainability. Many systems are working toward most or all of these goals. In the discussion that follows, we supplement the set of strategies associated with specific initiatives with some discussion of best practices identified elsewhere in the ECE literature.

Strategies to Improve Access to ECE Programming

There are a number of issues that challenge access to ECE programs, especially programs that are developmentally appropriate and support early learning (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2001). Perhaps the biggest barrier is cost: High-quality ECE programs are expensive because of the need to implement low child-to-staff ratios, hire well-trained staff, and provide the resources and materials necessary to create a stimulating environment. Many low- and middle-income parents cannot afford to pay the full cost of care, and the number of subsidy slots is small and restricted to those with very low incomes, meaning that middle-income families may have limited access to these care options (Karloly, 2009). Given these conditions, one means of improving access would be increasing the level of funding to support these programs. But given cutbacks in public funds, increased funding is unlikely without a proactive initiative to identify new sources of public funds, which some localities have chosen to implement, as we discuss later.

Another approach is to redesign or expand public ECE programs so that they attract full-fee parents whose fees can cross-subsidize programs serving lower-income children. In 2005–2006, the San Mateo-Foster City School District started fee-based preschool programs at three school sites that generated sufficient profits to cover the losses in the district's Title 5 child development programs (Karloly, Reardon, and Cho, 2007). One of the original preschools was a Mandarin-language immersion program and a Spanish-language immersion program was added as the program expanded. The effort involved careful market-driven planning to determine the appropriate fee to charge and where to site the programs. In California, Capistrano Unified School District offers another example of a district offering CSPP slots, as well as fee-based preschool slots, in elementary schools throughout the district and sometimes in the same school (Capistrano Unified School District, 2013).

Box 8.1. Summary of Five ECE Initiatives

San Mateo-Foster City School District Fee-Based Preschools. Facing a \$50,000 funding shortfall in the state Title 5 preschool programs it operated, the district leadership determined that it could cover the deficit using operating surpluses of fee-based, district-run preschools. The effort started with a business plan and a market survey to establish the appropriate fee and determine which school sites would house the programs. The three selected sites were all magnet programs with waiting lists to enter kindergarten. Those families that enrolled in the fee-based preschool were given priority for kindergarten enrollment at the same campus. The district now operates six preschools on elementary-school campuses that cross-subsidize the Title 5 programs operating at other sites.

San Francisco Preschool for All (PFA). First 5 San Francisco was among nine counties that established PFA programs in the mid-2000s that aimed to ensure all children in the county could attend a high-quality preschool program. Given the broad-based priorities for the First 5 funding, the county sought additional dedicated funding for preschool services. Proposition H, approved by county voters in 2004, created the Public Education Enrichment Fund, and set aside general fund dollars for education system improvements. One-third of the funding was set aside to create a new universal preschool program. The funds are used to offer a half-day free or partially subsidized preschool program to all four-year-olds in the county. Preschools are required to meet quality standards and the PFA funds also support QI initiatives through training and technical assistance. The Proposition H funds are scheduled to sunset in 2015, although the voters could approve an extension.

Duval County Early Learning Coalition. The Early Learning Coalition of Duval County, Fla., is a government entity that works with other partners to create a coordinated and integrated system for promoting school readiness. The coalition places emphasis on literacy skills for students who may be at risk. Its specific goals are to create school readiness programs that prepare children for success in school and involve parents, are an integrated and seamless system of services implemented through local coalitions, and are coordinated with integrated funding. It works with partners including city governments and agencies, local colleges and universities, statewide agencies, and national organizations.

Montgomery County P–3 System. The Montgomery County, Md., public-school system, seeking to ensure that all students would be college ready by 2014, began a comprehensive effort to build an integrated preschool to third grade (P–3) system. Multiple strategies were adopted. Systemwide goals were identified and mapped back to early learning strategies. The county aligned early learning programs and services with existing K–12 programs and services. Early childhood teachers participated in the district’s Teacher Professional Growth System. A system of monitoring and feedback allows for continuous QI.

Union City, N.J., P–3 System. Union City Public Schools began implementing their now-successful P–3 system in the 1990s. The district uses a mixed delivery system, with six district classrooms, 33 community providers, and one district-operated ECE center delivering preschool services. They have aligned home and school environments by encouraging dual-language learners and hiring bilingual preschool teachers; ESL certification for all teachers is encouraged. Master teachers serve as coaches and trainers for all preschool and kindergarten teachers. The system focuses on developing the whole child through play-based learning. There are 105 indicators of success, which are tracked and combined with assessment data to identify areas where additional staff training is needed.

SOURCE: Family League of Baltimore (2011), Karoly, Reardon, and Cho (2007), Marietta (2010); Marietta and Marietta (2013).

Box 8.2. Local ECE Initiative: St. Joseph Center's Early Learning Center

St. Joseph Center's Early Learning Center (ELC) is located in the Venice neighborhood of Los Angeles, near the border of Santa Monica. Given its location, children attending the ELC are potentially eligible to receive the City of Santa Monica subsidy through CFC, and the center serves many Santa Monica families. St. Joseph Center's ELC serves toddlers and preschool-age children, and is licensed for up to 45 full-time children (with specific licensed capacity for young toddlers, toddlers, and preschoolers). It currently serves 42 children.

The center focuses on social and emotional development as well as academics, and is a dual immersion (English-Spanish) program. In addition to providing ECE, the ELC has music and yoga classes and a literacy program. The center also provides additional services, such as vision screening (through a local partner), developmental assessments, and social services referrals. It is in the process of receiving accreditation with the NAEYC.

The mission of St. Joseph Center, the parent organization of the ELC, is to serve homeless and low-income people in Santa Monica, Venice, and nearby communities. The ELC is one of many services and programs offered; others include providing hot meals, a food bank, and a culinary training program. The ELC began in 1981 as a parent cooperative. In 2001, the program began receiving state funding for ECE services through CDE. However, the reporting requirements associated with the state funds required substantial staff time, and proved challenging to keep up with. In addition, the ELC was only able to serve the lowest-income families, most teachers only had minimal qualifications, limited program hours were mandated, and the center did not have the ability to innovate or implement best practices. The program was not as rigorous as administrative staff preferred; staff noted, for example, that the English skills of English-language learners did not seem to be improving. ELC lost the state contract in 2010 and decided not to pursue another state or federal contract.

At that time, St. Joseph Center's ELC changed its model to be more appealing to parents of diverse income levels after conducting an assessment of child care in the local area. In the new model, full-fee parents subsidize low-income families in a dual-immersion program, facilitating economic and racial diversity and allowing more flexibility with hours and program content. The ELC also improved the rigor of the program through various methods, including by increasing teacher qualifications.

To advertise the new model, the ELC originally put up a banner and flyers in the neighborhood, and full-fee parents stopped in to ask questions about the program. Referrals are now through word of mouth, and parent involvement and volunteering is high. This successful model has been in place for two and a half years and has a waiting list. The program has achieved a financially stable balance of approximately 30 percent low-income families and 70 percent full-fee families.

SOURCE: Key informant interviews.

Table 8.1. Profiles of Communities with Model ECE Programs

Initiative	Location	Population (1,000s)	% Age 0–5	% Age ≤18	% Non-White Minorities	Per Capita Income	Median Family Income	% Below FPL
	Santa Monica	90.3	4.0	13.1	31.4	\$58,399	\$106,992	12.0
Fee-based public preschools	Foster City, Calif.	30.9	6.8	25.0	58.0	\$53,384	\$145,391	4.2
PFA	San Francisco, Calif.	812.8	4.4	13.4	58.1	\$45,478	\$91,584	11.9
Early Learning Coalition	Duval County, Fla.	870.7	6.9	23.3	43.6	\$25,854	\$48,638	13.8
P–3 System	Montgomery County, Md.	989.8	6.5	23.7	51.3	\$47,310	\$111,280	6.0
P–3 System	Union City, N.J.	67.2	7.3	23.7	89.4	\$18,582	\$31,215	21.1

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (undated-b).

NOTE: Figures are as of 2010 or 2011. Median income is for families with own children under age 18.

Achieving economic diversity in the population of children attending a preschool program is another goal for many programs and communities. St. Joseph Center’s ELC (see Box 8.2) successfully navigated the loss of state funding and created a more rigorous program that is financially sustainable by attracting full-fee families and using their fees to subsidize the costs for low-income families. The Foster City model, discussed earlier, is one where the full-fee and subsidized children attend different public preschool programs. As another model that promotes greater economic integration, the St. Vrain Valley School District in Longmont, Col., offers both tuition-based and free, public-assisted preschool (through the state-funded Colorado Preschool Program) in all elementary schools. The state preschool program, constrained by the funding requirements, is limited to four-year-olds and provides a half-day, (morning or afternoon) four-day-per-week schedule. The district’s fee-based program offers more options: a half-day program (morning or afternoon) for two, three, or four days per week, available for both three- and four-year-olds.

Another factor that limits access is that many new parents have not yet established parent networks on which they can depend for information about available programs and must rely instead on formal sources of information. Often, such information sources are fragmented and out of date; information about available slots is particularly difficult to figure out as waiting lists are dynamic. To address these information gaps, many initiatives promote awareness of the importance of early childhood programs through resource centers, media and information campaigns, and outreach booths. Some sites use marketing research to identify the needs of specific populations. Among the initiatives listed Box 8.1, First 5 San Francisco operates Family Resource Centers throughout the city that provide support and educational services for families. As another example, the Great Start Collaborative, established in Calhoun County, Mich.,

enlisted 238 families through an outreach booth in the community. As part of this initiative, Great Start developed a common application for a variety of early childhood and family programs, including HS and other school readiness and parent support programs (Great Start Collaborative of Kent County, 2011).

Strategies to Improve ECE Program Quality

The predominant focus of ECE initiatives is on program QI. This focus reflects the widespread perception (backed up by consistent research findings) that ECE program services often fall short of the standards that are associated with developmentally supportive programs (Karoly, Ghosh-Dastidar, et al., 2008). This is a problem because research underscores that the benefits of ECE programs depend heavily on the quality of those programs (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2001).

Child care administrators in 41 states identified the most promising practices in their state to improve the quality of child care. The majority of the initiatives fell into one of five categories: QRISs, improving the quality of child care providers, providing resources to meet the range of children's needs, improving collaboration across providers and programs, and networks of specialists to support child care providers (Schulman, 2011). Along similar lines, Karoly (2009) noted the following approaches can improve the quality of preschool programs: specification of minimum program features, regulation, and monitoring; use of standards and an accreditation process; QRISs; making quality evaluations available to the public; providing incentives for achieving high standards; and evaluating program impacts on child outcomes. Zero to Three emphasizes the importance of any QI efforts being aligned across the system (Gebhard, 2009). Support for workforce development and training has also been described as an important route to higher-quality care (Karoly, 2012c).

QRISs are arguably one of the most widely adopted approaches for addressing ECE program quality. They hold promise for improving ECE program quality by defining quality standards and assessing programs according to those standards. QI supports linked to ratings help programs improve the quality of care they provide as well as their rating. QRISs are attractive to advocates for the funds they infuse into the ECE system and the QI goal, and they appeal to legislators for the accountability aspects of these systems. Consequently, QRISs are in the planning or implementation stage in nearly all states (Zellman and Fiene, 2012). These systems are appealing because they define what ECE quality is, often for the first time, assess quality, and provide support for QI. Some systems publicize provider ratings to help better inform parents regarding child care choices and to encourage providers to undertake QI. QRISs are particularly important for FCCH providers, who often work without peer or other support. Ratings and QI help them improve. Other efforts outside of QRISs have been put in place to link FCCH providers and expose them to peer support and PD opportunities (Karoly, 2012c).

Most QRISs are being implemented statewide, but a few efforts are more local. Florida's Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties have each implemented a county-level QRIS, which includes quality ratings and support for QI. California was awarded RTT Early Learning Challenge funds to support 17 county-level QRISs around the state (American Institutes for Research and RAND, 2013). These counties have formed a consortium that has agreed to standardize some aspects of these local systems; e.g., quality indicators at selected rating levels. One of these systems, LA Steps to Excellence, includes some Santa Monica ECE providers; the city provides tiered reimbursement based on STEP rating level (see Chapter Four).

The initiatives we reviewed focused considerable efforts on QI. A number of them have engaged multiple efforts. For example, Omaha created a Network of Excellence for providers that promotes the development of peer-to-peer interactions and professional learning communities. Like other initiatives, support is provided to early childhood teachers through various sources, including TEACH grants. A comprehensive data management system allows providers to compile information and track outcomes. Hawaii P-20, a collaboration of the Hawaii Department of Education and the University of Hawaii and Kamehameha Schools, is working to include preschool data in its K-20 longitudinal database with support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (Zellman and Kilburn, 2011). By being able to track children from preschool programs into elementary school, and linking third-grade reading scores to preschool participation, the hope is that programs will learn about how well their program prepares children for kindergarten and for later school success. This should help programs improve their quality.

Strategies for ECE System Service Delivery

Service delivery is often a focus of ECE initiatives, although the emphasis of these efforts is less about coordinating existing ECE programs and more about linking ECE programs to K-12 to improve quality, as discussed above. Such linkages also hold promise for easing transitions for children and for promoting other goals, such as sustainability of services, as discussed later.

A number of initiatives are pursuing efforts to develop a more integrated service delivery system, many under the label of P-3 systems. These initiatives aim to link preschool and elementary-school practice and curricula and bring together preschool and elementary-school teachers based on the belief that program alignment will clarify expectations, align practice, better prepare children for kindergarten, and enable kindergarten and elementary-school teachers to more effectively reach their students. The P-3 systems in Montgomery County, Md., and in Union City, N.J., have been held up as P-3 models (Marietta, 2010; Marietta and Marietta, 2013). The P-3 systems are also very focused on improving quality, especially for ECE teachers. The Montgomery P-3 system, for example, includes an accountability system for early learning teachers; such accountability systems help teachers understand professional standards. These teachers participate in the District's Teacher Professional Growth System, which provides

evaluation, peer assistance, and professional development to support improvement of professional capabilities (Marietta, 2010).

In other localities, early childhood initiatives have aimed to seek alignment across a wider range of programs and services. The First Steps Commission in Kent County, Mich., created memoranda of understanding with partners to clarify roles and responsibilities; the initiative will review the array of available early childhood services for gaps, costs, quality, impact on children, and alignment with community priorities (Great Start Collaborative of Kent County, 2011). Hartford's Blueprint for Young Children initiative proposes to combine the two largest family support systems into a single Family Support Network and will bring together multiple health care providers into a single primary care health network (Hartford Blueprint Team, 2005).

A few ECE initiatives are focused on building or expanding existing data systems so that data can be collected on children and on the programs that they attend. The hope is that data on children's elementary-school readiness and later performance can be fed back to ECE programs to assist them in improving their focus and quality. As one example, mentioned above, Hawaii P-20 is conducting careful pilot studies to assess the validity of selected preschool data elements that it hopes to add to its existing K-20 longitudinal data system. Once fully implemented, the system will enable children to be tracked from preschool programs into and through high school (Zellman and Kilburn, 2011).

One recommendation that emerged from a report on Hartford's Blueprint for Young Children initiative is that a connection be made with Hartford Connects, an existing web-based data system that collects and tracks data on youth (ages 14-21). The report notes that such a collaboration would provide baseline statistical information about Hartford's young children and families to identify and track key indicators; provide statistical means to measure progress; and provide early childhood programs with access to information about specific young children (Hartford Blueprint Team, 2005).

Strategies to Attain Sustainability of ECE Programs

It is difficult to sustain ECE programs as they rely heavily on public funds from outside the city or locality. Financial viability is also an issue because public subsidies often do not cover the full cost of care. A heavy reliance on government funds leaves many ECE programs with inherently unstable funding. As public support declines, programs may be forced to reduce their scale or close altogether.

A number of strategies have been employed to secure more sustainable funding for ECE programs. One approach is a dedicated funding stream. In 2004, the voters in San Francisco County—a relatively affluent, liberal, and high-cost county—passed Proposition H, which provided for a fixed set-aside from the city's general fund to support the PFA initiative, among other education system improvements. The added funding has been vital for allowing PFA to

expand, although the city could not transfer all the promised funds during the economic downturn and the funding set-aside is scheduled to sunset in 2015.

Another approach is to prioritize education funding for preschool programs. Fresno Unified School District has designated the largest portion of its California Proposition 30 funds (the 2012 ballot initiative providing for a temporary increase in sales and income taxes to support K–12 education, among other priorities) for its preschool expansion effort, aiming to double the size of the district-run program (Mongeau, 2013). The added spaces in the district schools will supplement spaces already available through HS and CSPP (many provided on school campuses), potentially boosting the public preschool participation rate to 80 percent (from its current level of 57 percent). A related strategy, employed by school districts across the country (including California), is using Title I funding for preschool programming in place of allocating the funds for K–12 services (Karoly, Reardon, and Cho, 2007). Districts making this choice have determined they will get a better return on their education dollar if it is spent helping children to develop the skills needed to succeed in kindergarten and beyond, rather than use the funds for compensatory services once children enter the elementary grades.

Another sustainability approach, mentioned above in the context of access, is to increase the quality or alter the characteristics of programs so that they attract full-fee parents. Improving program quality obviously benefits all participating children; by attracting full-fee parents, programs also achieve more economic and ethnic diversity than they otherwise would. The San Mateo-Foster City School District in California offers dual immersion prekindergarten programs (in Mandarin and Spanish) that are highly attractive to full-fee parents. The resulting surplus funds are then used to ensure the financial viability of the publicly subsidized programs that are otherwise underfunded.

Other communities have employed strategies for informing parents about tax credits and encouraging businesses to provide child care funding assistance to employees. For instance, the Early Learning Coalition of Duval County, a government entity, works with businesses to encourage their efforts to provide child care funding assistance to employees.

OST Models from Other Communities

This section features five OST models operating in five cities that exemplify innovation and best practices in OST programming. These five communities have a history of investing in OST programming, largely because of an initiative on the part of the Wallace Foundation to expand and improve after-school systems. Table 8.2 summarizes the demographics of the cities in which each initiative was implemented; again, the statistics for Santa Monica are shown for comparison. Box 8.3 briefly describes each initiative, including its objectives, auspices, and genesis. To illustrate the innovative use of technology by a CBO to deliver OST programming,

Table 8.2. Profiles of Communities with Relevant OST Initiatives

Initiative Name or Agency	Location	Population (1,000s)	% Age 0–5	% Age ≤18	% Non-White Minorities	Per Capita Income	Median Family Income	% Below FPL
	Santa Monica	90.3	4.0	13.1	31.4	\$58,399	\$106,992	12.0
Partners for Student Success (PSS)	Boston, Mass.	625.1	5.2	16.8	53.0	\$31,856	\$46,664	21.2
After School Matters	Chicago, Ill.	2,727.1	6.9	23.1	68.3	\$27,148	\$41,737	20.9
Out-of-School Time Initiative	New York, N.Y.	8,244.9	6.3	21.6	66.7	\$30,498	\$47,704	19.1
Providence After School Alliance (PASA)	Providence, R.I.	178.1	6.9	23.4	62.4	\$20,735	\$34,613	26.3
Project My Time	Washington, D.C.	618.0	5.9	17.0	64.7	\$42,078	\$53,839	18.5

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (undated-b).

NOTE: Figures are as of 2010 or 2011. Median income is for families with own children under age 18.

Box 8.4 highlights a promising effort by a Boys & Girls Club affiliate that uses a performance measurement system to track participant attendance and program engagement.

The community profiles in Table 8.2 and OST initiatives featured in Box 8.3 prompt three observations. First, none of the initiatives we include here address both ECE and OST programs together, as Santa Monica is considering. Second, compared with Santa Monica, the OST initiatives we review are generally in much larger cities (only Providence, R.I., can be considered a small to medium-size city), with more diverse populations and upward of twice the poverty rate. Third, it is important to recognize that each of these initiatives adopted a different mix of strategies that were driven by a combination of the goals for the initiative and the priorities and personalities of the individuals leading the effort. Moreover, because the initial efforts to build these initiatives were almost entirely funded by foundations, their structure and strategies reflected the objectives of those foundations.

In the discussion that follows, we detail the specific strategies used in one or more of these OST initiatives to improve citywide OST access, quality, service delivery, and sustainability. We further supplement our discussion of the strategies employed by these initiatives with best practices identified elsewhere in the OST literature.

Strategies to Improve Access to OST Programming

In the context of OST programming, accessibility often focuses less on providing more affordable slots for families and more on increasing OST program uptake and participation rates of targeted youth, particularly older targeted youth, those in third grade and higher (Bodilly and Beckett, 2005). There are several general strategies considered essential for improving

Box 8.3. Summary of Five OST Initiatives

Partners for Student Success (PSS). Boston's PSS seeks to help struggling public elementary students with academic support and enrichment, and is aligned with the Community Learning Initiative, which coordinates community centers, schools, and libraries to provide OST opportunities for youth. Boston After School and Beyond (a public/private partnership), the Department of Extended Learning Time, and Afterschool (DELTA) in Boston Public Schools coordinate to implement PSS. The Community Learning Initiative is run by Boston Centers for Youth and Families, a city agency, but both Boston After School and Beyond and DELTA are involved in its work.

After School Matters. Chicago's Department of Children and Youth Services and nonprofit intermediary After School Matters jointly coordinate OST opportunities for high-school students that are run by various agencies across the city. The focus of the coordination efforts included building a management information system for OST program data, developing an outreach plan, providing information on best practices to programs, measuring program quality, and creating a plan for sustainability. The grant created a multiagency coordinating committee that works together to coordinate OST programs and includes Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District, and Chicago Public Library.

Out-of-School Time Initiative. Through its Out-of-School Time Initiative, the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development consolidated many of the city's previously divergent OST programs. The department focuses on improving and expanding OST opportunities for children in kindergarten through 12th grade. It is run by a commissioner with experience in after-school programs and a special adviser is in charge of ensuring coordination across agencies.

Providence After School Alliance (PASA). PASA is a nonprofit intermediary contracted to create a network of OST hubs geared toward middle-school students throughout the city. The hubs are known as AfterZones and provide programming to sixth- through eighth-grade students for two and a half hours a day, four days a week. A wide variety of after-school programs are provided, including sports, academic help, and arts activities. PASA is the intermediary between the city and the hubs, with members of city agencies sitting on PASA's steering committee and board. PASA oversees the work of the community-based organizations that run each AfterZone.

Project My Time. Project My Time is an initiative of the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, a public/private partnership that acts as an intermediary between city agencies and CBOs that provide OST and other services for children. The focus was initially on fulfilling a need for quality middle-school OST programs, through creating a management information infrastructure, using standards and training, and outreach. After a change in the city's administration, the District of Columbia Public Schools led the efforts to improve OST programming in all schools by hiring and reviewing community-based organizations to provide after-school services and placing coordinators at each school to work with community-based organizations, staff, and parents.

SOURCE: Wallace Foundation (2008); Mendels (2009); Bodilly, McCombs, et al. (2010); Kotloff and Korom-Djakovic (2010); and Kauh (2011).

Box 8.4. Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands OST Performance Monitoring System

The Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands (BGCM) has six club locations and two middle-school sites in the greater Omaha metro area. In 2011, BGCM served approximately 1,100 students ages six to 18 each weekday with after-school programs operating from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Like BGC in Santa Monica, BGCM offers hot meals and a range of activities and programs, including character and leadership development, education and career development, health and life skills, arts and technology, and sports and recreation programs.

In order to improve outcomes for the children being served, BGCM has implemented a commercially available web-based performance monitoring system (KidTrax) club-wide that combines ID cards, scanning technology, and data entry and reporting systems. The program allows the club to target and monitor students and student outcomes, and to streamline financial processes on a continuous basis across all sites. One of BGCM's strategic goals is to support academic success. To address this goal, BGCM collects report card information for all of its participants from the local school districts to identify academic areas to target. It used the web-based program to identify below-grade-level reading as a key academic need among its elementary student participants.

KidTrax is used to continuously monitor the reading and other grades of its students and to monitor student behavioral problems while at the club, to match students with particular behavior needs to relevant health and life skills programs. KidTrax is also used to streamline financial processes. It includes components that allow for tracking of volunteer and employee hours, demographics, performance reviews, possible warning signs, case-management services for at-risk students, and services and meals provided for reimbursement (e.g., for reimbursement from USDA for Childcare Food Program).

BGCM also used KidTrax to identify programming gaps. For example, the club used the data to establish that students ages ten to 12 were not participating in programs intended for students under age 13. They followed up with these students and learned that this group appeared to not want to spend time with the younger students. Additionally, KidTrax is used to monitor student behavioral problems.

SOURCE: BGCM (2012), nFocus Solutions and BGCM (2012).

accessibility. To improve OST program uptake, these broad strategies include identifying all participants, dedicating sufficient and effective resources for outreach and recruitment, conducting outreach and recruitment in places where youth and families and the people that influence them (e.g., teachers, school personnel) are, and combining advertising resources across similar organizations (Bodilly and Beckett, 2005). General strategies for improving participation include daily and weekly monitoring of attendance and program quality, following up on absentees, and offering incentives to programs for achieving high attendance rates (Bodilly and Beckett, 2005).

Most of the initiatives used outreach and monitoring of attendance. For outreach, several citywide initiatives (Boston, Chicago, and New York) established resource and referral systems to disseminate information, such as location and program descriptions, about OST programs to possible participants and families (Hayes et al., 2009). Some cities (Chicago and New York) also

conducted market research to collect information about how to design programs that appeal more to teens and to shape their outreach campaigns (Hayes et al., 2009). Participant tracking systems are used sometimes to track attendance and student outcomes with the goal of identifying lagging programs and to mobilize resources where needed (see Box 8.4).

The Providence citywide system employed perhaps the broadest range of strategies to improve access (described in Kotloff and Korom-Djakovic, 2010). This initiative focuses on middle-school youth, a particularly challenging age group to engage in after-school programs. PASA first engaged a social marketing consultant to assess the perception of after-school programs among middle-school youth (“dorky” was one description given). Consequently, the intermediary worked with the OST providers to make sure that a menu of programs was offered that would appeal to a wide range of interests. Because any given OST provider is limited in the number of different programs it can offer, PASA coordinated the OST providers so that they set up neighborhoods or AfterZones, each consisting of geographically clustered OST providers. The middle schools served as “anchors” and students in each anchor could travel to other programs in the AfterZone, such as library, community center, or art center. So that students could access the other programs in the AfterZone, PASA ran a shuttle service to transport students when necessary. This also required all programs to coordinate their activities so that students knew what, when, and where alternative activities are offered. Thus combined, the programs in a given zone could provide a larger menu of activities from which youth could select.

Several of the strategies used to boost access rely on a web-based information system that was initially designed to record and monitor attendance of all students attending any AfterZone program (Kotloff and Korom-Djakovic, 2010). The intermediary sets enrollment and attendance targets for each OST program required for funding—if an OST program fails to consistently fill 60 percent of its slots or obtain a 60-percent attendance rate, the program may lose funding the next year. PASA and program staff use several face-to-face and phone-based recruitment strategies to attract youth, including recruitment fairs held at each middle-school site and recruitment during regular school lunchtime and in the classroom (e.g., giving in-class presentations related to OST activities when the topic links to the school-day curriculum). Program staff members also use targeted outreach to students who were enrolled in prior sessions but did not re-enroll or whose attendance has recently declined. PASA conducts teacher outreach by sending newsletters describing the program and benefits.

Using the attendance information that is monitored for each program, PASA staff review attendance data weekly and contact programs whose attendance is below 60 percent. They encourage program staff to follow up with youth to identify the reason for nonattendance and try to overcome any issues, although such close monitoring appears difficult to maintain with so many programs. Another strategy for keeping youth engaged is to encourage programs to use young people as staff, including high-school or college students or recent college graduates.

They also use AmeriCorps members to assist with the logistics of working with multiple sites in a single zone. There is some anecdotal evidence that using young staff is appealing to older school-aged and middle-school students and consequently boosts attendance rates. The possible drawback of relying on young staff is their inexperience or lack of training. This limitation is addressed by PASA by providing clearly defined job roles in developing and leading activities, ongoing intensive training, and use of a more experienced site coordinator to supervise them.

Strategies to Improve OST Program Quality

Several approaches for promoting effectiveness and quality of early OST programs have been used in citywide systems, many of which are similar to approaches used in child care fields. In the OST field, a consensus is emerging about what constitutes quality (Bodilly and Beckett, 2005): a clear mission; high expectations and social norms; a safe and healthy environment; a supportive emotional climate; small total enrollment; stable, trained personnel; appropriate content and pedagogy relative to youths' needs and program's missions, with opportunities to engage; integrated family and community partners; and frequent assessment of quality. Programs whose mission is, in part, to improve academic achievement are recommended to also align academic programming with regular school day curricula (Beckett et al., 2009).

Key QI strategies for citywide OST programming include training and technical support (including professional development), developing standards to assess program quality, monitoring improvement over time, vetting OST providers ahead of time with common criteria, and alignment with regular school-day curricula (Bodilly et al., 2010; Hayes et al. 2009). In Boston, local colleges offered professional development services, training, and higher education coursework, leading to a credential, certificate, or bachelor's degree in OST education. The city of Chicago provides professional development, training, and credentialing for OST providers and their staff (Hayes et al., 2009).

In Providence (Hayes et al., 2009), the intermediary and OST programs agreed to a set of quality standards. PASA developed an observational tool to measure quality along the dimensions of the standards. PASA sends a staff member to observe the program and to provide feedback, and support to programs that fail to meet the standards. However, PASA staff note that, given the number of lagging programs to follow up with, there are too few OST intermediary staff to determine if performance has improved in the areas where the programs were deficient.

There is a general reluctance to develop quality measurement and monitoring systems that hold OST programs accountable for individual student-level outcomes, such as individual student test performance, or population-level outcomes, like the graduation rate. Thus, most ways of measuring and reporting quality rely on observational tools (as used in Providence) about the environment, adult behaviors, and student-staff interactions. In addition, performance incentives could be used but generally are not employed in OST programs (Bodilly et al., 2010).

Strategies for Citywide OST System Service Delivery

In this section, we describe alternative configurations of the key stakeholders in citywide initiatives. None of the citywide initiatives describe efforts to change the way that services are delivered; for example, by transferring delivery of services from public agency to a CBO. On the other hand, the models provide examples of service delivery in both the public and private sectors.

Many of the largest citywide initiatives started from a point where there were a large number of public and private OST providers that had very little coordination. With this in mind, such initiatives employed a nonprofit intermediary to provide technical assistance and training; sometimes, the intermediary also oversaw the development of an information system (as in the early years of the Washington, D.C., initiative). PASA (the intermediary in Boston) is also the key administrator of the initiative and controls the funding, and its steering committee and board includes members of city agencies. PASA is trying to identify a community-based organization within each AfterZone to assume the additional management responsibilities of the programs, but so far none of the organizations have had the capacity to effectively do so. While the citywide initiatives described in the OST literature almost always employ an intermediary, the reason they do so is not necessarily because the intermediary provides a superior home for these types of tasks, but rather because initial funding for the initiatives came from foundations, so the funding has to run through an organization separate from the city.

In Chicago, the initiative was begun because there were many city agencies, including schools, libraries, and park districts, that offered independently operating OST programs. To coordinate efforts, one city agency assumed the tasks of building and implementing an information system to track the city's programs and participation, develop and carry out a communication plan to target teens, provide technical assistance to providers, develop and collect data on quality, and plan for long-term sustainability. This effort was housed in the city's Department of Children and Youth Services and overseen by a multiagency coordinating committee (Bodilly et al., 2010). The OST programs continued to be operated as before within the agency that they were originally housed in.

Some initiatives involved reconfiguring the relationships between the providers. One of the more extensive reconfigurations involved the Providence initiative, which employed a multi-site service delivery model. To address the management challenges inherent in this model, a school-based site coordinator was assigned to each participating middle school (which served as the anchor program for students) and an AfterZone manager within each local AfterZone. The AfterZone managers oversaw the off-site providers, supported the school-based site coordinators, and communicated with the intermediary and city agency officials to ensure they were abreast of the issues on the ground. The intermediary senior staff supervised AfterZone managers' work in the field, which had the benefit of ensuring that strategies that have been adopted citywide are

effectively and consistently implemented within each AfterZone (Kotloff and Korom-Djakovic, 2010).

Strategies to Attain Sustainability of Citywide OST Programs

Most citywide efforts to coordinate OST programming described in the literature are foundation-funded in the early years. This initial funding tends to be used to fund the development and initial implementation of an information system, to fund QI activities, and develop strategies for long-term sustainability. However, all citywide initiatives described here struggled with sustainability and to maintain programming over the long term. Some of the strategies involved reliance on government contracts and more foundation grants. All initiatives also sought to rally public support for the programs so they could better weather city budget reductions.

Nonetheless, there are some potential mechanisms for continued sustainability of OST programming (National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, 2009). These include creating dedicated local funding streams using general fund set-asides, special tax levies, and the establishment of a nonprofit intermediary (501(c)(3) nonprofit organization). As discussed above, an intermediary provides a mechanism whereby a city can make an initial investment and then solicit private and public matching funds. The intermediary can provide funding and resources, such as technical assistance or the creation and management of an information system, while being overseen by participating city agencies and other stakeholders.

Summary of Strategies for ECE and OST Provision

Our assessment of the research literature and the community initiatives featured in this chapter point to a number of potential strategies or best practices that may guide the City of Santa Monica as it looks to address issues of care access, program quality, service delivery, and sustainable financing. As a summary for this section, Table 8.3 lists the various strategies that emerged from this review, both from the research literature and the model programs we featured.

As noted at the outset, most initiatives are focused either on ECE or OST, without necessarily looking to create a unified system. Although Table 8.3 lists strategies specific to each type of care, many of the approaches identified for either ECE or OST may have relevance for the provision of ESAC more generally. Indeed, several approaches appear in both columns such as the use of creative strategies for outreach and recruitment, the focus on staff professional development as an approach for raising program quality, and the creation of dedicated sources of funding. Many initiatives also make use of new technologies for information gathering, monitoring, and reporting. It is also worth noting that a number of these strategies are already employed in Santa Monica, such as the use of financial incentives for QI (specifically through tiered reimbursement for ECE as discussed in Chapter Four) and the engagement of employers to

infuse private support for ECE in the community (namely through the various development agreements, also discussed in Chapter Four).

Table 8.3. Strategies for ECE and OST Provision Based in Research and Existing Models

Domain	ECE	OST
Access and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand access through new sources of funding (see financing section below) • Improve quality and expand offerings (e.g., dual-language programs) to attract more full-fee families and achieve greater economic diversity among enrolled children • Attract full-fee parents to cross-subsidize public or private programs • Close information gaps about available care options through multiple mechanisms (e.g., information campaigns, resource centers, event outreach, social media, the Internet) • Facilitate access to publicly funded programs through a common application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve OST program uptake through outreach and recruitment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource and referral systems ○ Market research to guide program offerings ○ Recruitment fairs and teacher outreach • Improve OST program engagement through attendance monitoring, high-quality programming, incentives, and employing young staff (e.g., college students or recent college graduates) • Facilitate participation through transportation services and coordinated program offerings
Quality of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ promising practices to improve quality of care, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QRISs ○ Raise standards, and measure and monitor quality ○ Expand accreditation ○ Provide financial incentives to improve quality • Support the professional development of the ECE workforce through coaching, mentoring, professional learning communities, and other mechanisms • Track children from preschool to elementary grades to measure impact of early learning programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ QI strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical support, training, professional development, and credentialing ○ Raise standards and measure and monitor quality and child outcomes
Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a fully aligned P–3 system that improves school readiness and capitalizes on early investments • Invest in longitudinal data systems to measure ECE outcomes and link them to K–12 performance and other key indicators of child well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a nonprofit intermediary to provide technical assistance, establish data systems, coordinate across agencies, and engage in marketing and outreach • Configure a management structure consistent with mix of school-based and off-site providers
Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated funding stream for ECE programs (e.g., special tax levies) • Prioritize education funding (e.g., Title I funds, Proposition 30 funds) for ECE programs • Attract full-fee families to public ECE programs to stabilize funding • Engage employers as an added source of private support for ECE for their employees or the community more generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated funding stream for OST programs (e.g., general fund set-asides, special tax levies) • Use the nonprofit intermediary to raise private and public funds

9. Summary of Findings, Policy Options, and Recommendations

In this concluding chapter, we first provide a summary of the ESAC issues we have identified through the information collection activities and other analyses presented in Chapters Two through Eight. We continue to organize the discussion around the four key themes that relate to our study questions: access and participation, quality of care, service delivery, and financing. We then discuss policy options and recommendations that respond to the issues identified.

Summary of Findings

Table 9.1 presents a synthesis of key issues identified in earlier sections of this report. In some cases, the issues are relevant for both ECE and OST services; in other cases the issues are unique to one or the other. This discussion provides the motivation for the consideration of policy options and the associated recommendations that follow.

Before delving into the issues identified through our project activities, it is important to reflect upon the fact that the ESAC system in Santa Monica has much to be commended. In terms of ECE programs, the city has a diverse mix of providers in home-based and center-based settings, with a mixture of private and public provision. There is a surplus of preschool spaces for city residents, which makes the city an attractive place to work for nonresident workers with young children who prefer to utilize a care provider near where they work. The city is one of the communities in Los Angeles County participating in LAUP and LA STEP, two initiatives designed to improve the quality of ECE programs. And the city's use of tiered reimbursement for the child care subsidies it funds gives providers an incentive to be rated and to work toward further QI. In terms of OST programs, SMMUSD and the city work together to ensure that there are OST offerings on every elementary- and middle-school campus in Santa Monica; the city also invests in other off-campus OST offerings. Parents provided positive feedback about their experiences in both ECE and OST programs, stating that they value the ESAC services the city offers and benefit more generally from the city's efforts to support families in their need for care that is safe and developmentally appropriate. These favorable aspects of ESAC in Santa Monica mean the city has a solid foundation from which to further advance its ESAC system.

Access and Participation

Our analysis identified both cross-cutting issues of access to programs and program participation, as well as specific issues unique to either ECE or OST. A common issue communicated by parents and other stakeholders is that parents are often unaware of the full

Table 9.1. Summary of Key Issues Identified for ESAC in Santa Monica

Care Type	Issue
a. Access and Participation	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of parent awareness regarding available ECE and OST programs Subsidized system is complex and challenging for parents to navigate Need for more economic diversity of families in ECE and OST programs, especially those that are subsidized by contracts or grants that fund a specific number of slots
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply of slots available for infant and toddler care may be below demand Delays in subsidy approval may close off program options, as some programs fill quickly Parents may not know that public-school preschool programs are open to fee-paying parents
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OST offerings do not meet the full range of family needs across the K–8 age spectrum Lack of prorating of fees for partial participation in OST programs limits options for families with nonstandard schedules and limits participation in additional part-time OST care Lack of transportation between school and some off-campus OST programs constrains program options for families
b. Quality of Care	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived need to improve quality of both ECE and OST Limited objective data on quality shortfalls make improvement targeting difficult
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents need guidance concerning program quality, particularly for FCCH providers Lack of coordination between schools and onsite ECE programs limits program alignment
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that staff in some programs are not well-qualified or disengaged Parents are concerned about safety issues with some programs (e.g., kids can leave when they want, safety of shared facilities, use of public buses) Parents need homework to be done during OST program time, but this is not regularly provided Limited options within some programs may not meet developmental needs of some older children
c. Service Delivery	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed delivery system (public-private) is viewed as an advantage, but need to ensure programs are using public resources as efficiently as possible Need to improve alignment (e.g., ECE with elementary grades; school day with after-school programs)
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited connection between school-based preschools and school principals and staff
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs operated by public-sector agencies may have higher costs, but cost and quality tradeoffs with alternative delivery approaches are not fully known
d. Financing	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most public funding sources for ECE and OST are targeted to a relatively small part of the city's population Some public funding sources are not utilized (e.g., Title I for preschool services, CCLC, ASES) or are underutilized (e.g., tax subsidies) Most public funding sources are constrained, and likely to remain so

range of ECE and OST options in Santa Monica. While CFC serves as an R&R agency, many families may not avail themselves of these services and families may not make the best use of the information provided. Likewise, the system of ECE and OST subsidies is complex and difficult to navigate, a common issue in nearly all U.S. communities. Finally, there are clear

concerns about the need for greater economic diversity of families in ECE and OST programs, particularly those that are funded by contracts and grants for a specific number of slots.

From the perspective of the supply side of the ESAC marketplace, Santa Monica would appear to have a sufficient number of ECE slots to serve the city's preschool-age children—even to the point of importing children from other communities into the city's programs, given the excess capacity. On the other hand, judging from parent comments and our rough calculation of potential participation rates (see Table 4.3), there may be a shortage of infant/toddler spaces, which are largely needed to support working families. Parents who are eligible for subsidies often experience delays in subsidy approval, which may cause them to miss the enrollment window. For preschool-age children, many parents who do not qualify for HS or CSPP appear not to be aware that they may still enroll their child at their neighborhood school's preschool program on a fee-paying basis.

Although it is more challenging to assess the supply of OST spaces, parents indicated in surveys and focus groups that they did not have all of the options they would be interested in available to them, especially for children in middle school and high school. The lack of options for prorating of fees for full-time OST programs to allow for variation in schedules also affects access to some part-time OST offerings, such as enrichment classes. Moreover, with OST programs, parents often feel constrained by a lack of transportation, so that they can only make use of options on their child's school campus or those that provide transportation between school and the program site.

Quality of Care

In considering issues with respect to quality of ECE and OST program services, our information gathering pointed to a wide range of opinions about all aspects of quality in these programs. In many cases, parents reported being satisfied with their current care arrangements; such satisfaction is commonly found when parents are asked about the program in which their child is currently enrolled, since parents who are less satisfied tend not to continue using a given provider. But others pointed to real concerns about program quality in a number of areas.

One challenge in understanding program quality issues is that, with a few exceptions, there is currently no objective source of information about ECE or OST program quality. The NAEYC or NAFCC accreditation that some programs have received is one marker of quality, but relatively few programs have undertaken the time-consuming and costly process of obtaining this seal of approval (see Table 4.2). The rating process used by LA STEP is another mechanism that holds promise for providing clear information about ECE program quality to parents, policymakers, and the public. Likewise, participation in LAUP is another marker of quality, given the threshold required to participate, but their ratings are not made public. At the same time, it is important to note that neither LA STEP nor LAUP has undertaken a validation study to determine if the features that they are accounting for in their quality ratings are

predictive of how children will benefit developmentally. However, First 5 LA has funded an evaluation of LAUP that examines changes in key areas of child development from fall to spring (Love et al., 2009).

Another cross-cutting quality issue concerned economic diversity, also already mentioned in the context of access and participation. For many parents and other stakeholders, such diversity is an important contributor to their children's learning. Because of targeted funding streams and parent (and student) self-selection, many, if not most, ESAC programs are economically segregated.

Quality in ECE includes important aspects of the care delivered within the program, such as staff quality, use of appropriate curricula, and sensitive staff-child interactions. The literature is clear that parents have difficulties identifying quality in these programs, and typically rate quality higher than trained early childhood professionals. The lack of transparency about program quality is particularly an issue in FCCHs, where programs may operate with only minimal health and safety standards.

Another important aspect of ECE quality concerns the degree to which ECE programs align with early elementary programs. As kindergarten becomes more rigorous, it is increasingly important that ECE program staff understand what will be expected of students and work to meet those expectations in the program through use of appropriate curriculum, practice, and pedagogy. Bringing together preschool and kindergarten teachers would help to improve alignment, but finding time and resources to support meetings between preschool and kindergarten teachers, even when they work on the same campus, is a challenge.

A number of quality concerns were specifically focused on OST programs. Staff qualifications were particularly noted. A number of parents and other stakeholders were concerned about the relatively low levels of training that characterize some OST staff. Many of these programs employ part-time staff who may be working other jobs as well, which reduces commitment. Concerns were also expressed about activity limitations in programs that serve older children. As children age, their interests become clearer and divergent; smaller programs may not be able to offer differentiated opportunities that would better engage older participants.

Safety was often mentioned as a quality concern in OST programs. Those that do not provide transportation may have children walk from school, often across busy streets. Reliance on city buses for field trips worried some parents because of children's exposure to the general public. Policies in some programs that allow students of any age to leave whenever they want were a concern to many parents. In programs that lack dedicated facilities, parents expressed concerns about bathrooms and playgrounds that are open to the public.

A key aspect of OST program quality for many parents concerned homework: Parents want homework completed or at least attempted in these programs. But a lack of communication between schools and OST programs reduces the value of this support. A number of

stakeholders questioned whether staff in some of these programs were fully capable of providing useful homework assistance given their limited education and training.

Service Delivery

Like most communities, Santa Monica has a mixed public-private delivery system for both ECE and OST programming. For the most part, the parents we heard from, the providers themselves, and other key stakeholders view the mixed-delivery system as an advantage in terms of giving parents a range of care options. On the other hand, where public resources are used to pay for care (whether through direct provision or through subsidies to private providers), there is a need to ensure that programs are using these public dollars as efficiently and effectively as possible. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing such a mixed-delivery system, relevant for both ECE and OST programming, is ensuring that the different components in the system are aligned. Parents, providers, and other key stakeholders all remarked about issues of alignment between ECE providers and the elementary schools the children will attend, and emphasized a lack of alignment even when those programs share a school campus. Other communities implementing P–3 systems may be a good source of strategies for improving alignment. Likewise, there is scope to improve the alignment between the school day and the on-campus OST services that precede or follow class. The alignment issues are no less challenging when the OST provider is off-campus.

In the context of ECE programs, one issue that was consistently raised was that onsite preschool programs are not easily integrated with the school campus; consequently, principals may be reluctant to be held responsible for preschool programs. Given the funding and auspices for these programs, the ECE staff do not report directly to the principal. There is a separate budget for the preschool component, different program and regulatory requirements, and separate training for teaching staff. Consequently, many principals do not invest in becoming familiar with program issues, nor do they typically work to find solutions. Because the children enrolled in the on-site program will attend kindergarten elsewhere in many cases, there is little incentive for principals to invest in their on-campus ECE program, despite being the titular head of those programs.

As noted in Chapter Three, the City of Santa Monica directly operates several OST programs. For some of the key informants with whom we met, this city aegis raised issues of potential inefficiencies with this operating arrangement; noted in particular were the potentially higher costs for program delivery given the lack of flexibility in staff requirements, although the cost to achieve the same quality of programming with alternative delivery options was not fully known.

Financing

The financial issues for ESAC cut across ECE and OST boundaries, given that a number of funding streams are structured to apply to children from birth to age 12 (e.g., California Title 5 programming, CalWORKs and non-CalWORKs APP subsidies, and tax system subsidies). Consequently, as shown in Table 9.1, a set of common financing issues emerged from our analysis.

As discussed in Chapter Three, there are more than a dozen different public funding streams at the federal, state, and local levels available to subsidize ECE and OST programs. For the most part, these publicly funded programs target lower-income families. Programs that target children whose family income is below the FPL, such as HS, would reach just 6 percent of the city's population of children under the age of five, according to Census figures on the child poverty rate for Santa Monica (see Table 2.1). Programs that reach farther up the income ladder—like Title 5 Child Development, CSPP, and the voucher programs administered by CFC—would extend to cover more families, but the CDE income ceilings for these programs, standing at about 200 percent of the FPL, would likely cover fewer than 25 percent of the city's children (given that 23 percent of the city's residents have income below 200 percent of poverty; see Table 2.1). Thus, while these programs might serve close to half of all children statewide (Karoly, Reardon, and Cho, 2007), fewer than half as many can benefit in a higher-income community like Santa Monica. At the same time, many families with income above the CDE income thresholds (e.g., with \$50,000 in annual income for a family of four) are likely to find it challenging to pay full price for full-time care for an infant, toddler, or preschool-age child, with fees of \$1,000 per month or more (see Table 7.6).

A comparison of the potential sources of public funds for ESAC and those used by programs in the city shows that some sources are currently untapped or used for a different purpose, namely the federal Title I funds used for the elementary grades (a share of which could be reallocated toward preschool programs) and two sources of after-school funding: federal CCLC and state ASES. In addition, the results of our parent survey suggest that many families may not be taking advantage of features in the tax system that subsidize ESAC, either by claiming a child care tax credit on federal and state income tax returns or through an employer-established FSA. If the take-up rate is below full participation for these two subsidy vehicles, it is likely to reflect a lack of knowledge about tax credits or limits on the number of employers that offer FSAs.

The funding challenge is further complicated by the future outlook for the public dollars that support ESAC. While there is generally bipartisan support for programs investing in high-quality early learning programs and for providing a safe and stimulating environment for children beyond the school day, the fiscal realities at the federal, state, and local levels mean that funding levels are not likely to expand any time soon and may contract further in some

cases. Thus, assembling a viable portfolio of sustainable sources of ESAC funding is a major challenge for the city.

Policy Options and Recommendations

We now turn to a discussion of policy options for addressing the issues identified in Table 9.1. Table 9.2 summarizes those recommendations. Where there is a basis for a firm recommendation, we make one. In cases where there is no clear policy course, we present alternative options and discuss their merits and drawbacks, with the aim of providing decisionmakers and key stakeholders with an understanding of the issues and the potential effects of alternative choices. In these cases, decisionmakers in the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD, together with other stakeholders, would need to deliberate over the advantages and disadvantages of alternative options before deciding on the preferred approach for the city to take. Table 9.2 also indicates which recommendations could be more readily implemented in the short term (a single asterisk) and those that would require a longer time to development and implement (two asterisks). Recommendations that would require significant new resources are marked with a dagger.

Access and Participation

A number of the issues related to access and participation arise because of the complex web of funding streams and eligibility requirements, all largely dictated by federal and state regulations that the city can do little to change. Nevertheless, there are strategies the city can consider to make the ESAC system work better in Santa Monica.

- **Establish a web-based portal for one-stop information on ECE and OST care providers and sources of financial support (A1).** In order to support a seamless system of ESAC, this portal should apply to both ECE and OST programs and feature both public and private options. It could provide a search function so parents could seek out care options that meet specific needs in terms of location, hours, type of setting, and so on. In addition, providers could post information about enrollment periods, current openings or the length of the waiting list, fees and subsidies available or accepted, and other key program features, including accreditation status and quality ratings. Regarding financial support, the site could include a calculator so families could determine if they would be eligible for specific public subsidies or slots (e.g., HS or CSPP). Further, consumer-friendly information could be posted on such details as the steps required to apply for subsidies and the preferred documentation and allowable alternatives. Links to key resources such as CFC would also be provided. Such a web-based portal allows for more frequent updating, is more affordable to maintain, and was suggested by parents. To supplement the portal, however, the city and other stakeholders should also consider using social media tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) and other outreach and marketing approaches to further disseminate information about

Table 9.2. Summary of Recommendations for ESAC in Santa Monica

Care Type	Recommendations
a. Access and Participation (A)	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A1. Develop a web-based portal for one-stop information on ECE and OST care providers and sources of financial support, including options for subsidies * A2. Explore reestablishing a centralized waiting list specific to Santa Monica **† A3. Collect periodic data from a representative sample of parents on care use and need
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ** A4. Consider options for expanding infant/toddler slots in existing programs or new programs ** A5. Develop a strategic plan for expanding public preschool slots for fee-paying families and increase awareness of this option * A6. Give priority enrollment for preschool slots in SMMUSD schools to neighborhood children who will continue on to kindergarten
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ** A7. Coordinate OST offerings to meet programming and scheduling needs of children and families, and ensure that participants can access the offerings with appropriate prorated fees *† A8. Develop transportation options to shuttle students from site to site
b. Quality of Care (Q)	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> **† Q1. Collect periodic independent assessments of ECE and OST program quality to support QI initiatives **† Q2. Create incentives and capacity for improving ECE and OST program quality * Q3. Align QI initiatives with developmental needs of children
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> **† Q4. Collect kindergarten readiness data that can be linked with preschool developmental assessments and subsequent student performance ** Q5. Incorporate specific features in public preschool programs likely to attract full-fee families * Q6. Consider city subsidies for FCCHs in exchange for targeted QI
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> **† Q7. Improve skills of OST program staff * Q8. Address safety concerns related to OST facilities open to the public ** Q9. Improve quality of OST programming, with a focus on broadening the scope of available activities to appeal to middle- and higher-income families
c. Service Delivery (S)	
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ** S1. Develop a more closely integrated preschool to early public elementary system
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * S2. More closely connect OST staff and their activities with the K-8 staff and academic program ** S3. Consider merits and drawbacks of contracting out OST programming to providers who operate on public-school campuses and/or other sites
d. Financing (F)	
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * F1. Encourage private- and public-sector employers to offer dependent care FSAs and to consider other ways of providing child care funding assistance to their employees * F2. Use web-based portal and other outreach methods (e.g., public awareness campaign) to increase parent knowledge and take-up of tax code subsidies for ESAC * F3. Encourage ESAC providers to routinely provide families with documentation needed to obtain reimbursement through tax subsidies or employer-based plans * F4. Encourage enrollments by fee-paying parents in public programs to provide more sustainable funding and increase economic diversity ** F5. Explore the option of establishing a nonprofit intermediary to support ESAC services in the city
ECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * F6. Examine options to (a) reallocate a portion of Title I funds or (b) use a portion of Proposition 30 funds to support preschool programming through expanded slots or improved quality of existing slots
OST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * F7. Review potential for relevant city agencies to qualify for state ASES and 21st CCLC funding and develop a strategic plan to secure funding if merited

NOTE: * denotes a recommendation that could be implemented in the near future. ** denotes a recommendation that may take more time to develop and implement. † denotes a recommendation that may require significant resources to enact.

available ESAC options. The city could also consider developing software applications for handheld devices as additional mechanisms for information dissemination. These outreach and marketing tools are also useful strategies for correcting the types of misperceptions about care options that were expressed in the parent surveys and focus groups and the key stakeholder interviews.

- **Explore reestablishing a centralized waiting list specific to Santa Monica (A2).** Although CDE no longer supports the statewide centralized eligibility list, the city could consider establishing a centralized list that providers could access. CFC could be the intermediary placing individual children on the list that all providers could access. This mechanism could support timelier and better matching of children to slots for which they qualify. It would also provide city planners with information about where shortages in care options may exist.
- **Collect periodic data from a representative sample of parents on care use and need (A3).** For planning and policy purposes, the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders would benefit from collecting data from parents on a regular basis (e.g., annual, biennial) regarding their ESAC care use, their preferences over various care options, and their unmet needs. To be most useful, the data collected should be representative of the population of Santa Monica and have sufficiently large samples to provide results for subgroups of interest. To be as economical as possible, survey questions pertaining to ESAC could be integrated with other city data-gathering activities such as those associated with the Wellbeing Index project funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Alternatively, the city may be able to add questions to other routine surveys, such as the California Health Interview Survey, which already includes some questions related to child care use and experiences.²⁹

The following recommendations stem from the unique access issues for ECE programs:

- **Consider options for expanding infant/toddler slots in existing programs or new programs (A4).** The information about possible shortages in infant/toddler slots is largely anecdotal, so the city, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders should consider options for expanding infant/toddler slots, while simultaneously collecting more data about the actual extent, if any, of excess demand. Given the apparent surplus of preschool-age slots, the city may be able to work with some providers to convert preschool rooms into infant/toddler rooms. In addition, 38 new infant/toddler slots are slated to come online with the opening of the new civic center ECE facility. The flexibility of FCCs to accommodate infants, toddlers and older children without major

²⁹ For information on the California Health Interview Survey, see UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (2012).

changes in space configurations may make FCCs a viable target for expanding infant/toddler slots as needed, subject to ratio requirements.

- **Develop a strategic plan for expanding public preschool slots for fee-paying families and increase awareness of this option (A5).** Integrating fee-paying families into public preschool programs, as a number of communities are already doing (discussed in Chapter Eight), would address not only the access issues considered here (e.g., lack of economic diversity), but also provide at least a partial remedy for financing issues. (The success of this approach is also contingent on successful strategies to improve the quality of public ECE programs so that parents who can afford to pay the program cost will do so.) Accomplishing this integration, if desired, will require addressing the current allocation of preschool spaces across different elementary-school sites (see Table 4.3). The strategic planning process could identify approaches to making better use of existing facilities or expanding the space available through prefabricated modular classrooms or other such low-cost expansion approaches (Munger et al., 2007). The planning process could also take into account demographic projections and their implications for space needs in the future. Another objective of the strategic plan would be to identify effective approaches to raise awareness among families that the fee-paying option exists.
- **Give priority for public preschool enrollments to neighborhood children who will continue on to kindergarten (A6).** Increasing the number of children who enroll in kindergarten at the same campus where they attended preschool can facilitate the alignment of preschool and elementary-school curricula, promote a better preschool-kindergarten transition for children and families, and increase principal and teaching staff buy-in. As an incentive, fee-paying parents who enroll their children in the preschool program could be guaranteed a slot in the kindergarten class at the same school. This policy would not only provide children with a more consistent learning environment, it would increase school staff's stake in the success of the preschool children, likely increasing their motivation to coordinate the preschool-kindergarten program alignment. Principals, too, would be more likely to consider the preschool students "their" students, as most will continue into the kindergarten.

Additional recommendations address the OST program access concerns:

- **Coordinate OST offerings and ensure that youth participants can access activities offered at various sites with appropriate prorated fees (A7).** The city, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders might review the current program offerings across all relevant sites and providers, the associated fee structure, and other aspects of the OST offerings, and make changes needed to improve access and increase participation. Not all

programs necessarily need fee adjustments, but comments received from parents regarding prorating of fees and issues of affordability indicate a need for some providers to revisit this issue. Similarly, not all programs need to adjust their activity mix. Overall, however, the system would benefit from an examination of fee structure and activity mix across sites and ensure that parents of all income levels have options that are appealing for their children. Examples from communities such as Providence show how social media and other outreach methods (e.g., recruitment fairs) can be used to identify what children and families are looking for and to engage students in the OST programs that are in place. Web-based data systems can also provide a way to monitor and track attendance and solicit feedback on student experiences.

- **Develop transportation options to shuttle students from site to site (A8).** Again, following the example in other communities, such as Providence’s AfterZones, a transportation option (perhaps through the public transit system or school buses) might be used to provide a safe way for students to travel between their school and OST program. A dedicated or regular bus line could run along required routes at certain times of the day to support this transition from school to OST.

Quality of Care

In considering policy options for improving the quality of care offered in and across ESAC programs, it is clear that there are many quality issues that might be addressed. An optimal strategy would be to make a clear public commitment to high-quality programs and to QI. These efforts are likely to pay off in terms of creating better learning environments for children and improving their school performance; this reality can help to justify the costs associated with implementing some of these efforts. A commitment to making program quality transparent will help parents and other stakeholders make better ESAC program choices and motivate providers to participate in QI efforts. Moreover, improving ESAC program quality can further goals with respect to program access and participation (e.g., more diversity).

We note that several of the concerns under the quality rubric relate to issues of alignment—between preschool and the early elementary grades and, for school-age children, between the school day and out-of-school time. These issues are also related to the service delivery domain. We defer a discussion of recommendations related to alignment for the discussion on service delivery that follows.

We begin with a set of recommendations that potentially apply to QI for both ECE and OST programs:

- **Collect periodic independent assessments of ECE and OST program quality to support QI initiatives (Q1).** As discussed in Chapter Eight, there is a considerable consensus in the ECE and OST fields regarding what constitutes quality programming,

and there are tools available for measuring and summarizing quality. Given the relatively small number of ECE and OST providers operating in Santa Monica, the city and other stakeholders (such as CFC and SMMUSD) could sponsor the collection of objective quality measures for a sample or census of ECE and OST providers with only a modest investment. This information, whether collected once or on a periodic basis, would give providers feedback on where they need to improve, and would allow for more targeted QI efforts. Without this information, systemwide QI would be challenging to conduct, as little guidance exists on where to direct QI efforts in the community. Alternatively, for ECE providers, some of these objective quality measures could be collected as part of participation in LAUP or LA STEP; the city could provide incentives for such participation, as we discuss next.

- **Create incentives for programs to improve quality and develop local QI capacity (Q2).** In terms of incentives, the city could direct its QI funds in a number of ways, including offering mini-grants to providers to support evidence-based QI activities, such as seeking accreditation or supporting specific staff PD activities; or expanding the tiered reimbursement system tied to LAUP, LA STEP, and accreditation to include children with vouchers not funded by the city. To expand the capacity to support QI, city funds could be used to support training for appropriate ECE and OST staff, who could work directly with programs on those QI activities that will help to strengthen programs, and/or support provider networking activities—including peer coaching, something that is being implemented at LA STEP with FCCH providers. The city could also explore ways to leverage the QI capacity being developed by First 5, LAUP, and other county entities to support city-sponsored QI initiatives. The new civic center Early Childhood Education Center, with its planned training facility, will also be a resource for QI efforts.
- **Align QI initiatives with the developmental needs of children (Q3).** At the preschool level, continuity of care is important; enabling children to remain on the campus where they attend preschool would support this goal. For older children, efforts should be made to provide a rich and varied set of options for OST programs, some of which might include easy transition to and from on-campus enrichment classes and after-school care. Following the example of other communities, such as Providence’s AfterZones, an OST alternative might involve creating a limited number of specialized OST programs around the city linked to schools through dedicated transportation; students could select programs that most interest them.

In addition to these cross-cutting strategies related to QI, several recommendations are specific to ECE:

- **Collect kindergarten readiness data from individual children that can be linked with preschool developmental assessments and subsequent school performance (Q4).** In advance of a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment, SMMUSD could deploy a kindergarten readiness assessment and establish a data system that would allow linkages with developmental assessments collected during the preschool years (e.g., the Desired Results Developmental Profile) and with subsequent student performance in the early elementary grades. Such data would enable analysts to provide ECE programs with feedback on their “graduates,” which could help in considering QI. The EDI data collection effort could be expanded and linked to these other data sources, although, as mentioned earlier, the EDI is not meant to be a child assessment tool; something similar could be used or additional components added to the EDI to assess each child.
- **Incorporate specific features in public preschool programs likely to attract full-fee families (Q5).** Efforts to attract full-fee families will depend critically on making the public preschool programs competitive with the other options full-fee parents have in the private sector. We discussed an incentive in terms of guaranteed kindergarten enrollment (recommendation A6); another option noted several times in our discussions with parents, providers, and stakeholders was to create ECE dual-language immersion programs, a model that has been implemented in other communities (as discussed in Chapter Eight). These programs would complement SMMUSD’s existing immersion program. Ultimately, raising program quality has benefits for participating children and families across the board, but it also serves to address the need for greater diversity discussed earlier.
- **Consider FCCH subsidies linked to targeted QI goals (Q6).** As with tiered reimbursement, subsidies that are conditional on the performance of QI activities can be an important motivator of program improvement. Such subsidies might be particularly important for FCCH providers, who often work without peer input or support. To receive such subsidies, specific activities might be identified that are based on an individual provider’s particular challenges or that address more general issues in the delivery of FCCH care. For example, providers might be expected to participate in specified training or achieve certain professional goals, such as a number of ECE credits or courses. They might be asked to participate in designated trainings, join a provider network, or participate in a peer coaching effort. These subsidies could be coordinated by CFC and funding could be provided by the city or an external funder.

A number of recommendations pertain to the quality concerns that were specific to OST programming:

- **Improve skills of OST program staff (Q7).** The city and SMMUSD could begin to address issues of staff quality and capacity by developing standards for staff in terms of required education and training and desired competencies. Combining these standards with professional development opportunities, including ongoing training for current staff as well as new hires could develop the skills that the city and SMMUSD deem necessary for staff to function effectively in OST programs.³⁰ Furthermore, more supervision from a site coordinator can ensure that staff are performing up to expectations. In addition, it might be possible to set up an OST internship program, perhaps in collaboration with SMC, to attract young people interested in gaining experience in working with youth. Internships could be jointly supervised by OST and SMC staff. Examples from other communities discussed in Chapter Eight show how older youth or young adults can be effective staff for OST programs, given their age and interest in part-time work schedules, especially if provided with training and close supervision.
- **Address safety concerns related to nondedicated facilities (Q8).** Guaranteeing a safe OST environment is paramount for ensuring high rates of participation on the part of children and their families. Specific safety concerns were expressed by some parents on the surveys and in the focus groups, although the extent to which such concerns are widely held could not be determined. By bringing together the relevant stakeholders, specific solutions might be found to any legitimate safety concerns identified by parents. For example, a seating policy on public buses could be established whereby younger children must sit in an area near the driver during OST program hours. In park programs, if the concerns about supervision are well founded, staff-student ratios could be increased and policies instituted that require an accompanying staff member for bathroom visits. Implementing periodic surveys or other mechanisms to get parent feedback will ensure that quality problems are identified and addressed (recommendation A3).
- **Improve quality of OST programming, with a focus on broadening the scope of available activities to appeal to middle- and higher-income families (Q9).** A few stakeholders suggested that the same principles discussed above for ECE programs might be applied to OST programs. For example, providing (and/or reinforcing) language(s) instruction through formal or informal OST classes would be appealing to many parents and students. Examples from other communities, as explored in Chapter Eight, demonstrate how community partnerships can be used to develop creative after-

³⁰ Examples of training and PD include child development, classroom management, and bullying intervention techniques. More specific training and PD could be offered for staff of programs offering specialized activities (e.g., literacy, curricula development, or science education).

school options, especially for older youth. In establishing new program options and strengthening existing ones, the city, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders could adopt the array of QI strategies that have been effective in other citywide OST systems such as training and PD, putting program standards in place, monitoring quality and improvements over time, aligning the OST programming with the school-day curriculum, and soliciting feedback from students and parents.

Service Delivery

A number of the recommendations discussed in the context of access and quality concerns also can contribute to addressing some of the service delivery issues listed in Table 9.1. For example, elementary-school principals are likely to be more engaged with their on-campus preschool programs if more of the preschool children participating in the program will enroll in the school's kindergarten—the objective of earlier recommendations regarding guaranteed enrollment and support for full-fee enrollment. The two primary issues identified in the service delivery domain that remain to be addressed concern with alignment and public versus private provision of ESAC services.

We begin with several recommendations specific to ECE and OST alignment:

- **Develop a more closely integrated preschool-to-early-elementary system (S1).** At sites where preschool programs are located on the same campus as the elementary school, strategies can be adopted to more closely integrate the leadership and teachers across the two programs. Personnel linkages might involve including ECE staff in on-campus trainings concerning school policies, or in professional development programming. Administrative linkages could include the integration of school calendars and coordination of school events (e.g., parent workshops). Curricular linkages could occur across art, music, or physical education, where preschool students could benefit from schoolwide resources in these areas, such as teaching staff and materials. Linkages for parents could be accomplished by having the PTA encompass all grades, starting with preschool. For children, there may be opportunities for students in the elementary grades to serve as reading buddies or connect in other ways with preschool students. For students transitioning from preschool to kindergarten at the same school, the relevant teachers can meet to coordinate regarding the child's developmental progress and learning goals. Earlier recommendations regarding increasing the participation of fee-paying families in these programs (recommendation A5) and enrolling neighborhood children in local preschool (recommendation A6) are consistent with this approach. These and other strategies have been implemented in other school systems to establish and support effective P–3 systems (Sullivan-Dudzic, Gearns, and Leavell, 2010). For public and private preschools that are not co-located on elementary-

school campuses, not all of these strategies may be viable, but, at a minimum, opportunities could be offered to staff across institutions to engage in coordinated planning and to develop approaches for ensuring a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. Widespread distribution of Common Core standards to ECE programs throughout the city would be a first step in educating preschool staff about kindergarten expectations. At the same time, it will be necessary to address barriers to closer coordination, including funding and schedule constraints and work rules (e.g., additional pay for after-hours meetings or time limits on amount worked in a given day).

- **More closely connect OST staff and their activities with the K–8 staff and academic program (S2).** For OST, it would be beneficial to hire and support a site coordinator on each campus who is charged with facilitating alignment between the school-day and OST programming; this person could also become the face of all on-campus OST programs, working with the principal when problems arise and taking some of the responsibility to resolve them. Considerations in implementing this recommendation stem from assigning funding and supervisory responsibilities and determining appropriate bargaining units, as the OST programs on campus are operated by different entities. At each campus with OST programming, the OST coordinator could be paired with a teacher on the school staff who would be a liaison for the school-day curriculum and tasked with developing more effective alignment, from identifying shared goals, linked curricula and programming (e.g., anti-bullying), and communication strategies. Closer linkages could also be supported through use of some of the strategies mentioned above for ECE (recommendation S1) such as including OST staff in K–8 in-service days and other training, as well as school administrative meetings and parent outreach activities. Notifying OST staff of schoolwide events and issues and considering OST program calendars in planning events would also facilitate coordination and good will. Such inclusion would begin to create school campuses in which OST programs function as an extension of the school day. Again, in forging such linkages, policymakers will need to address the challenges that arise because principals and teachers are extremely busy, so it will be necessary to adopt and resource strategies such as release time or other mechanisms that recognize schedule constraints and other work rule issues.

With regard to public versus private delivery of OST services, none of the examples we identified in the course of our literature review and reported in Chapter Eight involved the transfer of service delivery from a public agency to a CBO. However, there is an extensive literature that considers the merits of public versus private provision of services across the full spectrum of services in which governments engage, from public safety, to transportation, to

human services (Weisbrod, 1998; Stecher et al., 2010). Considerations often involve the expectation that there is likely to be a tradeoff between cost and quality: Services provided by a public-sector agency may be more costly, given high public-sector employee wages and other government regulations, but direct provision offers greater control over the services provided and the potential for higher quality and greater public accountability. While it may appear that an outside agency can provide the same quality of services at a lower cost, the government agency also needs to consider the added administrative cost of contracting with outside organizations and the costs of performance monitoring, especially if the same quality of service provided by the public agency is expected. In addition, since many CBOs rely on fundraising or other in-kind donations (including volunteer time) to fill the gap between fees charged and the full cost of the care provided, recognition of the full cost of private provision may narrow the public-private gap in the cost of service delivery. On the other hand, in the context of human services delivery, CBOs may be able to generate synergies with other services and thereby provide more integrated and effective services at lower cost compared with a government agency.

The analysis shared in earlier chapters provides some of the needed information to assess the potential tradeoffs between public provision of OST services and contracting those services out to the private sector. For example, the cost analysis in Chapter Seven suggests that, as presently configured, the cost per child-hour of OST programming on the part of private providers is lower than the cost for the public programs delivered by the city, largely because of lower staffing costs. At the same time, our analysis did not address potential differences in program quality or the combination of OST experiences offered in the private programs as compared with the public ones. For this reason, if the city sought to offer the same type of OST programming by contracting with a private provider, it is not clear if that provider would still have a lower cost profile to deliver the desired mix of services compared with direct provision by the city. Thus, a key piece of information for assessing the merits of contracting out is the cost-quality tradeoff for private providers relative to public providers. And there is little guidance in the OST literature with which to benchmark that particular relationship.

The information gathered from parents and other key stakeholders provides further insight regarding the merits of contracting out. For example, the focus groups and parent surveys suggested that parents appreciate having a range of OST options and the flexibility afforded by the current mix of providers and services. On the other hand, some parents expressed dissatisfaction with the programs available to them in both the private and public sectors, in terms of the capabilities of program staff and the types of OST programming delivered. Thus, in considering the implications of contracting, consideration should be given to the consequences for the range of OST options that would be available and the effect on program quality. If contracting out would narrow the range of OST options available to parents and affect other key features of importance to parents and children (e.g., convenience, cost,

alignment with the academic programs), parents and other key stakeholders may show less support for this approach.

Assuming that the cost of private provision is lower than public provision for a given mix of services, another issue is the ability to achieve that desired level of quality through contracted services. With an increased emphasis on government accountability and the trend toward government outsourcing, government agencies have increasingly been turning to performance-based accountability systems as a way to incentivize organizations to provide high-quality services and hold them accountable for meeting measurable objectives (Stecher et al., 2010). The child care QRISs being implemented in states and localities are one example of such a system. A recent RAND study concluded that performance-based accountability systems can be effective in improving the quality of services supported with public dollars or reducing the cost of service provision, but effectiveness evidence is relatively rare. Depending on the type of services being provided, it can be challenging to select appropriate performance measures and to structure meaningful incentives. Ensuring that such systems are effective requires careful work on the design end, follow-up monitoring and evaluation to determine if they are working as intended, and, finally, adjustments to correct any issues in design and implementation.

With that background in mind, we make the following recommendation with respect to OST:

- **Consider the merits and drawbacks of contracting out OST programming to providers who operate on school campuses and/or at other sites (S3).** The city should carefully weigh the potential advantages of contracting out OST services, along with the potential disadvantages, accounting for the issues already noted as well as any others, such as constraints imposed by public OST funding streams. This assessment may require additional information gathering, such as evaluating differences in the mix of OST programming provided by the public versus private programs in the city and potential differences in the resulting quality. In addition, further market research may be needed to assess the demand on the part of parents in the community for the type of OST programming offered by the city versus the services that would be offered by private providers. If the city determines that contracting out is likely to be advantageous overall, it should consider implementing a pilot effort to outsource the OST programs at one or two school sites before exiting direct service provision completely. The pilot could be used to establish the contracting approach and whether a performance-based contract would be used—and if so, how it might be structured. The programmatic inputs and desired outcomes could be identified and the accompanying measurement of those outcomes could be undertaken. The associated financial incentives would also be specified and applied. The pilot effort also could be structured to test out some of the other programmatic changes recommended in Table 9.1. The pilot effort could then be

evaluated to see if the city is able to achieve its objectives for the same or lower cost as in-house provision. Based on the pilot effort, the contracting mechanism could be refined and expanded to more OST sites, or the city could opt to continue its role as a direct provider of OST services.

Financing

In considering policy options for sustainable ESAC funding, it is clear from our review of the current funding sources in Santa Monica and the strategies used in other communities that there is no magic bullet; there is no single untapped funding source that will provide stable, long-term funding for ESAC in the city. Rather, the optimal strategy would appear to be to develop a diverse portfolio of public and private funding, where the public side would include as many federal, state, and local sources as possible and the private side would include fees paid by families as well as contributions from other private entities, such as employers and the philanthropic community. In addition, the strategy of integrating subsidy and full-fee families within the same program (recommendation A5) can create a more sustainable funding mix.

In many respects, Santa Monica already relies on a diverse mix of funding sources to pay for ESAC. But there is room to diversify even further, as indicated in Table 9.2. In particular, we recommend the following for both ECE and OST funding:

- **Encourage private- and public-sector employers to offer dependent care FSAs and to consider the value of providing child care funding assistance to their employees (F1).** This approach would follow the model in Duval County, Fla. (discussed in Chapter Eight), whereby the city would work with the employer community to promote the benefits of offsetting the cost of care as part of more family-friendly workplace practices. Employers would benefit in terms of enhanced recruitment of talented workers who would value such benefits (as the FSA mechanism tends to benefit higher-wage workers more). The city benefits from infusing additional private resources into ESAC. Families will gain greater access to dependent care tax benefits and possibly employer subsidies.
- **Use the web-based portal and other outreach strategies to increase the take-up of tax code subsidies for ECE and OST (F2).** The web-based portal and social media mechanisms discussed earlier in the context of access and participation (recommendation A1) can also support this objective. Through direct outreach to families or through information offered by providers (along with the required documentation, as recommended next), more families may be able to take advantage of the state and federal dependent care tax credit. The tax code provisions are especially beneficial for lower- to middle-income taxpayers.

- **Encourage ECE and OST providers to routinely provide the required documentation needed for parents to obtain reimbursement through tax subsidies or FSAs (F3).** At the end of each academic year and the end of each calendar year, providers in FCCHs and centers could readily provide families with a statement showing their spending on ECE or OST services in the past calendar year. That documentation could be accompanied by instructions for claiming the child care tax credit.
- **Enhance the sustainability of public funding streams for ECE and OST by integrating fee-paying families and subsidized families into the same programs (F4).** This kind of integration is already under way in the on-campus OST programs—and, to some extent, for public-school preschool programs. It is also a model being adopted in other communities (see Chapter Eight). Shifting to a full-fee and subsidy mix represents a culture shift for many programs, and marketing and public relations campaigns may be needed to draw families to the new program. As noted, further integrating full-fee families into public-school preschools (recommendation A5) can provide cross-subsidies and increase economic diversity within programs. Likewise, expanding the use of sliding scale fees (particularly the upper range of the scale) linked to ability to pay for OST offerings such as sports and other recreational activities would further leverage public OST dollars and allow more children to participate. The balance of full-fee and subsidy slots in a program likely differs among programs depending on the cost structure; each program should evaluate the ideal mix of financing that would support its programming. This recommendation is tied to earlier recommendations to advance the quality of subsidized ECE and OST programs (recommendations Q5 and Q9), so they are attractive to fee-paying parents.
- **Explore the option of establishing or designating a nonprofit intermediary to support ESAC services in the city (F5).** Following the model used in a number of cities for OST services, the city should consider the option of establishing a nonprofit intermediary to channel public resources—as well as private donations from foundations, businesses, and individuals—into the provision of ESAC. This intermediary could also help align programs and provide a measure of system oversight and accountability. The intermediary might operate as a public-private partnership, functioning as a central resource for innovation and technical assistance, for the creation and dissemination of data systems, for outreach to parents and the public, and for advocacy efforts. By capturing both ECE and OST within the intermediary’s purview, this agency could help the city work toward a more fully coordinated and integrated ESAC system.

In addition to these general strategies, we make the following recommendation specifically for ECE funding:

- **Together with SMMUSD, assess options for reallocating a portion of funds or using a portion of Proposition 30 funds to support preschool programming to create additional slots or to improve the quality of existing slots (F6).** The four Title I elementary schools in Santa Monica have the option to use those funds to support preschool services. Reallocating Title I funds would be justified if the return on investing in early education programming in terms of education outcomes were higher than the return on investments in enhanced services during the elementary grades. As discussed in Chapter Eight, districts in California and across the country are opting to direct their Title I resources to the preschool years, recognizing that a high-quality early learning experience can reduce the need for compensatory funding in later grades. Such a reallocation could be implemented on a trial basis at one or two school sites in Santa Monica and evaluated to determine the downstream consequences. For example, there is evidence to indicate that high-quality early learning programs can reduce the need for special education services in the elementary grades, with dollar savings that may be large enough to cover part or all of the early education program costs (Karoly, Kilburn, and Cannon, 2005). If a pilot program demonstrates such savings, the experience could justify a broader effort to reallocate Title I funding. Likewise, while Proposition 30 funds may be used to restore prior funding cuts, those funds could also be used to prioritize new areas (such as preschool programs) if the returns on using the funds for new priority areas exceed the gains from restoring those funds in other areas of spending.

Finally, specific to OST funding, the following recommendation applies:

- **Review the potential for the relevant city agencies to qualify for state ASES funding or federal CCLC funding and develop a strategic plan for winning such funding if warranted (F7).** The city is not tapping into either of these funding streams at the moment, and the CCLC may be less relevant for Santa Monica, given the targeted nature of the program. However, ASES is potentially available to any community in California, although limited funds mean that there is competition to win an award from the state.

A Stronger ESAC System within the SMC2C Initiative

The recommendations in Table 9.2 are designed to promote an ESAC system that is an integral part of the SMC2C initiative. While the detailed recommendations pertain to specific issues identified with ECE or OST programming or both, there are several overarching themes

embedded in these recommendations that we highlight below. Adopting some or all of these recommendations would allow the city, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders to advance toward an ESAC system that is:

- **integrated.** The system would be better integrated across the age groups being served, from birth to kindergarten entry and from kindergarten entry through the school years. It would also be integrated across the public and private sectors.
- **inclusive.** The system would endeavor to serve children and families in the city in more economically diverse programs. These programs would also be more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and language.
- **aligned.** The system would better align early education with the elementary grades, and would more closely link the education that takes place during the school day with the care provided before and after school and during the summer and school breaks.
- **high-quality.** The achievement of high quality in ECE and OST programs would be prioritized, supported, and recognized through incentives to improve quality and through objective measures that document when high quality is achieved.
- **innovative.** The system would seek to employ innovative and data-driven strategies that respond to the unique needs of the city’s residents. Where possible, the city and its partners in the public and private sector would take advantage of new technologies (e.g., web-based tools) and communication tools (e.g., social media) to support information gathering, service delivery, and communication.
- **evidence-based.** The system would collect relevant data and information to determine the quality of the services being delivered and use that information to target QI efforts. Data on school readiness and academic success outcomes also would be used to hold providers accountable and furnish feedback that would guide further improvements.
- **diversified.** A diverse portfolio of public and private resources would support the system, taking full advantage of federal, state, and local funding streams and tax subsidies that provide financial supports to qualifying families and motivating the philanthropic and business communities to contribute as well.

Together, with these features, the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, and other stakeholders have an opportunity to build a more seamless ESAC system that meets the needs of the city’s children and families, and that optimizes public investments in its future human capital.

Appendix A. Parent ESAC Survey Instrument

This appendix shows the questions used for the parent ESAC survey instrument summarized in Chapter Five; this survey was administered by the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD.

Early Childhood and School-Aged Care in Santa Monica

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input will assist us in getting a better picture of families' needs for early childhood and school-age care in our community. Please complete only one survey for your family. This should not take more than ten minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please contact [name].

1. How many people live in your household that you consider family in each age group listed below (including yourself)?
 - a. Birth–4 years _____
 - b. 5–12 years _____
 - c. 13–17 years _____
 - d. Adults (18 years and older) _____

2. Do you have a child/children under 13 years of age?
 - Yes
 - No → Thank you for your time, please submit and exit the survey.

For the questions that follow, please answer with respect to your youngest child under 13 years.

3. How old is your youngest child?
Year _____
Month _____

4. Are you currently using any type of child care for your youngest child other than care by a parent (for example, in your home or a family child care provider's home, child care center, preschool, or a before- or after-school program)?
 - Yes → Skip to question 6
 - No

5. Why are you not currently using care for your youngest child (check all boxes that apply)?

- I don't need care
- I couldn't find a provider with a space for my child
- The available hours and location didn't fit my needs
- I couldn't find the quality of child care that I wanted
- I couldn't afford any child care
- Other reason: _____

Thank you for your time, please submit and exit the survey.

6. What types of care or programs are you currently using for your youngest child (check all boxes that apply)?

- Care by a relative (nonparent)
- Care by a nonrelative (such as nanny, neighbor)
- Licensed family child care home (licensed to care for children in the provider's home)
- Center-based care for children 5 and under (often referred to as a child care center or preschool that has full-day or part-time program hours)
- Child care or preschool program located at a public-school site
- Before- or after-school program for your child at your child's elementary or middle school (such as CREST, Teen Center, Sports or Homework Club)
- Community-based after-school program from City of Santa Monica (Police Activities League or PAL, Virginia Avenue Park)
- Other after-school program for children not at a school site (such as Boys & Girls Club or YMCA)
- Other care arrangement not listed, please specify: _____

7. Approximately how many hours does your youngest child currently spend in child care (care by relative, provider, child care center, preschool, nursery school, before- or after- school program) in a typical week?

- Not Applicable
- Under 10 hours
- 10 hours up to 15 hours
- 16 hours up to 20 hours
- 21 hours up to 25 hours
- 26 hours up to 30 hours
- 31 hours up to 35 hours
- 35 hours up to 40 hours
- 41 hours up to 45 hours
- 46 hours up to 50 hours
- 50 hours +

8. Parents select care arrangements for a number of reasons. Now, thinking about the program/care arrangement where your youngest child spends the most hours in a typical week, please identify how important each of the reasons listed below were when you chose your current care arrangement. Please check whether it was very important, somewhat important, not very important or not important at all to you. How important to you was....

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know or not applicable
a. Location of the arrangement	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Cost of the arrangement	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Reliability of the arrangement	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Learning activities of the arrangement	<input type="radio"/>				
e. Your child spending time with other children his or her age	<input type="radio"/>				
f. Time during the day or week that this program is able to provide care	<input type="radio"/>				
g. Education, training, or experience of the teachers	<input type="radio"/>				
h. Number of adults compared to the number of children	<input type="radio"/>				
i. Other reasons for selecting care: _____					

9. Do you feel there are good choices for child care programs for your youngest child near where you live?

Yes

No

Additional comments: _____

10. In the past 12 months, was there a time when you could not find care when you needed it for your youngest child for a week or longer?

Yes

No → Skip to Question 12

11. What are the reasons you were unable to find care for your youngest child? Please check all boxes that apply.

- I couldn't find a provider with a space
- The available hours and location didn't fit my needs
- I couldn't find the quality of child care that I wanted
- I couldn't afford the quality of care I wanted
- I couldn't afford my child care
- Other reason: _____

12. In the past 12 months, if you changed your care arrangement for your youngest child, which of the following reasons contributed to that change? Please check all boxes that apply.

- I have not changed programs within the past year
- Program closed or stopped providing care
- I or my child didn't like the program
- A more preferable option became available
- My schedule changed
- Schedule of program changed
- Child was asked to leave
- I wanted a more educational program
- Cost Eligibility for assistance changed
- Other: _____

13. Do you currently receive financial assistance/subsidy to pay for your youngest child's care arrangement?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

14. The list below identifies different places or persons that may help you pay for your youngest child's care arrangement. Please check as many as are applicable to you.

Not Applicable

Head Start

City of Santa Monica Financial Assistance Program

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Subsidy

Connections For Children

Scholarship or reduced fee from my child's school

Relative helps pay for care

Other (please specify)

Employer-Based Support

15. Do you have a tax-free spending account for child care with your employer (or your spouse's or partner's employer)?

Yes

No

I don't know

Prefer not to answer

16. Not counting a tax-free spending account for child care, does your employer (or your spouse's or partner's employer) help to pay for the cost of child care?

Yes

No

I don't know

Prefer not to answer

17. Do you claim a child care tax credit on your state or federal income taxes?

Yes, the Federal Income Tax Credit

Yes, the State Income Tax Credit

Yes, both Federal and State Income Tax Credit

I don't know

18. What is your approximate annual household income (before taxes)?

- Under \$15,000
- \$15,000 up to \$25,000
- \$25,000 up to \$50,000
- \$50,000 up to \$75,000
- \$75,000 up to \$100,000
- \$100,000 up to \$250,000
- Above \$250,000
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

19. In which ZIP code do you reside?

- 90401
- 90402
- 90403
- 90404
- 90405
- Other ZIP code: _____

20. Do you have any other comments or feedback you would like to provide about child care programs for your child or children in Santa Monica?

Thank you. We appreciate the time you spent completing this survey. Should you have any questions, please contact [name].

Appendix B. Parent Summer Program Survey Instrument

This appendix shows the questions used for the parent summer program survey administered by the City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD summarized in Chapter Five.

City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD 2012 Summer Program Parent Survey

1. Has your child participated in any nonschool summer programs this summer? These could be programs run by the City of Santa Monica (such as the Police Activities League), SMMUSD (CREST), or a private or nonprofit organization (for example, Boys & Girls Club or summer camp).

- No → *Thank you for your time—you do not need to complete the survey.*
 Yes → *What program(s)? Please write the name(s) of the program(s) below and continue to the remaining survey questions.*
-

2. During this summer, about how often have you worried about the safety or supervision of your child while in the nonschool summer program(s)?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Often

If you had concerns, what in particular made you worry?

3. During this summer, about how often has your child complained of being bored in their nonschool summer program(s)?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Often

4. Using any number from 0–10, where 0 is the worst possible program and 10 is the best possible program, what number would you use to rate your child’s summer program(s)?

Rating:

Why would you rate the program(s) this way? _____

5. Would you recommend your child’s summer program(s) to other families?

- Definitely not Probably not Probably yes Definitely yes

Why or why not? _____

Appendix C. Parent Focus Group Protocol

This appendix provides the protocol used for the parent focus groups summarized in Chapter Five. Section I of the protocol provides the consent language read to participants. Sections II and III list the questions, by topic area, that were used to guide the focus group sessions.

Protocol

Welcome and thank you for coming. I'm [FG leader] from the RAND Corporation and this is [FG support], also from RAND. I'll begin with some background on our research, the RAND Corporation, and your role as a participant in this focus group.

Consent

The City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD have asked the RAND Corporation to study the system of early child care and out-of-school care in the community. RAND is a nonprofit research organization based in Santa Monica. We are gathering information about programs and care options to help the city improve the system.

As part of this study, we are conducting focus groups with parents to discuss their experiences with individual programs, the child care system in Santa Monica as a whole, and to capture their thoughts on how care could be improved. These focus groups will provide critical information for our work. As a parent of [a young child/school-aged child], your perspective on the care your child receives and the choices you make regarding [early child care/out-of-school-time care] is important for us to understand.

You were selected through your participation or connection with the City of Santa Monica, SMMUSD, or one of their partner organizations. You may choose not to participate, decline to answer any question or stop participating at any time. We anticipate this discussion to last no more than ninety minutes, but you may leave whenever you need to.

City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD staff are no longer in the room with us. RAND will keep the information you provide during the focus group confidential. Your name will not be associated with anything you say in our notes or report and we will make every effort to make sure that any information you provide cannot be traced back to you. We will only share notes with other RAND staff. We ask that you all respect each other's anonymity and agree not to share what participants say today outside the group. That will allow everyone to feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts. Are you willing to do this?

RAND cannot guarantee that the information discussed in this session will be kept confidential by all focus group participants, so please keep that in mind as you answer and do not say anything you do not wish to be disclosed.

Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate? We would like to record the audio of this session to supplement our notes. We will keep the audio recording confidential and will destroy the recording as soon as the notes have been validated. We will begin recording after introductions. Do you agree to the audio recording?

If you have any questions about the study or focus groups, please contact [name].

Please write your first name on the cards provided on the table so that we can refer to you by name, which will make it easier to know who said what. I'd like each of you to begin with a brief introduction—please state your first name, your work status (full- or part-time), and the age of your child or children, as well as the programs they currently participate in [the care arrangements you use for them]. Let's start on this side of the table.

As a reminder, audio recording will begin now.

II. Program Choice and Perception

1. In general, what do you look for when selecting a program for your child?
 - a. Which of these program elements is most important to you? (Examples: staff-to-child ratio, activities, safety/supervision, characteristics of the other children who attend, location, timing, cost/availability of subsidy)
 - b. Is economic diversity among the children and families in the program a characteristic that you consider when selecting a program? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you typically visit a program in person before selecting it for your child? Do you visit more than one program? Why or why not?
 - d. What resources do you generally use to learn about programs available in the area prior to selecting a program for your child?
 - i. e.g., Internet, Connections for Children, teachers, administrators, friends and neighbors?
2. What is your opinion of the quality of programs available in the community for children your child's age? For children of a different age?
 - a. Think about [Boys & Girls Club, CREST, sports programs, private programs]. Are there any reasons you would not want your child to participate in any of these programs?
 - b. What other programs have you heard about?
 - c. Have you heard about any other issues in any of the programs in the community?

III. Current Program(s)

3. The next set of questions is about the program in which your child is currently enrolled. How long have you been using this program?
 - a. How did you find out about it?
 - b. Do you plan to continue using the program?
 - c. What do you like most about the program?
 - d. What do you dislike most about the program?
 - e. What other programs/care arrangements have you used in the past or do you use currently? (If use more than one program, ask, "why?")
 - f. Why did you leave the previous program/care arrangement?
4. How would you rate the program in terms of overall quality?
 - a. What makes you say that?
 - b. Have you ever complained about quality to a staff member? If so, how was your concern addressed?
 - c. What do you think would make the program better (e.g., changes in curriculum, activities, timing, location)?
 - d. Have you experienced problems with transportation to or from the program? If so, what were these problems and how could they be resolved?
5. Does your child enjoy his or her time in the program?
 - a. What does your child like best about the program?
 - b. Does he or she ever complain of being bored?
 - c. Has he or she had conflicts with other children or staff members in the program? Was this resolved? How?
6. Do the program's hours ever cause problems for you, given your work schedule or other commitments?
 - a. Are you aware of other programs that could fill the gap in care, such as wrap-around programs? Have you considered using these? Why or why not?
7. Have you experienced any gaps in care that current programs could not meet?
 - a. What are these gaps for you and your family?
 - b. How could these be addressed?
8. That's all the specific questions we have. Do you have any suggestions or ideas for how [early and/or out-of-school care] could be improved? This could be about your program experience or could be more general thoughts about care in Santa Monica.

For Parents Eligible for Subsidy or Scholarship

9. Do you ever have trouble paying for care for your child?
 - a. Did the availability of a subsidy or scholarship influence your choice of a program or care arrangement?
 - b. Did you have to reject programs that seemed like a good match for your child or for your care needs due to cost?
 - c. Did you discuss the availability of a subsidy or scholarship with a staff member while researching programs?
 - d. Did you discuss a payment arrangement with a program staff member when calling or visiting programs?

Optional [as Time Allows]:

10. Have you had any conflict or concerns regarding staff members or administrators of the program your child is currently attending?
 - a. If so, what was the conflict about/what was the concern?
 - b. Was the issue resolved? How?
11. Have you had any safety concerns regarding your child in the program?
 - a. If so, what were those concerns?
 - b. Did you discuss those concerns with a staff member? If so, how were they resolved?

Appendix D. Provider and Key Informant Interview Protocol

This appendix provides the protocol used for the key informant interviews summarized in Chapter Five. Section I of the protocol provides the consent language read to participants. Sections II through IV list the questions, by topic area, that were used to guide the semi-structured interviews. Depending on the background of the interviewee, different portions of the protocol were used.

Protocol

I. Consent

The City of Santa Monica and SMMUSD have asked the RAND Corporation to study the system of early child care and out-of-school care in the community. RAND is a nonprofit research organization based in Santa Monica. We are gathering information about the programs available, their cost and funding sources, and their general quality to help the city improve its system of care in terms of funding sustainability, quality, and programs offered.

As part of this study, we are interviewing community members like you involved in early- and out-of-school care to discuss the system and elicit their thoughts on how it could be improved. These interviews will provide critical information for our work, both in terms of system mapping and for developing recommendations.

We will not attribute your statements directly to you. However, in responding, please consider that people reading our final report may be able to link information you provided to your organization and possibly to you. If there is anything you would like to keep “off the record”, please let us know, and that information will not be included in our report or shared with the city or SMMUSD in any way.

We will not be asking about this, but if you mention an incident of child abuse, we may have to stop the interview and report it to the Principal Investigator of the study, who would then review the information and may have to report it to the proper authorities. If that is the case, we may not be able to keep your information private.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. We anticipate this discussion to last no more than one hour.

Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate? [optional if no note-taker present: We would also like to record the audio of this session. We would destroy the audio recording as soon as we are able to validate our notes. Do you agree to audio recording of this interview?]

If you have any questions about the study or this interview, please contact [name].

II. Background

1. Please briefly describe your background. How many years have you been involved with [early/out-of-school] care in Santa Monica? What positions have you held?
2. Please briefly describe the services your organization provides (if applicable).
 - a. What age group(s) does it serve?
 - b. What are your funding sources?
 - c. What is the supervising body/agency?
 - d. Approximately how many children does the program serve? Does this number change during summer? What are the eligibility requirements?

II. Program Details (if program provider/head of organization that provides services)

3. Does the program follow a curriculum or have lesson plans?
 - c. Who develops the curriculum/designs activities?
 - d. Are there any off-site activities?
4. Let's talk about the quality of your program. What do you do to ensure quality?
 - a. Do you track any indicators of quality or progress among your staff and children served? If so, what indicators do you track? How do you use this information?
5. Have you ever had complaints from parents about program quality? What were those complaints? What, if anything, did you do to address them?
6. Now, let's talk about staffing. Where do you find program staff?
 - a. What qualifications do you seek in staff members?
 - b. Is any type of credential required?
 - c. What ratio of staff/teachers to students in the classroom/group do you strive for?
7. Approximately what percentage of staff members remain with the program from year to year?
8. Approximately what percentage of children return to the program year after year?
9. What is the program's cost? Is the program financially sustainable?
 - a. Will you be affected by this year's budget cuts?
 - b. If so, what will you do to deal with the cuts?
10. How quickly does the program fill up when registration opens? What sort of marketing do you engage in? Do you have a waiting list?
11. Can children arrive late/leave early on the days that the program is operating? Do children need to be signed out when they leave?
12. About what percentage of participating children receive a subsidy (or scholarship)? What is the approximate income level of most families (low, middle, high, mixed)? Do you have subsidy or scholarship slots that are not being filled?
 - a. Do you feel that economic diversity in programs like yours is important?

- b. IF YES to a, have you talked with staff/board/others about how diversity might be increased in a program like yours?
 - c. IF YES to b, has your organization taken any steps to serve a more economically diverse population?
 - d. IF NO to c, what has gotten in the way? What might help your organization serve a more economically diverse group of families?
13. About what percentage of participating children are special needs/have an IEP?
- a. Are these children integrated into the larger program or do they have separate activities? Why?
14. Have you made any changes to the program recently? If so, what prompted these changes?

III. System View (all interviewees)

Now we're going to ask a few questions about how you view the early childhood and out-of-school-time care landscape as a whole in Santa Monica, including public and private programs.

15. Do you see the current care landscape as a system?
- a. If NO, do you see any advantages to having a system? What would those advantages be?
 - b. IF NO to 15, what do you think gets in the way of developing a system of care?
 - c. IF YES to 15, what do you think the goals are for [the current early care and out-of-school-time system]? [IF NO SYSTEM, ASK: What are the goals of most programs? Examples include high quality care for all kids, most parents able to work, least amount of driving to drop off/pick up kids, equal access to programs regardless of income/location, economic diversity in families served in each.]
 - i. What goals, if any, are missing? Which goals are unnecessary or interfere with [system/program] functioning?
 - ii. If you could choose just a few goals for [this system/most programs], what would you choose (e.g., increased quality, kindergarten readiness, parent options, low cost)?
 - iii. Are there times when certain goals interfere with [system/program] functioning (e.g., equality of access is given higher priority than maximizing funding, seeking diversity in children served leads to inconvenient locations for programs)?
16. Do you feel there are any gaps (such as some children not being served adequately, issues with timing of programs, or disparities in quality) in the current offerings of early and/or out-of-school care?
- a. What groups of children, if any, are not being served adequately?
17. Do you feel that there are any areas of the system where quality could be improved? Have you heard of any issues with quality in other programs?
18. What do you see as the strengths of the early care landscape in Santa Monica? The weaknesses?

19. What do you see as the strengths of the out-of-school care landscape in Santa Monica? The weaknesses?
20. As outsiders, the system seems pretty complex. Do you agree? Do you feel that complexity is a strength or a weakness of the system?
 - a. Why is the system so complex? What are the advantages of this complexity (e.g., more choices, diversity)? What are the disadvantages (e.g., confusion, inefficiency)?
 - b. Do you think that parents are able to navigate the system effectively?
 - c. If not, what might be done to help parents navigate the system more effectively?
 - d. What, if anything, might be done to simplify the system?
21. Do you have any suggestions or ideas for how early and/or out-of-school care could be improved? This could be specific to your program or could be more general thoughts about the Santa Monica system of early care and out of school care.

Appendix E. Methods for Collection of Provider Cost Data

This appendix provides additional detail regarding the methods for selecting providers and collecting data for the cost survey described in Chapter Seven. The data collection instrument is included, as well.

Sample Selection

We stratified a list of the providers in Santa Monica into FCCHs (both small and large), infant/toddler centers, preschool centers, and OST providers. Using Excel, we generated a list of random numbers and assigned a number to each provider. Selection proceeded as follows for each stratum:

- For FCCHs, we selected two small and two large providers, using the lowest random assigned numbers, then replaced these providers if necessary with others on the list to provide variation in whether they serve subsidy children. We selected one small and one large FCCH that did not accept subsidies and one each that did, for a total of four FCCHs.
- For infant/toddler centers, we sampled three providers, again selecting those with the lowest random numbers but within their sector (e.g., lowest for-profit, lowest nonprofit). We also wanted variation in accreditation and subsidy status and, where necessary, chose the next-lowest numbered provider to gain that variation in the sample—this gave a total of three selected infant/toddler centers.
- For centers serving preschool-age children, we also selected the lowest-numbered providers within their sector strata (public, nonprofit, and for-profit) and replaced the selection with the next-lowest random numbered provider for variation in accreditation, LAUP, Head Start, Title 5 funding, and subsidy status. We sampled five preschool centers.
- For OST, we selected four programs from our inventory list that provided variation in organizational structure, number of children served, and funding sources; this resulted in two public and two private providers selected for the sample. We did not use the random number method for OST, given the small number of providers and the differences between types of programs.

Data Collection

After selecting 16 sampled providers, we contacted these providers through phone or email. If contact was made through email, we sent a letter explaining the study and asking if they would

participate, accompanied by a letter of support from the City of Santa Monica. If contact was made by phone, we requested their email address to send the same materials. We were able to interview 14 providers. During the process, we were unable to contact three sampled providers. Four refused to participate and three were no longer providing services to children in Santa Monica.

For those who agreed to participate, we scheduled a 1.5-hour window of time in which a project team member visited the provider at their place of business and conducted the interview. We suggested to providers through email or by phone upon scheduling the appointment that they have certain documents on hand to ensure the interview would take as little of their time as possible:

- General information on revenues (including fees paid, donations, government/subsidy payments) and expenses for the previous fiscal year
- Staff and payroll information (total salaries and total cost of benefits, don't need details on individuals)
- Current enrollment (number of children in each age group and/or classroom) and tuition/fees information
- Current waiting list (if applicable); numbers by age groups
- Licensing (including square footage)
- Current calendar of program year with days off

We emphasized throughout the process that we did not need to see or take copies of any documentation, but that having the information on hand would take less time. We also reminded participants that we would not be sharing any of this information, including the list of sampled providers, with anyone other than the research team. The location of the interview was left to the convenience of the provider and all chose to have the interview conducted at their place of business. The interviews varied in length from one hour to an hour and a half. After completing the interviews, we entered the data and followed up on any remaining questions through email.

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The landscape of early learning and out-of-school-time programs in the City of Santa Monica is complex, with numerous providers and funding streams. This complexity reflects its evolution in response to changes in federal, state, and local priorities and initiatives. Future shifts in funding levels, program auspices, and other features are likely. In July 2012, the City of Santa Monica Human Services Division and the Santa Monica–Malibu Unified School District contracted with the RAND Corporation to conduct an assessment of child care programs in Santa Monica. The study was motivated in part by the perception of some stakeholders that the system of care had become fragmented and complex. Additional motivations were the uncertainty of resource streams stemming from recent and anticipated state and federal budget cuts and a desire to ensure youth well-being in the community. The project sought to assess how well Santa Monica’s child care programs meet the needs of families, including child care and early education programs serving children from birth to kindergarten entry, as well as care for school-aged children (focusing on kindergarten through eighth grade) in the hours before and after school and in the summer. Overall, recommendations for improvement focused on advancing access, quality, service delivery, and financial sustainability.



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