AB 176 CHILD CARE CENTER WORK GROUP
Meeting Minutes – Friday, October 10, 2025

Work Group Leadership
Crystal Sujeski, CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal, CDA-DC, Chair
Lya Johnson, DSS – CCL, Licensing Program Manager III, Co-Chair

CAL FIRE – OSFM Support
Jena Garcia, OSFM-CDA Supv. (Absent)

** Attendance is recorded. Attendance Log is available upon request.*

1. CALL TO ORDER 8:30 AM

A. Welcome/Introductions **Crystal Sujeski/Lya Johnson**
   i. Purpose of the Work Group:
      1. Formed under Assembly Bill (AB) 176 to advise the Office of the State Fire Marshal on code change proposals and regulation development for the California Building Standards Code.
      2. The meeting is focused exclusively on child care centers.
      3. Family child care homes are not within the scope of this discussion.
      4. Questions and concerns related to child care centers should be held until the roundtable/public comment period at the end of the meeting in order to keep the meeting moving efficiently.
   ii. Agenda/Minutes Reviewed **Crystal Sujeski**
      1. Today we are reviewing drafted code proposals for the intervening code cycle.
      2. Reviewed - How to access and subscribe for OSFM Work Group notifications and emails.
         a. Workgroups | OSFM
         b. Subscribe to Newsletter | OSFM

2. OLD BUSINESS – Sujeski/Johnson

A. Timeline – Update
   i. Work Group will be on an hiatus until Jan. 9, 2026
   ii. Proposals will be posted on the Work Group webpage
B. Sub-Work Group – Final Draft Proposals
   i. Definitions- Cortney Nelson
      1. Item 1 proposes to update the “Child Care Center” definition to align with the preferred terminology of a child care home.
      2. Item 2 proposes changing “Family Day Care Home” to a “Family Child Care Home” to align with the preferred terminology of a child care home.
      3. Item 3 proposes changing “Large Family Day Care Home” to a “Large Family Child Care Home” and then just cleaning up a little bit of the definition for this one. It did say that this was for anywhere from 9 to 14

persons. Cleanup editing it to be up to 12 or 14 children for a large Child care home.

4. Item 4 proposes adjusting it to a small family child care home and also some minor changes to make sure that it's the same as where we're saying a provider's own home. Which is how the large family child care home definition was as well.
    a. Comments:
        i. Tony Jordan-Should we be listing 14 or fewer and if the sub group has any input? Recommends keeping it simple.
            1) Courtney Nelson- saying 6 to 8 for small or 14 or less for large, either way is good.
            2) Crystal Sujeski – We will use this comment to cleanup the language with the sub-group.
5. Item 5 proposes simplifying the definition of infants. We removed the beginning of the original definition, which indicated whether or not the child could evacuate the building, and then also changed the definition slightly to say what an infant is rather than what. An infant is not, so it would just be a child under two years of age, which is also the same definition we have for Title 22.
    a. Comments: None
    b. Work Group Poll –
6. Item 6 proposes aligning our changes with separating daycare and childcare. So, for places of public accommodation, just specifying that daycare would be an adult daycare center versus a child care center as places of public accommodation for congruency across all of the definitions.
    a. Comments: None
7. Work Group Poll –
        i. Item 1, 2, 6 Consensus “Agree/In support”
            Disagree- 0
            Needs further study – 3
            Agree– 36
        ii. Item 3 Consensus “Agree/In support”
            Disagree- 7
            Needs further study – 5
            Agree– 32
        iii. Item 4 Consensus “Agree/In support”
            Disagree- 5
            Needs further study – 11
            Agree– 31
        iv. Item 5 Consensus “Agree/In support”
            Disagree- 3
            Needs further study – 7
            Agree– 43
8. General Comment:
    a. La Wanda Wesley – Inquired if Carolyn Wertheim could confirm and verify the alignment of the infant definition.
        i. Carolyn Wertheim-Yes. Discussion in the sub-group was that this is the current definition for infants.

b. Timothy Omalley-CBSC-The infant definition needs to be coordinated with OSHPD, as they too have an infant definition. Also, it has additional definition materials that may be useful and will be sent. And recommends verifying defined terms referenced in Section 455. Further, making sure the definitions are coordinated with the state laws and Title 22 definitions for conflict.
c. Kevin Reinertson-Concern with voting since people are leaving their hands up.
    i. Crystal Sujeski-Clarified that this is a straw man poll and there has not been an overwhelming shift in approval/disapproval/further study up to this point.
d. Michele Tyler-Concern that the definition should match what's in Title 22 to reduce confusion.
e. Carolyn Wertheim-There was an extension amount of conversation in the sub-group and we need to start somewhere. As a provider it's important to have a voice.

ii. Occupancy Classifications – Melanee Cottrill
1. Item 1 Proposes 305.2 revisions to relocated exception language into the main body text and add clarifying language to the exception. And change from five to six for 305.2.2 & 305.2.3. Proposed 308.5 revisions to coordinate with 305.2.
    a. Comments: None
    b. Work Group Poll –
        i. Item 1 Consensus "Agree/In support"
            Disagree- 3
            Needs further study – 5
            Agree– 25
2. Item 2 Proposes 308.5 revisions to coordinate with 305.2 and further address inconsistencies regarding buildings and structures, update outdated language, and broaden the terms so that ongoing updates wouldn't be necessary with future code changes. Additionally, there was a focus on aligning the code with what fire marshals can actually enforce, as concerns were raised about their responsibilities regarding licensing.
    a. Comments: None
    b. Work Group Poll –
        i. Item 2 Consensus "Agree/In support"
            Disagree- 5
            Needs further study – 10
            Agree– 31
3. General Comment:
    a. Rebecca Grasty recommended adding a definition or age range for "infants" and "toddlers," since these terms are not consistently defined across systems. She also suggested removing the word "day" from "child day care" to align with existing licensing terminology, which uses "child care center."
    b. Mike Baisdon – Asked clarifying question on existing language.

c. Cortney Nelson – Recommends using “persons” whether than “clients”.
d. Tony Jordan – Are these documents available to review and will the be another opportunity for additional feedback?
    i. Crystal Sujeski – Yes. They will be updated to comply with ADA and posted to the Work Group webpage. If the State Fire Marshal approves them, they will be submitted to the California Building Standards Commission on December 1st for the intervening rulemaking activities. The next opportunity for public comment will be Feb. 18th and 19th at the Building Standards Commission-Building, Fire, and Other (BFO) Code Advisory meeting.

iii. Chapter 4- Special Detailed Requirements Based on Occupancy and Use – Patricia Rock
    1. Item 1 proposal removes the State Fire Marshal’s amendment to Section 436.1.1 to align with the 2019 California Building Code. This change eliminates the requirement for all first-floor Group I-4 rooms to have direct exterior egress, which has created design, construction, and financial challenges for existing facilities and care providers. She noted that while certain child care facilities can be reclassified as Group E with less stringent requirements, adult day care centers cannot, resulting in inequitable impacts. The revision maintains fire safety standards while offering more flexibility and cost-effective compliance for both child and adult day care facilities.
    a. Comments:
        i. Rebecca Grasty – Agree with the proposal, a direct door to the outside incurs more safety concerns for child care programs than it would solve.
            1) Elisa Felix-Supports comment.
        ii. NG – Agree but will there be a grace period for compliance.
            1) Crystal Sujeski – This proposal is codes applicable for permitting after July 1st, 2027.
        iii. Brandy-Seeds Montessori-Agrees with the removal of the direct exit requirement.
        iv. Tony Jordan-In agreement with the proposal, especially to align with Title 22 Section 101438.3, clarifying indoor activity spaces and group size separations.
            1) Elisa Felix-Supports comment.
    b. Work Group Poll –
        i. Item 1 Consensus “Agree/In support”
            Disagree- 2
            Needs further study – 3
            Agree– 31

iv. Mitigating Factors - Michael Duarte (Courtney Nelson presented)
    1. Item 1 proposed to adds an alternate means of protection and appeals subsections 1.11.2.4.1 and 1.11.2.5.1 specifically for child care facilities.

2. Item 2 proposes to add an inspection subsection and coordinate section 110.3., adding 110.3.10 Child care center inspections and renumbering 110.3.11-13
3. Item 3 proposes to add an exception to 903.2.3 where installation of fire sprinklers is not feasible.
4. Item 4 proposes to add an exception to 903.2.6 where installation of fire sprinklers is not feasible.
5. General Comments:
    a. Brandy -Seeds Montessori-Is this proposal trying to improve the 850-fire clearance process.
        i. Crystal Sujeski-The proposal's purpose and rationale suggests the proposal is being made to encourage a more proactive approach to the fire clearance inspection processes.
6. Work Group Poll –
    i. Item 1-4 Consensus “Needs further study”
        Disagree- 7
        Needs further study – 22
        Agree–17

3. NEW BUSINESS **Crystal Sujeski**

A. None

4. ROUNDTABLE/PUBLIC COMMENT **Crystal Sujeski**

A. LaWanda Wesley- 850 Fire Clearance issues
    i. Autumn Brook – Encourages contacting your local.

***For those who submitted questions in the chat, please submit them to our general inbox for a response.**

4. UPCOMING MEETING DATE FOR 2026 **Crystal Sujeski**

A. The second Friday of each month starts at 8:30 AM and ends at 10 AM.
    i. Next Meeting – January 10, 8:30-10 AM

5. MEETING ADJOURNED 10:30 AM **Crystal Sujeski**

If you would like to watch the recording of this meeting, please visit the link below: