
AB 176 CHILD CARE CENTER WORK GROUP

Meeting Minutes – January 9th, 2026

Posted – January 20, 2026



Contacts:

Chair - Crystal Sujeski, CDA-Div Chief, (510) 846-1276, crystal.sujeski@fire.ca.gov

Co-Chair – Lya Johnson, DSS-CCL, (951) 295-0398, lya.johnson@dss.ca.gov

Support – Becca Mansergh, OSFM-CDA-SSA, becca.mansergh@fire.ca.gov

I. CALL TO ORDER at 8:33 AM

- A. Welcome/Introductions – Crystal Sujeski and Lya Johnson
 1. Crystal Sujeski shows how to [subscribe](#) to OSFM CDA work group emails (choose Code Development and Analysis – Title 24 Rulemaking Updates)
 2. Crystal Sujeski reads out the [Child Care Center Charter](#)
 3. Lya Johnson adds that the purpose of these meetings is not to answer questions about specific facilities, interactions, or fire code inspections.
- B. Agenda/Minutes Review – Crystal Sujeski

II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Timeline – Intervening Rulemaking Status

1. Crystal Sujeski shows where to find Part 2 on the [Building Standards Commission](#) website. It can be found under the 2025 Triennial Edition at Part 2 – California Building Code, that link goes to the International Code Council (ICC) code. In the ICC code: red is a California amendment, green is an emergency regulation, and black is model code. In the case of this work group, child care facilities are defined as Group E, this definition can be found at Chapter 3 (Occupancy Classification), Section 305 (Educational Group E), 305.2 child-care facilities.
 2. Crystal Sujeski then shows the [timeline](#) for the package. The Child Care center work group submitted proposals through the internal executive approval process, and what gets moved forward is at the discretion of Chief Berlant. After the approval from the State Fire Marshal, the package was submitted to CBSC and are currently being put through ADA and Administrative Procedures Act (APA) compliance. The official documents will be posted on the [Building Standards Commission](#) website under the (Building, Fire, and Other) BFO February 17-18, 2026 meeting. Once the proposals are submitted, the process moves to the Code Advisory Committee (CAC), the agenda for the BFO meeting will be posted 15 days before at which point all the proposals will be posted and the members will make their recommendations. State agencies will then take those recommendations and respond, then the 45 day public comment period will begin where stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the proposals and recommendations. After this process, the approved proposals will be published January 1, 2027 and goes into effect 180 days later.
 3. Once model code for the 2027 triennial code is published, then this work group will work on proposals for that code.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. No new business

IV. ROUNDTABLE

- A. Sonia Campos asks who members can talk to regarding timelines of implementing the new code. Lya Johnson recommends reaching out to your licensing program analyst as they can facilitate conversations with local inspectors. She also mentions that if it's related to an application, there are centralized Application Bureau analysts and if it's not an application, then there are regular analysts. She also mentions that members can reach out to [childcare advocates](#) for support as well.
- B. Kari Roberts asks if there are any child care providers on CAC, Melanee Cottrill and Crystal Sujeski both confirm there are no child acre providers on CAC. The list of committee members can be found on the [CBSC](#) website under the BFO committee. Crystal Sujeski states that the committee is made up of a fire official, a local building official, a fire protection engineer, someone in the construction industry, someone in the commercial building industry, an architect, a disability advocate, and a public member. The public member could be anyone, including someone who works in child care, and is the advocate for public interests. Timothy O'Malley confirms this and adds that the ex-officio members are subject matter experts. He also states that anyone can apply for the public member spot when the spot opens every three years. Crystal Sujeski says that CBSC will open a call for applications, which includes sending out information via [email](#) and information bulletin.
- C. Jenna Borkoski asks for clarification regarding the Group E automatic sprinkler system requirements in sections 903.2.3 and exceptions proposed in the coming cycle. Crystal Sujeski says the status of that proposal can't be discussed until it is officially posted on CBSC's website. As previously mentioned, that posting will happen before the CAC meeting in February. Crystal Sujeski then mentions postponing this child care work group meeting until March, after proposals are officially posted and reminds everyone that model code will be published late April at which point sub-groups can start again. Timothy O'Malley asks if there is anything national that will make a difference in the meantime, Crystal Sujeski answers that she doesn't know off the top of her head, but she thinks that some proposals touched on Group E occupancy. Eric Driever confirms that documents won't be released until later, something that is happening across all agencies. The proposals are created by work groups in the precycle activities and BCSC makes these documents accessible and corrects minor grammatical errors, which is why there is a gap between when proposals are submitted and when they are published. BCSC becomes the primary document controller and are the designated agency that controls the rulemaking process for Title 24, so they control when documents are officially posted.
- D. Melanee Cottrill mentions several substantive questions present in the chat regarding changes to the code, confirming that Crystal Sujeski can't answer those questions at this point in the process, and asks how members can make comments. She knows that members can go to the committee meeting and submit comments and that there is an opportunity for written comments, but other than those public meetings, what is the process? Crystal Sujeski states that is what the sub-groups will be working on after the work group hears the final proposals at the CAC meeting February 17th. Crystal Sujeski then clarifies that the proposals worked on by the work group last year haven't been approved, so they are currently ineffective. Melanee confirms this, asking if future work

group meetings will be making subsequent recommendations, or in some way influencing the process with CBSC. Crystal Sujeski states that will happen during the 45-day public comment period and that there is a public comment time during the CAC agenda as well. Crystal Sujeski expands on the 45-day public comment period, specifying that this period happens after CBSC have made their recommendations and the proposals are sent back to state agencies to respond.

- E. Lya Johnson states that a previous comment about the new codes going into effect January 1st may be causing anxiety among members and states that [AB176](#) rolled back the codes to the 2019 codes, so that is the change that is reflected in the 2025 codes. Crstal Sujeski confirms this, adding that the 2025 codes reflect AB176, which reverted the definition of a class E occupancy back to the 2019 definition.
- F. Nam De Silva asks if the work group will get a preview of the proposal presented at the CAC meeting. Crystal Sujeski says that the proposals will be posted to the CBSC website under the February 17th BFO meeting at least 15 days before. Timothy O'Malley mentions the CBSC subscription again. Nam De Silva asks if there is a specific subscription regarding proposals or if they must sign up for everything. Timothy O'Malley says that you can check boxes for what emails members want to receive, in this case choose "all CBSC communications except BSASRF". Crystal Sujeski states that anyone subscribed to the OSFM CDA – Title 24 rulemaking updates email list will also receive this information once posted.
- G. Kari Roberts wants confirmation that the 2019 codes are in effect, including the infant population going down to 5 children. Crystal Sujeski reads out the [code](#), changes are in red:
- H. 305.2 Group E, child-care facilities.
 - 1. This group includes buildings and structures or portions thereof occupied by more than six children *36 months* of age *and older* who receive educational, supervision or personal care services for fewer than 24 hours per day.
 - i. **Exception: [SFM]** A child-care facility not otherwise classified a Group R-3 occupancy, where occupants are not capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from the staff shall be classified as Group I-4. **Infants** and toddlers are allowed in a Group E child care **when the facility complies with California Building Code Section 305.2.1, 305.2.2, 305.2.3 or 308.5.1.**
- I. Kari Roberts confirms that this is the old code. Eric Driever corrects the previous statement that the 2019 codes are in effect, clarifying that technically the 2019 codes are not in effect, the 2025 codes are in effect and the 2025 codes were updated with language that was previously in the 2019 codes. Crystal Sujkeski says that there is an [information bulletin](#) about the bill and how it effects child care centers occupancy and use.
- J. Robert Capps asks about ambiguity in building codes regarding age, citing that at separate points under 2 years, 2 years and 9 months, and over 2 years are all mentioned, and if this issue will be addressed in the next code update? Crystal Sujeski says that this was part of the previous work group and is in the process of approval. She then mentions that if members want a formalized code interpretation there is a [code interpretation form](#) and [instructions](#) on how to submit a formal request to the code interpretation committee. Robert Capps mentions that in certain cases members had to point out the exceptions to local code inspectors as they weren't familiar with the changes. Lya Johnson says that the information bulletin comes from the Office of the

State Fire Marshal and members are encouraged to share this information to local code inspectors to spread communication about the changes as it applies statewide and the information may not have fully trickled down yet. Crystal Sujeski mentions that part of AB176 is to provide training and that training is in the works, it will likely end up as a webinar series.

- K. Lya Johnson mentions that there are several questions in the chat related to fire sprinklers. Crystal Sujeski says that fire sprinklers provide property protection if they're the full system and are a life safety issue. They provide extra time and currently systems are more focused on the area where there is a fire so that there isn't a large loss to someone's business or home. She mentions that sprinklers have been used as a replacement for rated corridors and when someone wants to build a larger building with more travel distance. Part of the discussions from last year included that child care centers cover a vulnerable population who are reliant on staff to evacuate and attempted to find the balance between that and the need for reuse.
- L. Crystal Sujeski then confirms that the next child care work group meeting will be in March. There are no objections.
- M. Sylvia Aguilar asks if there are mentors that can help with inspections. Crystal Sujeski says to work with a childcare advocate and engage early with the local fire official who can guide members through the process of submitting plans and what timelines look like.
- N. Several members ask if there will be a meeting like this one for child care home providers and if there are resources for child care home providers. Lya Johnsons answers that members should speak with a childcare advocate and that she is not aware of any meetings like this happening for family child care.
- O. Karen Pinedo asks about monitoring systems for smaller child care centers. Crystal Sujeski says that the fire system does need to be monitored, no matter how many people you have. There are standardized installation guidelines in [NFPA 72](#) (view free access, make an account) and members can reach out to a fire alarm designer or contract company and they can educate better about their specific service. The requirements for monitoring can be found in Chapter 9 of both the building and fire code.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. None

VI. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2026

- A. Postponed in roundtable discussion, meets the second Friday of the month
- B. Next Meeting: March 13, 2026

VII. MEETING ADJOURNMENT AT 9:47 AM

If you would like to watch the recording of this meeting, please visit the link below:
<https://youtu.be/JHeFJOGogh8>