

Roundtable Rooms

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

3:25 pm – 4:40 pm

CWLA reserves the right to change roundtable descriptions and presenters without notice.

Navigating the Insurance Crisis: Protecting Access to Care for Children and Youth

California's children and youth-serving organizations are facing a mounting insurance crisis that threatens the stability of critical services. Rising liability costs and limited coverage options are leaving many providers unable to secure affordable insurance, which is causing these organizations to close their doors. In this roundtable, we will provide an overview of the current insurance landscape, outline who is most affected, and discuss how this instability risks limiting placement options and access to care for children and youth. The conversation will also explore potential solutions and policy strategies to balance accountability and consumer protection with the urgent need to maintain a viable provider network that can safely and effectively serve children and families. Participants will share their experiences with the insurance crisis, and the solutions they are exploring.

Facilitators: Elizabeth Oseguera, California Alliance of Child and Family Services; Andrea Durbin, Illinois Collaboration on Youth; Lisette Burton, Association of Children's Residential & Community Services

Optimizing Care: A Roundtable on a Service Paradigm to Support Children with Complex Behavioral Support Needs

This roundtable discusses a newly published service framework for treating children with complex behavioral health needs. Grounded in neuroscience, trauma-informed care, and family-centered practice, this paradigm offers a comprehensive approach to serving one of the most vulnerable populations in our service systems. The discussion will explore the unique characteristics and needs of these children; how the framework translates into practice across service settings; evidence-based treatment and support modalities; and system-level implications for coordination and financing.

Facilitators: Nancy Thaler & Stacy Nonnemacher, National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

Residential Treatment: Risks, Benefits and Alternatives

This roundtable will explore the benefits and risks of residential treatment, alongside community-based approaches that may be equally or more effective for youth currently served in residential care. Participants will consider whether existing residential providers could adapt their models—offering similar levels of intensity and frequency of intervention in community-based settings—so youth can remain connected to their families and communities. This session will be guided by participant priorities and experience. Attendees will be encouraged to share perspectives on barriers to shifting toward intensive community-based systems of care, emerging practices, and promising alternatives. The discussion will emphasize practical considerations, real-world

challenges, and innovative pathways for improving outcomes while potentially reducing reliance on residential placement.

Facilitators: Martin Irwin, NYU Grossman School of Medicine; Alan Vietze, CWLA Senior Fellow

Trauma Informed Training for the Frontline

This interactive roundtable will focus on strengthening the child welfare workforce through trauma-informed simulation training and evidence-informed decision-making tools. Drawing on CWLA best practices for simulation training and the *CWLA Standards of Excellence*, participants will explore how simulation can support workforce competency and readiness. The discussion will center on common challenges in training frontline staff, developing and sustaining workforce development programs, and building capacity over time, with a particular focus on how simulation-based approaches can help address these barriers. Participants will also examine the role of pre-service training that begins in undergraduate programs as a strategy for improving practice and strengthening the workforce pipeline. Facilitators will share insights from their extensive experience training frontline professionals and from their work as authors of CWLA's forthcoming *Best Practice Guidelines for Simulation Training in Child Welfare* (working title).

Facilitators: Amy Wheeler, Founder and Experiential Learning Specialist, Mountain Heart Learning, LLC; Betsy Goulet, CWLA Senior Fellow

A Home for Every Child: Using Change as a Catalyst for Better Child Outcomes

This interactive session will invite state child welfare leaders into a thoughtful, forward-looking conversation about how to make the most of recent federal guidance as a catalyst for real improvement. Together, participants will explore the kinds of questions experienced leaders naturally ask when long-standing processes evolve—examining opportunities to rethink strategy, measurement, and collaboration in ways that better support children and families. Through shared reflection and peer exchange, the session will surface practical insights, promising approaches, and lessons learned across states, with a focus on using this moment to strengthen outcomes, not just compliance. Attendees will leave with new perspectives, sharper questions, and ideas they can adapt within their own systems.

Facilitator: Molly Tierney, Accenture

Breaking the Bottleneck: Practical Approaches to Reduce FFPSA Implementation Burdens on States

This roundtable will tackle the fundamental challenge hindering Family First implementation—the gap between federal policy expectations and states' capacity to fulfill them. While funding and guidelines exist, many jurisdictions struggle to independently develop the necessary infrastructure to qualify for funding. Using Minnesota's experience with Motivational Interviewing implementation as one example, this conversation will explore practical solutions that can be adapted across diverse systems. Discussion will explore innovative approaches to evidence-based practice training, technology solutions for fidelity monitoring, state-local collaboration models, and lessons from early adopters. Participants will share implementation challenges and creative workarounds, with focus on solutions that leverage existing resources

rather than building entirely new systems—helping all participants discover actionable strategies to move from policy to practice.

Facilitators: Emily Smith Goering, Lyssn; Amber Forrester & Michelle Ndely; Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Making Medicaid Matter in Child Welfare

Child welfare and Medicaid were not designed to work seamlessly together, yet today's realities demand closer alignment. Rising behavioral health needs, placement instability, and an overstretched provider workforce are exposing gaps between these systems—especially for children and families with complex needs. This interactive roundtable will explore how Medicaid can move beyond a parallel system to become a more effective partner in prevention and in stabilizing outcomes for children involved with child welfare. Participants will discuss how Medicaid policy, managed care structures, specialty health plans, and financing strategies can be leveraged to support trauma-informed care, behavioral health access, and community-based services. Grounded in real-world experience, the conversation will highlight emerging policy shifts, waiver opportunities, and practical approaches states can act on now. By engaging in dialogue together, we can bring together diverse perspectives to surface actionable ideas participants can apply in their own systems.

Facilitator: Katie Olse, Sellers Dorsey

Rural Realities: Implementing FFPSA Beyond Urban Systems

Rural communities face persistent challenges in implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices under FFPSA. Limited workforce capacity, long travel distances, and staff turnover can make it difficult to sustain evidence-based practices and maintain model fidelity over time. Even when services exist, referral pathways, candidacy decisions, and billing structures may unintentionally limit access. This roundtable will invite participants to share how rural realities are shaping FFPSA implementation across states. Participants will discuss what is working, where implementation has stalled, and how collaboration can be strengthened in low-capacity environments. CWLA will use themes and insights from this discussion to inform recommendations to the Administration, helping ensure rural needs are meaningfully reflected in future policy and guidance.

Facilitators: CWLA Rural Committee

Learning from Our Experiences

This roundtable by Leaders United for Change will be grounded in a new CWLA-aligned book project featuring case studies from leaders of color across the child welfare, behavioral health, and youth justice fields. Centering themes such as navigating white emotionality, supporting the mental health and resilience of men of color, and advancing Black feminist leadership and transformation, authors and editors will share resonant incidents, challenges, and pivotal moments that have shaped their leadership journeys.

This session will intentionally blend brief provocations from contributors with guided small-group dialogue, reflective prompts, and accessible mindfulness practices designed to support emotional safety and shared learning. Participants will leave with concrete strategies for leading with equity, courage, and care, along with tools for cultivating inclusive organizational cultures that honor lived experience and collective resilience.

Facilitators: Donte Abram, Promise Rose Residential Care Home; Latesha Fussell, UMass Boston

Rest & Recharge: A Conference Relaxation Space

This roundtable room will serve as a relaxation space for conference attendees to pause, unwind, and recharge. Designed as an alternative to a traditional roundtable, the space will emphasize mindfulness and rejuvenation in a calm environment. Attendees will be invited to step away from the pace of the conference and engage in low-pressure, restorative activities such as coloring and other sensory-based creative practices. A curated playlist will provide gentle background music to support relaxation and reflection. Located near the Leaders United for Change *Learning from Our Experiences* roundtable, this area is intended to foster moments of grounding, creativity, and informal connection. All materials are provided, and participants are welcome to come and go as needed throughout the session.

Facilitators: Hosted by the CWLA Member Equity Committee