



The Emergency Child Care Bridge Program

What it is, how it works, why it matters

Logistics

- Webinars will be recorded and archived at <http://kids-alliance.org/webinars/>
- All attendees will be on mute – type any questions you have into the chat box or if you experience technical difficulties email Shanti Ezrine at s.ezrine@kids-alliance.org
- A certificate of participation will be posted online after the webinar at <http://kids-alliance.org/webinars/>
- We will be answering your questions – please submit questions using the “chat” function on your GotoWebinar dashboard

Today's Speakers

- Angie Schwartz, Policy Director, Alliance for Children's Rights
- Donna Sneeringer, Director of Government Relations, Child Care Resource Center
- Jeremey Heebner, California Department of Social Services
- Diana Boyer, County Welfare Directors Association

THE ISSUES:

- 1. Child care is expensive*
- 2. Child care can be hard to find*
- 3. Caregivers waiting to be approved currently receive few financial supports*



Child care in California is expensive

2012 Average Annual Cost of Full-Time Care for an infant



Child care in California is expensive

- Take someone:
 - Making \$15 an hour,
 - Who works 40 hours a week and takes two weeks of vacation.
- That person would earn \$30,000 a year.
- To afford average full-time infant care in California, that person would give up 40% of their income.
- To afford that care in Los Angeles, they'd give up 48% of their income.
- If they took no vacation, never called in sick, and worked every week of the year, that child care would still take 46% of their income.



And caregivers face other budget constraints

- 54% of renting households in California pay more than a third of their income in rent.
- Among low-income renting households, 81% pay more than a third of their income in rent. 51% pay more than half of their income in rent.
- Households in the Los Angeles metro area spent an average of 15% of their income on transportation, and another 13% on food. Those shares are often higher for low-income families.

Figure 1.20
Percentage of California's Renters Experiencing Rent Burden
by Income Category



Caregivers face budget constraints, con't

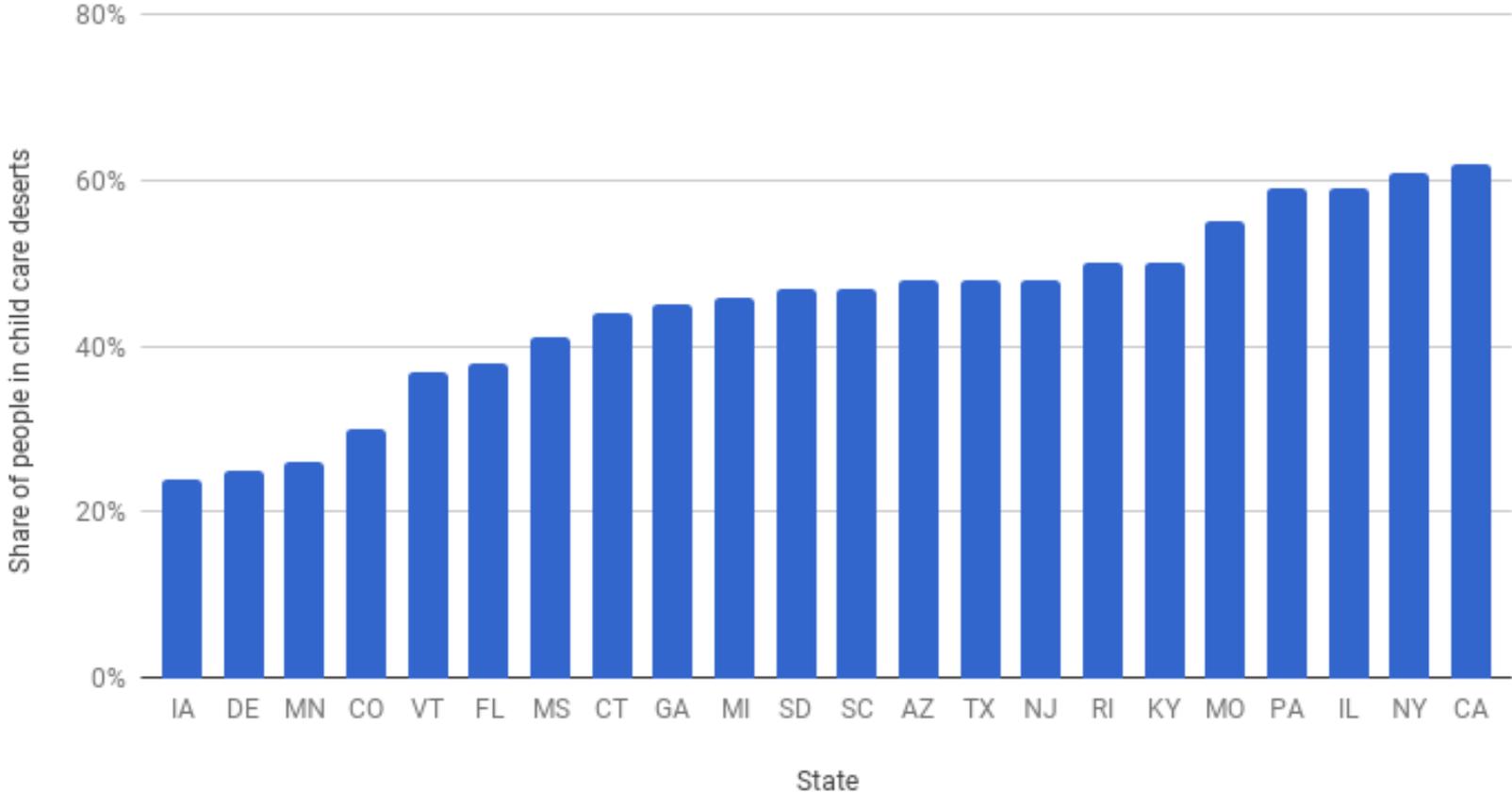
All of this makes it hard for caregivers to afford child care. That, in turn, makes it hard for them to work, look for jobs, or attend school.

This is especially difficult for California's many lower-income caregivers:

- Nationally, 53% of households with foster children had incomes below \$50,000 a year; that was only true of 43% families in general.
- Foster households were 10 percentage points more likely to be rent burdened (spending more than 30% of their income in rent).

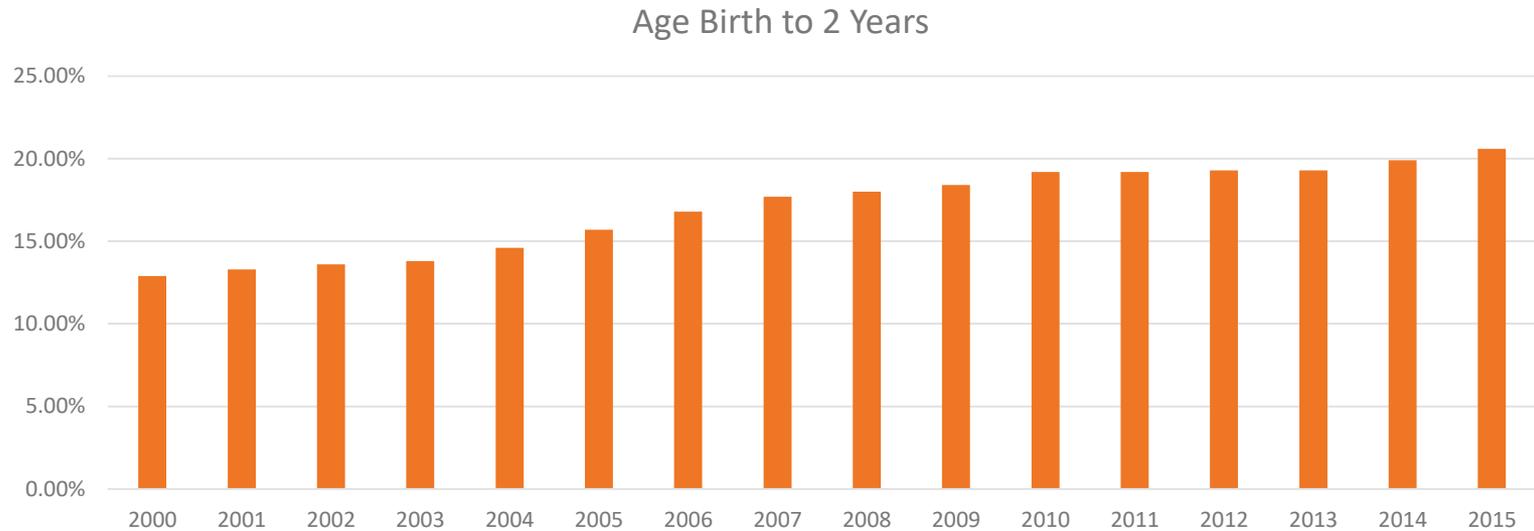
Child care can be hard to find

Share of people in child care deserts



Changing Foster Child Population

Although California's foster care population has decreased over the past 15 years, **the proportion of very young foster children—those between the ages of 0 and 2—has been steadily increasing.** Finding for placements for these young children is challenging due to their need for child care.

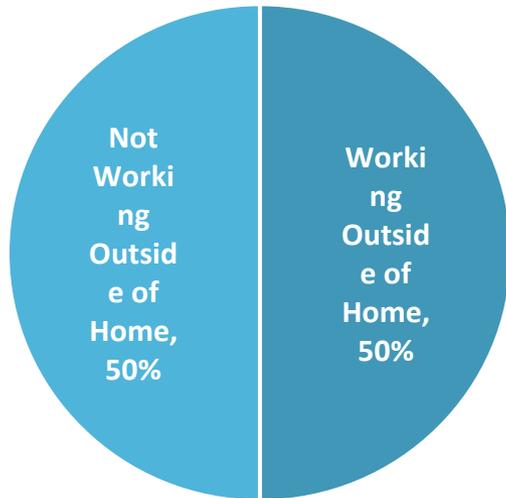


Changing Foster Parent Characteristics

Due to a shifting economy that requires more parents to work outside the home, the ability to **recruit and retain** foster parents is becoming more challenging. Compared to the average American parent, foster parents tend to be **older**, **possess fewer financial and educational resources**, and live in homes with **more children**. Foster parents are:

- Typically over age 40
- Most often married, although single foster parenting is on the rise
- Less likely to be college educated
- **Working outside the home** (approximately 50%)

“A high rate of employment among the pool of potential foster parents necessitates access to quality child care.”



Support to Caregivers upon Initial Placement is Critical

- Foster parents, particularly relative caregivers, often take in children with little advance notice or planning.
- High cost of living in California means caregivers are likely working outside of the home.
- While foster children are often eligible for California's subsidized child care system, it can take months to get into those programs, and navigating those programs can be overwhelming to foster caregivers.
- Without immediate access to child care, resource families are often reluctant to take in foster children.

The current foster care rates do not support the costs of child care

- Relative caregivers with emergency placements can obtain a CalWORKs child-only grant, until they are approved. Some counties like LA patch with an additional \$400 stipend to get to the regular foster care rate.
- Current foster care rates were never intended to cover child care costs, even though federal Title IV-E does include the costs of child care in its “board and care” definition.
- Foster caregivers either have to pay out-of-pocket or wait for months to obtain child care subsidies from the State.

Stabilizing Initial Foster Placements

- Research shows that the initial stage of placement is when children are at greatest risk for experiencing placement instability, especially in the first six to seven months.
- Evidence also suggests that infants experience the most placement moves during the first month of their placement as compared to older children.
- Children are more likely to experience instability when placed in a home where the foster parents have children of their own under age 5.
- Adequately supporting initial foster placements—including providing access to child care—is key in reducing placement instability.



Recap so far

- People aren't becoming foster caregivers because they're worried about child care costs.
- Current caregivers are bearing a heavy financial burden in the months after they take in a young child, but before they can find long-term child care.
- Stabilizing family-based placements as soon as children enter the foster care system is critical to achieving positive child welfare outcomes.

EMERGENCY CHILD CARE BRIDGE PROGRAM SUPPORTS THE GOALS OF CCR



Child Care Bridge Program Supports the goals of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Effort:

AB 403 (Statutes of 2015):

- Improve California's child welfare system and its outcomes by using comprehensive initial child assessments, and **increasing the use of home-based family care and the provision of services and supports to home-based family care**, reducing the use of congregate care placement settings, and creating faster paths to permanency resulting in shorter durations of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. These changes, along with other provisions in this act, require **initial investments** in the child welfare system.



Goals of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Effort:

- Federal law requires that placements of children in foster care be in the **least restrictive, most family-like environment**.
- Efforts to achieve legal permanency and **emotional permanency** are necessary for every child and youth. These include establishing and maintaining connections to siblings, extended family, culture, and, if applicable, tribes.
- That children and youth in foster care have been affected by **trauma**, both by the fact that they have been separated from their family, and by the circumstances that led to their removal. Recognizing this trauma and minimizing additional trauma should be structured into how practice is implemented for children and youth in foster care.

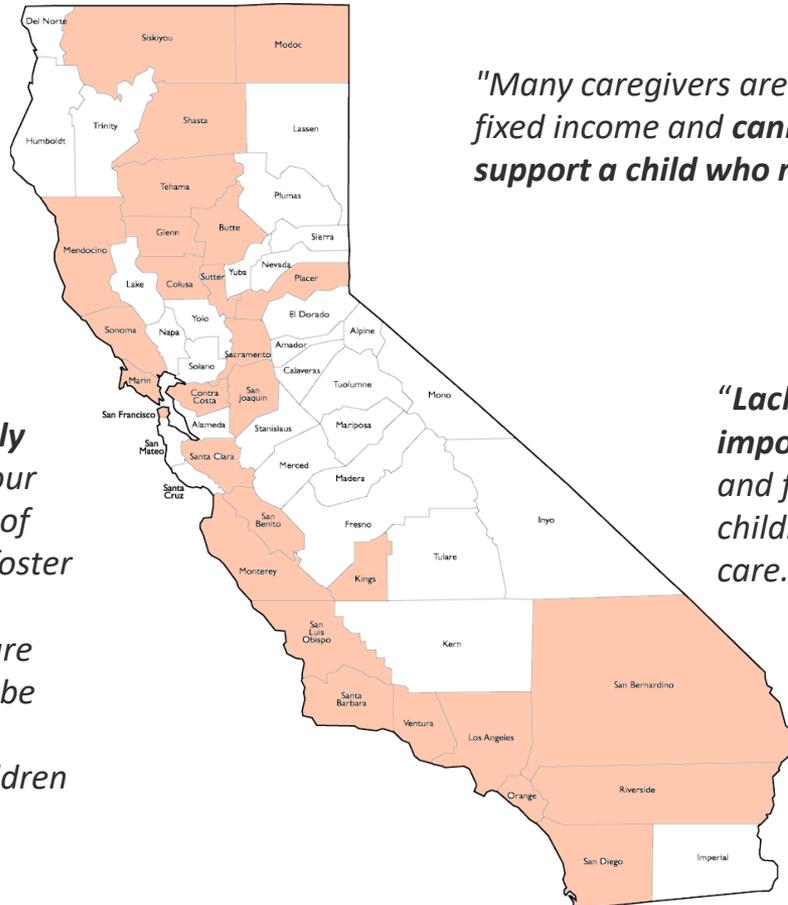


Recruiting & Retaining Foster Parents

County Child Care Proposals for Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention & Support Funding

In 2015, the Legislature set aside \$17.8 million to support foster parent recruitment and retention activities. **28** of the 54 counties that submitted funding requests, **proposed to use funds to provide child care to foster children.**

*“This is the **number one most frequently identified barrier** for foster parents in our county being able to accept placement of non-school age children... Most of our foster parents and relative caregivers work outside the home and child care costs are not affordable to these families to also be able to cover the costs of daily food, clothing and shelter needs of foster children in their care.”*



*“Many caregivers are employed or on a fixed income and **cannot financially support a child who needs child care.**”*

*“**Lack of child care makes it impossible** for many of our relative and foster families to care for children and pay for full-time child care.”*

Emergency Child Care Bridge Proposal

- Funding under FPPRS, while significant, was still not adequate to support the needs of foster caregivers.
- Additional support clearly needed to help foster parents access the subsidized child care system, and to ensure foster children received trauma-informed services consistent with CCR.
- Coalition of advocacy groups and agencies led by LA County Board of Supervisors, working with Assembly Member Thurmond, sponsored AB 1164, to establish the program.
- The bill was eventually folded into Budget Trailer Bill (SB 89, Statutes of 2017) and is slated to begin January 1, 2018.

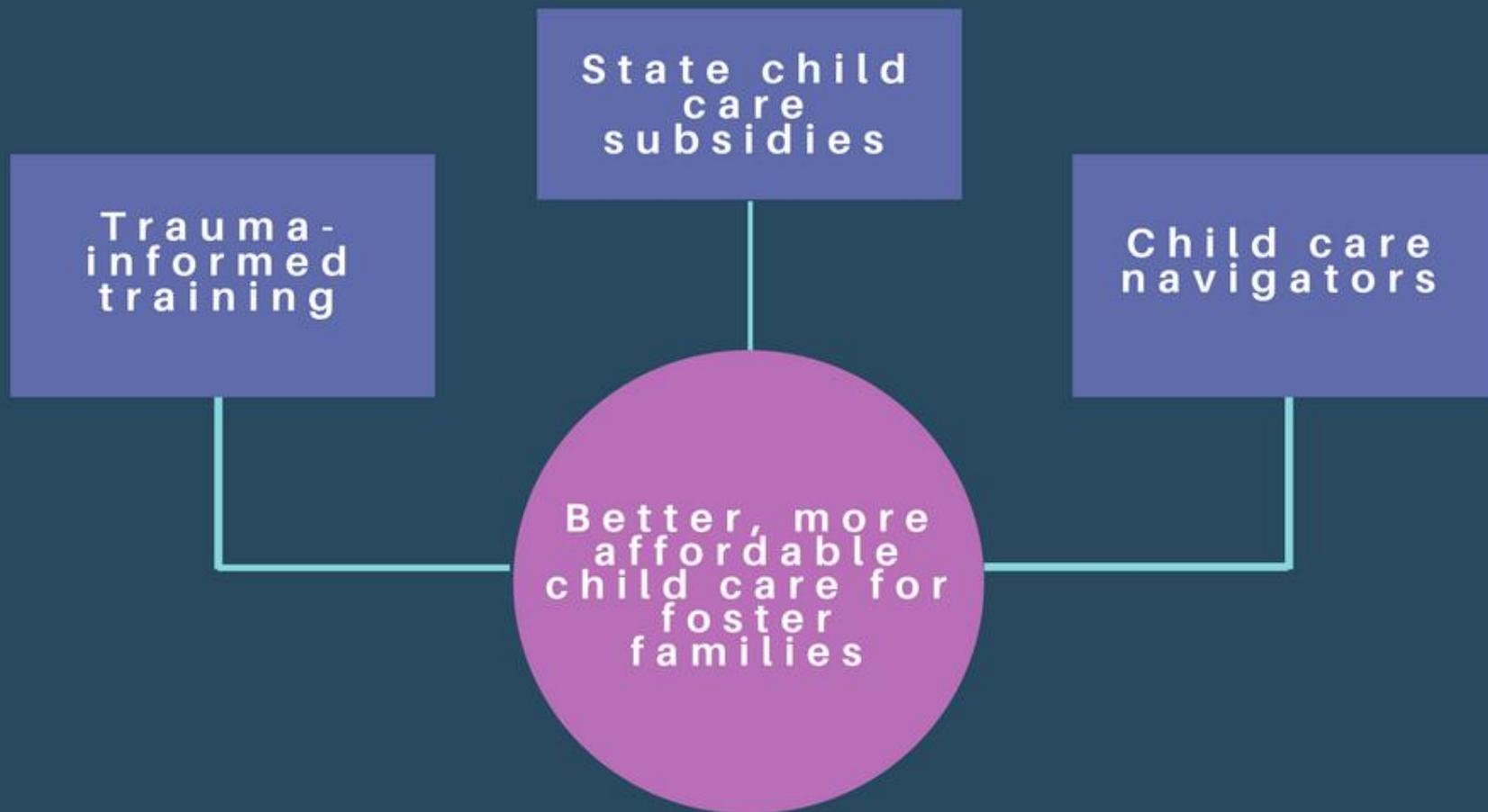
ONE SOLUTION:

The Emergency Child Care Bridge



Overview

- The bridge program is \$31 million in state funds for counties to help caregivers access temporary child care, until they can find longer-term accommodations.
- There are few strings attached to the funding. Counties have considerable flexibility to implement as they see fit.
- It has three basic components (see next slide)



The emergency child care bridge

A three-pronged approach

First Component: Child Care Voucher

- **Who is eligible for the child care voucher:**
 - Caregivers completing the approval process, where a child was placed with them on an **emergency basis** or a **compelling reason** pursuant to 309/361.45
 - Caregivers **approved as resource families** pursuant to WIC § 16519.5
 - **Parenting youth** in foster care under the jurisdiction of juvenile court, including non-minor dependent parents
- **Caregivers or parenting youth must:**
 - Have work or school responsibilities,
 - Parenting activities beyond scope of ordinary parental duties, or
 - Need child care to attend court hearings and trainings related to the child or parenting youth's dependency case.
- **Six month voucher, but can be extended for an additional six months if the family is unable to secure long-term, subsidized child care**



Second Component: Child Care Navigator



- Employed by a local Resource and Referral Network
- Works with the family, child welfare agency worker, and family team
- Help secure child care at the time of placement and long-term high-quality child care
- Assist with any necessary applications to receive child care
- Ensure families are informed regarding benefits of child care and education

Third Component: Training

- The Resource and Referral Program will provide trauma-informed training and coaching to child care providers
- Training will be coordinated by the Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Training topics will include:
 - Infant and toddler development
 - Trauma-informed best care practices
 - Strategies for working with children in foster care



NEXT STEPS



Getting More Information

- All County Letter 17-109 was released detailing the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program:
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2017/17-109.pdf?ver=2017-10-30-132310-620>
- CDSS hosted a Q&A session to answer questions and will follow up with additional answers in the coming week
- CWDA sent a survey to counties asking: (1) are the planning on opting in? (2) if yes, are the opting in as of January 1, 2018 or planning on waiting until the 2018-19 fiscal year
- County Fiscal Letter will be forthcoming with additional claiming process

Counties must opt-in to receive child care bridge funding

- Counties must take necessary steps to implement the child care bridge program, such as entering into an agreement with local R&Rs. (Or writing a letter to the state, explaining why that's not feasible).
- Counties must complete a child care bridge plan using a state form by **November 30th, 2017** to receive the funding.



Opting-in is straightforward

Counties submit the following:

- Their contact info
- Projections of:
 - The number of children, by age, to be served with a child care voucher
 - The number of children to be served by a child care navigator
 - The ratio of federally to non-federally eligible children
 - The number of child care programs to receive training-informed care training
 - The number of child care providers to receive trauma-informed care training & coaching
- Timeline for implementation of the program, with the phased implementation of numbers served
- Any additional eligibility criteria/local priorities for the program
- APP and/or R&R plan approval signature
- The director's certification

For the 2-page submission form, see the recent [All County Letter](#)

Where to send your materials

Mail to:

Family Engagement and Empowerment Division
Attn: Child Care Programs Bureau
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street, MS 8-8-139
Sacramento, CA 95814

Or email to:

ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov

(By **November 30th**)

Questions?

- The PowerPoint slides, webinar recording, and a certification of participation will be posted at www.kids-alliance.org/webinars

