



# **Clearing a Career Path:**

## **Lessons from Two Communities in Promoting Higher Education Access for the Early Care and Education Workforce**

*Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, California*

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## **Introduction**

Over the past several years, Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, and others across the state, have made a significant investment in the professional development of the early care and education (ECE) workforce. This trend is an outgrowth of a long history of advocacy and concern about the importance of retaining and adequately compensating ECE teachers and providers, and offering them ongoing educational opportunities that will increase the quality of care for children.

Alameda and Santa Clara Counties also have active California CARES (Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards) programs,<sup>1</sup> which provide monetary rewards to ECE personnel based on their education levels and continued commitment to professional development. Throughout California, CARES programs have served as a major impetus for the expansion of higher education opportunities for the ECE workforce.

The statewide CARES program began as a three-year legislative effort in 1998, and in 2001, the CARES bill, AB212, provided funding for staff in state-subsidized child care centers. In the meantime, California voters passed Proposition 10, a tobacco tax measure that greatly increased resources for programs serving children from birth to age five and their families. The state Children and Families Commission created by Proposition 10, now known as the First

5 California Commission, agreed to provide state matching funds for non-subsidized program staff in counties that funded their own child care workforce compensation and retention programs. Several counties began their stipend programs with local funds and gradually added state sources; as of June 2006, 46 of California's 58 counties offered CARES programs. Between 2002 and 2006, about 72% of Santa Clara County's ECE workforce, and about 63% in Alameda County, participated in at least one round of CARES.

More recently, two reports from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (Whitebook, Bellm, Lee & Sakai, 2005; Whitebook et al., 2006a) have documented several factors in both counties, and in much of the state, that point to the need for changes in the ECE higher education system:

- Members of the ECE workforce have varying levels of education, often exceeding statewide requirements in both family child care and center-based settings;
- The state's higher education system is somewhat mismatched with the higher education needs of the ECE workforce. There is a general lack of upper-division and graduate ECE courses, despite the fact that much of the center-based workforce has an AA degree or higher. In addition, despite the increasing number of dual language learners in California's preschool-age population, the 2006 study found that "most of California's ECE workforce has not engaged in coursework or non-credit training related to dual language learning, because the state's

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the CARES program, though not the "CARES" acronym itself, has recently been changed from the original "Compensation and Retention Enhance Stability," reflecting a growing focus on meeting educational goals.

institutions of higher education have little to offer in the way of such training and education.”

Both Alameda and Santa Clara Counties recognized early on that investing in the ECE workforce through CARES programs was necessary but insufficient, and that broad systems change was also required.

This report documents the process through which Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have used CARES programs and other resources to leverage systemic change in ECE higher education. It describes a range of new and expanded efforts in both counties, and aims to use the corresponding challenges faced and lessons learned as helpful tools to other counties and institutions embarking on similar efforts.

## **Setting the Stage for Higher Education in ECE: Tapping a Community Vision**

### ***Alameda County***

Alameda County has a long history of working on higher education issues in ECE, with a dual focus on assisting the workforce and helping the higher education system adapt and expand to meet evolving needs. The California Early Childhood Mentor Program, which began in Alameda County in 1988, is a good example of this; based at community college campuses across the state, it is now the largest mentoring operation for ECE professionals in the U.S., providing stipends for mentors’ professional development.

The most recent phase of ECE higher education planning in Alameda County began in the mid 1990s, when the local Child Care Planning Council conducted a countywide child care needs assessment. That process identified high staff turnover and low educational requirements for teachers and providers as factors that were eroding the quality of ECE programs in the county. Low wages, minimal benefits, and a shortage of professional development opportunities were prohibiting staff from remaining in the field, let alone pursuing higher education. Although the Planning Council and others proposed several remedial actions, resources were not available to significantly address these problems.

After California voters approved Proposition 10 in 1998, the Council was asked to participate in local planning for the use of these new funds. In 1999, using

findings from its own assessment and from national research on the interdependence of staff education and ECE quality, the Council recommended a plan to provide cash incentives for ECE staff to pursue higher education opportunities. Known as the Child Development Corps, this became Alameda County's local CARES program. The plan also included contracts with grants to the local community colleges to increase access to ECE training and to resolve certain barriers, such as a lack of courses available for English language learners. This plan was funded solely by local First 5 Alameda County (Proposition 10) revenues until 2001, the start of AB212 funding for state-subsidized center staff and First 5 California matching funds for staff in non-subsidized programs. The Corps, as part of a larger systems change agenda, is currently administered by the First 5 Alameda County Commission, and is financially supported by three sources, with about 65 percent coming from local First 5 funds.

The community college system was recognized as the logical avenue to begin improving the ECE professional development system for several reasons: 1) very few practicing ECE staff were required to hold even an AA degree, and therefore most were in need of lower-division credits; 2) the community colleges were experienced in the ECE field, but needed additional resources in order to reach new students and improve their offerings; and 3) the local four-year public institutions were providing relatively few programs or courses of study for ECE practitioners. The launch of the Child Development Corps in 2000 was extremely successful: many teachers and providers returned to college, the colleges expanded courses and added new ones, and by

2005, Corps participants were frequently requesting upper-division courses and degree programs.

In 2005, First 5 Alameda County initiated a program of support to help local colleges and universities develop BA and MA programs. The commission was especially concerned that the county lacked a diverse ECE leadership to reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of young children and their families. This concern has been validated by findings from the Alameda County portion of the California Early Care and Education Workforce Study (Whitebook et al., 2006b).

### ***Santa Clara County***

The Santa Clara County Child Care Planning Council has long sponsored a workforce committee, composed in part of representatives of the county's community colleges. In the decade preceding the passage of Proposition 10, the committee's core activity was to gather information on licensing, Child Development Permits, and available ECE-related courses in the county, and to share this information with the field on an ongoing basis through handbooks and other materials. Ultimately, however, this labor-intensive effort required a level of resources that was not available.

An equally important conclusion from this effort was that information gathering alone was insufficient for supporting the needs of ECE professionals. Although the Planning Council engaged in the required activity of assessing the public's need for early care and education services, there was no local attempt for many years to

determine the needs of the ECE workforce.

Prior to the passage of Proposition 10, numerous forums were held to gather community input about local ECE priorities. Early educators attending these forums overwhelmingly identified the need for support of professional development activities. Related concerns included the lack of equitable compensation, the fragmentation of the professional development system, the lack of coherent career paths, the lack of planning across higher education systems, and the isolation of the ECE workforce. Further, there was a clear gap in the ECE infrastructure, with no central clearinghouse gathering information on the field and using it for needs assessment and planning. Acknowledging this gap was a critical step toward building broad support for ECE professional development among community colleges, universities and local partners.

Several leaders met to discuss the concerns expressed in the public forums, and agreed to focus on quality enhancement, based on a shared understanding that raising staff educational levels was the cornerstone for improving the quality of ECE services for young children and families. They developed a two-prong strategy of outreach and educational support. The first was the CARES stipend program, and the second was the development of WestEd's E3 Institute: Advancing Excellence in Early Education, which became the central resource clearinghouse for information about community colleges, universities, the Child Development Consortium, Community Care Licensing, training organizations, professional

associations, and other community-based groups. The overarching goal of these Santa Clara County efforts has been to move local members of the ECE workforce along a degree path.

The creation of the E3 Institute came about partly because of the strength of collaborative agreements made by the community colleges, universities and local partners involved in the forums. These stakeholders worked with the First 5 Santa Clara County Commission to demonstrate the value of a significant investment of resources into ECE professional development, based on research about quality. The Santa Clara County CARES program leveraged local and state First 5 and AB 212 funds, and provided critical information for understanding the educational needs of the ECE workforce. By gathering quantitative and qualitative workforce data, it was possible to "put a face to" the ECE field, describing this local workforce clearly for the first time. The Santa Clara County portion of the California Early Care and Education Workforce Study (Whitebook et al., 2006c) further bolstered the county's ECE-related higher education priorities: to facilitate communication within and among local colleges and universities; to expand opportunities for English language learners; to improve the level of college-based education among all early educators; and to develop and diversify the field's leadership.

## **Emerging and Innovative Programs**

Both Alameda and Santa Clara County are currently engaged in a wide array of ECE-related higher education programs. Although these programs differ in their specific components, both counties have focused on four issues:

1. Counseling, advising and communication;
2. Programs for English language learners;
3. BA degree options; and
4. Leadership development.

## ***Counseling, Advising, and Communication***

Planners in both counties recognized early on that a key to strengthening their ECE professional development systems, and to assuring student success in navigating an often confusing college environment, was to focus on student counseling and guidance. This has included the creation and funding of new staff positions at colleges or community agencies, enlisting the help of community partners, and adding career guidance courses to ECE curricula.

### ***Professional Development Coordinators and Career Advocates (Alameda County)***

In 2000, when First 5 Alameda County initiated its CARES program, the agency also funded two efforts to provide support to CARES participants and to bolster the local ECE professional development system. First, to assist participants in complying with the program's educational requirements, it funded Professional

Development Coordinator (PDC) positions at each of the county's four community colleges offering Child Development Permits and AA degrees. PDCs were hired at each college to work with faculty and student support programs, and with the broader ECE and family support communities, to identify and promote resources for improving Alameda County's professional development system. At the same time, First 5 Alameda County contracted with the county's three child care resource and referral agencies to hire on-site ECE Career Advocates, who offer community-based services similar to those provided by the PDCs.

Since that time, the Professional Development Coordinators and Career Advocates have worked to improve academic counseling and support to students; to create a more organized and articulated system among the colleges; and to promote increased course offerings and community-based training. These programs have also laid the groundwork for further efforts to develop ECE higher education opportunities in the county

### ***CARES Partner Agencies Paired with Community Colleges (Santa Clara County)***

To support CARES participants and integrate the program into Santa Clara County's ECE system, the E3 Institute developed a model of pairing each of the county's six community colleges – De Anza, Foothill, Gavilan, Mission, San Jose City and West Valley – with one of four regional CARES partner agencies, the Provider Resource and Training Center (PTRAC), GoKids, The Provider Connection, and Kidango. These partner



agencies assist CARES participants with the application process, setting of professional development goals, and other needs. With CARES as the catalyst, this linkage has helped the community colleges and community-based organizations to work toward similar goals. It has also helped teachers and providers access opportunities for training and education – often by bringing them into the professional development system through community-based training, where they may feel more comfortable, and gradually transitioning to college-based work, with support and guidance. As described below, these relationships have provided the basis for colleges and partner agencies to work together on particular initiatives.

#### *Onsite College Liaisons (Santa Clara County)*

The E3 Institute now contracts with each community college in the county to provide an onsite College Liaison who helps CARES participants navigate the system and set professional goals, and shares information about relevant courses and other opportunities at all campuses in the county. This network of onsite liaisons has also bolstered linkages among Guidance and Child Development Departments countywide. There are generally two College Liaisons at each campus, one of whom is usually the Child Development Department Chair.

At the six community colleges, as well as San Jose State University and National Hispanic University, Child Development Department faculty and counselors work together to help students plan future coursework, particularly through the use of the Professional Development

Educational Plan (PDEP). The PDEP is a comprehensive goal-setting tool that helps students to document their educational paths and guides them through a planned course of study. Santa Clara County's PDEP will soon be online and integrated into the web, allowing College Liaisons to access information about courses at all relevant institutions of higher education across the county.

San Jose City College is the only campus in the county that has a College Liaison within its Guidance Department, working closely with the liaison in the Child Development Department. Each has expanded her knowledge of the other's area of expertise: Guidance Department staff report that they now know much more about child development requirements, and Child Development Department staff are better informed about requirements for transfer, major prerequisites, and other standard counseling issues. The result for Child Development students has been a more seamless system, and better understanding of where they want and need to go academically.

#### *Counseling and Support (Santa Clara County)*

With support from the E3 Institute, Santa Clara County community colleges are now offering courses that help ECE students understand the variety of available opportunities related to working with young children, and support them in navigating appropriate educational pathways.

San Jose City College has adapted existing one-unit and half-unit Guidance

classes specifically for ECE students on study techniques, year- and life-planning, and the PDEP. The first class, offered in summer 2005, was taught in English and Spanish to Spanish-speaking dual language learners. Using these classes as a basis, the instructor has begun a student support group that focuses on such issues as challenges that students face at work and moving through CARES requirements. As of fall 2006, the college is offering each class to 30 CARES participants that it has identified through its CARES partner agency, and the E3 Institute is covering tuition costs.

Gavilan College offers a two-unit course entitled “Exploring Careers With Children,” providing students with an introduction to career options, educational and licensing requirements, and how to navigate college systems.

### ***Programs for English Language Learners***

The challenges of pursuing professional development in ECE are often compounded for students who are also learning English as a second language. Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have focused on these students by creating Spanish-speaking student cohorts, hiring bilingual staff, offering Spanish-language or bilingual classes, and providing neighborhood-based classes and mentoring as bridges toward college attendance.

### ***Emerging Teacher Program, Merritt College (Oakland)***

The Emerging Teacher Program (ETP) at Merritt College began in summer 2005

with a cohort of 24 English Language Learner students, and as of fall 2006, 23 of these students had successfully moved through the course sequence. Funded by First 5 Alameda County, ETP is designed to address the challenges that English language learners working in the ECE field often have in taking non-child development-related courses. The program helps these students earn, over an eight-semester period, the 16 units of General Education required to reach the “teacher” level of the Child Development Permit Matrix.

Enrolling ETP students are required to have a minimum of nine early childhood education credits and an assessment score in English as a Second Language (ESL) at the intermediate level, with a focus on writing ability. These prerequisites were established to try to ensure that students could successfully complete the program. The course sequence, all taught in English, includes two ESL classes (one for credit) and four additional semesters of General Education.

Students in ETP are required to participate in monthly cohort meetings led by the program’s bilingual and bicultural coordinator. The meetings allow students to network and support one another; respond to educational challenges; and receive encouragement for their motivation and effort. Students also receive workplace-based tutoring services, including homework assistance, help with English writing and speaking, and guidance on study skills. In addition, the program coordinator offers counseling on educational plans and course selection. The local child care programs employing many of the cohort members are also very

supportive, and provide space for tutoring and other assistance to the students. Since the beginning of ETP, faculty members have received two training sessions in Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). The SDAIE training teaches classroom techniques for working with non-English speaking students, which instructors can use to teach content in any subject.

*Spanish-Speaking Student Cohort Program, Chabot College (Hayward)*

Chabot College's Spanish-Speaking Student Cohort Program is available through the college's Child Development Department, and was originally funded through First 5 Alameda County. Cohort students take their first four ECE classes (13 units) in Spanish, and in the last two classes, they transition to using an English textbook and completing assignments in English. In December 2005, First 5 Alameda County provided additional funding to help hire a full-time bilingual Professional Development Coordinator to focus exclusively on institutionalizing the cohort program and supporting these Spanish-speaking students. This coordinator maintains a database of enrolled and pending students, and meets with all students to discuss goals, develop educational plans, pass on information about resources at Chabot, and confer about future classes in English.

Resolution of the issue of offering classes in Spanish,<sup>2</sup> and the addition of

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<sup>2</sup> A number of California community colleges have grappled with the question of whether the state's Education Code allows for classes to be taught in languages other than English. The colleges' current interpretation in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties is that such classes are allowable as long as classes with comparable content are also being offered in English.

a bilingual Professional Development Coordinator, have both made a major difference in formally establishing the cohort program within the institution. For the first time since the program's inception, Spanish-language coursework was included in the college's Fall 2006 Schedule of Classes. The brochure for the Early Childhood Development concentration at Chabot has also been translated into Spanish.

*Certificate Programs for Spanish-Speaking English Language Learners, Gavilan College (Gilroy)*

In fall 2006, Gavilan College entered the second year of its ADELANTE project, a 17-unit Spanish-language Child Development Certificate program for a cohort of 24 Spanish-speaking CARES participants. The project collaborates with its CARES partner agency, GoKids, to offer educational advising, using the PDEP and tutoring services to assist students in completing their certificates.

*Certificates and AA Degrees for Latino Students, National Hispanic University (San Jose)*

National Hispanic University (NHU), primarily a four-year private institution, offers a handful of certificate and AA degree tracks to its predominantly Latino student body. The first cohort for NHU's newly developed Early Childhood Education certificate program began in spring 2006 with 37 students, and the AA degree program began in fall 2006, with a total of eight course offerings for the 2006-07 academic year.

NHU's ECE Certificate Program

currently involves several Spanish-speaking cohorts, including one from the City of San Jose's Smart Start Program, and is in discussion with the San Jose Unified School District about developing a cohort for district early childhood staff.

The AA in Early Childhood Education at NHU requires the completion of 72 units, somewhat more than most associate degree programs; the additional units come from two core courses that focus on technological skills. The program's curriculum also includes the study of bilingual and multicultural education.

NHU provides several other student support services, including:

- The Student Academic Assistance Center, funded through Title V and staffed by two English and two Math professors (who also have part-time teaching responsibilities). Students receive support and guidance in writing and math, and have access to computers and other resources. The Center is open from 9:00am to 8:30pm to accommodate the significant number of students who take evening classes.
- The Student Success Services Program, begun during the 2005-06 academic year and staffed with two Retention Specialists, offers tutorials and academic advising to first-generation, low-income students during their first two years at NHU.

*Programs for Family Child Care Providers and English Language Learners, De Anza College (Cupertino)*

De Anza College has launched several efforts targeted to family child care

providers and English language learners. Since 2004, in partnership with The Provider Connection, a program of Palo Alto Community Child Care, and with funding from First 5 Santa Clara County, De Anza College's Child Development and Education (CDE) Department has offered the Early Learning Quality Improvement Program (ELQuIP) to provide neighborhood-based child development classes, classes in Spanish, and a mentoring program. While not exclusively for English language learners, ELQuIP has acted as a launching pad for a new Literacy and Development Program for Spanish-speaking providers.

Neighborhood-based classes. These child development classes provide easier access and a more comfortable setting for providers who may be intimidated by attending courses at the college. Two core classes required for a Child Development Permit are offered in both English and Spanish, and provide a bridge to a third core class on the De Anza campus. Most participating providers have come from the Adult Education system; De Anza and The Provider Connection collaborated with administrators from the County Office of Adult Education to create a continuum in which students begin with Adult Education, move into De Anza neighborhood classes, and then take on-campus classes. Prior to the first on-campus class, program coordinators escort students to campus and provide a tour of the bookstore, the library and classrooms, and assist with such logistics as obtaining parking passes. The program covers costs for the on-campus classes, including registration, parking and books.

**Mentoring program.** Begun in 2003, ELQuIP's mentoring program involves 30 experienced mentors whose child care programs and practices have been identified as models of best practices, and 30 mentees who are new to the ECE field. Mentors and mentees are matched according to ten different factors, including primary language spoken, type of setting (center-based or family child care) and ECE-related interests. They are required to take a one-credit neighborhood class together and to engage in "learning exchange hours," in which they visit each other's programs. These visits are often linked to completing an assignment given by the class instructor, such as structured observation in an ECE setting. Mentors and mentees are also required to attend a series of monthly training and networking events, which include a guest speaker, discussion and dinner. The ELQuIP mentoring model also serves as a stepping-stone toward the California Early Childhood Mentor Program.

**Literacy and Academic Development Program / Proyecto de Alfabetización y Desarrollo Académico.** As an offshoot of ELQuIP, De Anza's CDE Department is also launching a new literacy and academic development program, targeting Spanish speakers who are license-exempt child care providers, ELQuIP participants, and/or involved in Mountain View Adult Education programs. The overall goal of the program is to increase access to college for Spanish-speaking English language learners interested in Child Development, helping them progress toward college-based Child Development and General Education classes in Spanish or English. Courses will use a variety of instructional approaches, including tutoring, study groups, cooperative learning and

collaborative assignments.

To implement the Literacy and Academic Development Program, De Anza is collaborating with several community partners. The Mountain View School District will provide classroom and child supervision space, as well as a computer lab; the Mexican Consulate in San Jose will provide training and materials via Mexico's National Institute for Adult Education (INEA); De Anza will provide neighborhood classes; and E3 will provide funding and feedback in the ongoing planning and implementation process.

### ***BA Degree Options***

While many members of the ECE workforce have not yet completed a college degree, another substantial segment is ready to pursue upper-division work past the associate degree, but has faced a serious shortage of opportunities. Community partnerships in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have now fostered the development of new BA options at four Bay Area campuses.

#### *Child Development BA Program for Working Professionals, Mills College (Oakland)*

Mills College in Oakland originally planned to launch a Child Development BA Program for Working Professionals in fall 2006 as a two-year pilot, targeting a culturally and linguistically diverse group of working ECE practitioners who hold AA degrees. Due to financial constraints, the initial concept has been scaled back and Mills is now planning to start a smaller group of students in January 2007.

Program planning has been funded by First 5 Alameda County. In January 2006, First 5 Alameda County sent a countywide recruitment mailing to child care programs, resource and referral agencies, and Child Development Corps participants who had completed AA degrees. As of fall 2006, eight students had been accepted by Mills, and the college was working to adapt course schedules to meet working students' needs; some may require more time, perhaps up to three-and-a-half years, to earn a BA.

The program planning committee, led by the college's two Child Development professors, largely based the curriculum on the one currently used in the Mills College BA in Child Development program, adding just one new course. The curriculum will include a combination of early childhood and liberal arts coursework, and will use the college's lab school and one of the project's community partners, the Association of Community Services, as practicum sites. Child care center directors who employ participating students will be asked in advance to release them from teaching responsibilities for three half-days per week during the first year of the program in order to complete the practicum requirement.

In addition to using a cohort model, the Child Development BA for Working Professionals Program will benefit from other student support services available on the Mills campus, primarily in its elementary education and nursing programs. These include services targeted to such groups as transfer students from community colleges, older students, and those who are the first generation in their family to attend college. The program will

also have a part-time coordinator who will oversee recruitment, applications and financial aid; help enrolled students to navigate the college system, connecting them with appropriate resources; track students' needs for and use of supports; and serve as a liaison to program faculty and the college administration.

Financial aid packages will be developed for each cohort member, including reduced tuition and a small amount of scholarship funding from First 5 Alameda County.

*BA in Human Development, with an Option in Early Childhood Development; Teacher Education Minor in Early Childhood Education, California State University East Bay (Hayward)*

First 5 Alameda County is currently funding an effort to adapt the BA program at California State University East Bay's Hayward campus for early childhood development students who receive their AA degrees at one of four community colleges in Alameda County (Chabot, Merritt, Ohlone and Las Positas). This effort came out of an Early Childhood Education Work Group, sponsored by CSU East Bay and launched in 2004, which included representatives from the county's four community colleges, Los Medanos Community College in Contra Costa County, and First 5 Alameda County; the CSU East Bay Dean, Human Development Chair and faculty, and Teacher Education Chair and faculty; and local ECE center and Head Start directors.

A desire to develop a program with a dual focus on child development from birth to age five and on early childhood

education led to a hybrid effort: an Early Child Development Option within the Human Development Major, combined with a Minor in Early Childhood Education through the Department of Teacher Education. The combination of the BA and the Minor represents a new partnership between two departments at CSU East Bay. The university already offers a Child Development Option within its Department of Human Development, but the age focus is broader (birth to 12) and the content is focused on research and theory. Its Teacher Education Department offers a fifth-year credential program after completion of a BA, and a Master's program in Teacher Education, but has not previously had an undergraduate BA program in Education focused on any age group.

The program will use a cohort model, and enrolling students will transfer to CSU from area community colleges at the junior-year level. Students will obtain a BA in Human Development, with an Early Childhood Development option and a Minor in Early Childhood Education, in three years, taking three to four classes per quarter. The BA curriculum was adapted from existing courses in the Human Development Department at CSU, as well as program standards from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for serving children from birth to age five.

Six new courses were developed for the Minor in Early Childhood Education, most of them addressing curriculum and instruction across a variety of cognitive and social-emotional areas, and including a culminating course that includes the field practicum. Students' work sites will act as

their practicum placements.

Student support services will include an orientation for participants; two advisors (one from the Human Development Department, and an academic advisor from the Department of Teacher Education); course offerings on weekdays, evenings, Saturdays and online, and block (preferential) registration until the cohort is registered. Both the Human Development and Teacher Education Departments have stressed the need for a coordinator to help with resources and registration. Discussions of a preparatory summer institute have included such topics and potential courses as: How to Write a Research Paper; Are you Transfer-Ready?; How to Take On-Line Classes Using 'Blackboard'; Study Skills 101; Career Options; Financial Aid and Scholarships; and What is a Community of Learners?

First 5 Contra Costa County provided a planning grant for a BA in Human Development program with an option in Early Childhood and a minor in Early Childhood Education at CSU East Bay's Concord campus. First 5 Alameda County will use this as a foundation for developing a similar scholarship program for qualified community college students from Alameda County. The Alameda County program is expected to begin in winter 2007, with the first set of courses for the Minor offered in summer 2007. As of August 2006, planners had held two informational meetings for prospective students.

*Interdisciplinary Minor in Early Childhood Studies, University of California at Berkeley*

Planning for UC Berkeley's Undergraduate Minor in Early Childhood Studies – as well as an Interdisciplinary Master's in Leadership for Child Development (see "Leadership Development," below) – involved staff from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at the university's Institute of Industrial Relations, and the Early Childhood Education Program Committee, made up of faculty from the School of Education (including the Dean), the School of Social Work, and the Department of Psychology. The creation of a new ECE center on campus had originally prompted the formation of a group of people interested in seeking to expand the university's role in early childhood professional development. At first, the discussion focused on periodic training seminars that UC might provide for the ECE community, but CSCCE staff encouraged the committee to consider the idea of Minor and Master's programs. The impetus for the Minor came largely from a planning grant provided by First 5 Alameda County, which enthusiastically supported the interdisciplinary nature of the program and eventually provided a \$100,000 grant for planning and operation of both programs in the first year. Another inspiration was a successful UCLA program offering a Minor in Developmental Psychology.

The new Minor program was approved by the university in spring 2006, outreach to students began in fall 2006, and the required core seminar will be taught for the first time in spring 2007. Students will

choose between two options: a Generalist track, and a Teacher Permit Track that qualifies students to receive a teacher-level Child Development Permit. In addition to the core seminar, "Perspectives on the Young Child in Society," the program will require the School of Education course, "Early Development and Education;" either "Developmental Psychology" or "Development During Infancy" in the Department of Psychology; and at least five designated upper-division courses.

The program will be open to 25 students per year, who will also have access to an academic advisor and a Child Development Permit advisor. The goal is to attract existing UCB students from a variety of disciplines to learn about early care and education, with the intention that some will become teachers, and some might pursue other fields of study or careers involving young children, such as social work or public policy. Several scholarships will be available to students in the Teacher Permit Track who make a commitment to work in the ECE field in Alameda County for a certain period of time after graduation.

*BA in Child and Adolescent Development, San Jose State University*

San Jose State University has long offered both BA and MA programs in Child and Adolescent Development. In 2003, the E3 Institute partnered with this department to fund a cohort of potential leaders working in the ECE field who were interested in enrolling in the Master's program (see under "Leadership Development," below). Based on lessons learned with this MA program cohort, the E3 Institute next recruited, funded and



provided classroom space for a BA cohort, which began classes in fall 2006.

To recruit BA students, the E3 Institute tapped the Santa Clara County CARES database, as they had done to identify potential Master's students. Together with SJSU's Department of Child and Adolescent Development, the Institute examined transcripts of CARES participants and sent letters to several hundred potential candidates, inviting them to informational sessions. They then held three informational sessions, hosting a total of 130 participants; of these, 90 applied to the program and 35 were selected. The cohort is primarily composed of individuals at the Associate Teacher, Teacher or Director level of the Permit Matrix, and will move through all courses as a group. Since completing the selection process, the Chair of the Child and Adolescent Development Department has met individually with each candidate to support them through the application process and to ensure that they have completed all necessary academic requirements before formally matriculating.

The cohort's accelerated course format will consist of an initial 12-week session of two fall classes, followed by three 10-week sessions ending the following summer. They will then repeat the same pattern of sessions, beginning the following fall with a series of more challenging classes. The entire sequence consists exclusively of upper-division courses in General Education and Child and Adolescent Development, and the expectation is that students will complete a BA in three to three-and-a-half years. This particular BA program course sequence is possible

through "Special Sessions" at San Jose State, a mechanism independent of University General Fund monies and allowing for greater flexibility.

The E3 Institute is paying for all BA cohort student expenses and program costs, including instructors' time and advising time from the department chair. Classes take place at E3's offices, which are generally more accessible to students, and are held in the late afternoons or evenings; others will be offered online. The cohort of 35 students has guaranteed spots in the program, so they do not have to compete for access to classes with other students. Beginning in spring 2006, E3 has also hosted regular cohort meetings to discuss the state budget, current ECE-related legislation, and other leadership and policy issues.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the E3 Institute is supporting San Jose State University in designing and developing a science and ECE minor.

### ***Leadership Development***

Planners in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties also recognized a serious shortage of opportunities in the Bay Area, and in the entire state, to pursue an advanced degree related to early childhood – and saw that this shortage carried serious implications for the future leadership of the field. The result was two efforts to create master's degree options for emerging ECE leaders. Santa Clara County has also devoted renewed attention to developing leadership skills among ECE center directors.

*Interdisciplinary Master's in Leadership for Child Development, University of California at Berkeley*

As with UC Berkeley's Minor program, planning for an Interdisciplinary Master's in Leadership for Child Development involved staff from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), and the Early Childhood Education Program Committee. The Master's program will be a joint effort of the Schools of Education, Social Welfare and Public Policy, and the Department of Psychology. Impetus for the program came from strong documentation of a growing need for leadership development in the ECE field (Whitebook, Bellm, Lee & Sakai, 2005), and the planning process was supported by a grant from First 5 Alameda County. UC Berkeley had operated an Interdisciplinary Program for "Leaders in Day Care" in the 1970s, but abandoned this focus when foundation funding ended.

Planners hope to create a 15-month program, for 10 to 15 students per year, that will run over two summers and one academic year, with an emphasis on leadership development. Students will have the option of focusing on adult learning and teacher training, or on administration and policy. Planners initially sought to begin a pilot program in summer 2007, but with encouragement from the Graduate Division, are now submitting a full proposal to the university for a Graduate Group in Early Childhood Leadership. If approved, this Graduate Group will qualify for central campus funding, and might also have the option to offer a designation in early childhood for students earning PhDs in the various disciplines. The planning team hopes to

announce the student application process in fall 2007, and to begin classes for the first cohort in summer 2008.

*MA in Child and Adolescent Development, San Jose State University*

In 2003, the E3 Institute helped recruit a group of students working as classroom teachers in the ECE field to enroll in San Jose State University's existing Master's Program in Child and Adolescent Development, providing full funding for all of them and making its offices available for classes. This Master's program, almost exclusively made up of working students, offers classes only in the late afternoons and online to accommodate students' schedules.

The E3 Institute used its extensive CARES database to identify prospective students, based on their possession of a BA with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above. After 40 candidates were initially found eligible and recruited, ten students began the program in fall 2004. Those recruited by the E3 Institute fit the profile of being working students, but in addition, all of them were working directly with children. Only five students in the group, however, continued the program into the second year and graduated with Master's degrees in June 2006. The university and the Institute subsequently decided not to initiate another special group, in part because of the high attrition rate and the related need to re-examine their processes of recruitment and student support.

E3 Institute funding allowed for this group of MA candidates to have all expenses reimbursed, including tuition,

books, parking, and graduate admission exam fees, at a cost per student of approximately \$7,500, if they successfully completed classes with a grade of B or higher. Students also agreed to stay in the ECE field in Santa Clara County for three years after completing the program.

Once they enrolled, this group of students was not distinguished from students who had enrolled independently in the Master's program. The initial plan was for them to take two graduate courses (six units) per semester and to complete their degrees in 2006. A number of students soon reduced their course load, however, due to challenges with writing, research, and computer skills, in addition to balancing school with full-time work, and only five of the ten students moved on to the second year of the program.

Participating students did not receive supportive services beyond what all other Master's candidates receive, which includes a general program orientation, online information at the university and department's websites, and access to a general MA Program Coordinator.

*Director's Collaborative of Santa Clara County, West Valley College (Saratoga) and Mission College (Santa Clara)*

The E3 Institute has also funded an effort through the West Valley College's Child Studies Department, with recruitment and outreach assistance from Mission College's Child Development Department the CARES partner agency, Kidango, to create the Director's Collaborative of Santa Clara County. Historically, such collaboratives have been formed to provide opportunities

for directors of child care programs to offer support to one another at regular meetings, but previous local attempts had achieved mixed success because of inconsistent attendance.

The launching of this network in fall 2005 was prompted by the realization that directors, who do not qualify for CARES stipends because they don't work directly with children, had little incentive or financial support for continuing their education, and little direct access to information about moving up the Child Development Permit Matrix.

The Collaborative includes the opportunity to take a class entitled the Early Childhood Directors Professional Growth Network, and to participate in a variety of leadership activities coordinated and funded through the E3 Institute, CARES, the Child Development Training Consortium and the CA Early Childhood Mentor Program, scheduled throughout the year. These include lectures, discussion and networking, for which directors, assistant directors and teachers with supervisory responsibilities receive three college credits. Mission College's Child Development Department and Kidango provided support for recruitment and outreach about the Collaborative.

## **Lessons Learned: At the County and Community Level**

Most of the higher education efforts in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties described in this brief were supported and guided, and often initiated, by administrators or representatives from First 5 organizations, nonprofit agencies, Child Care Planning Councils and other groups focused on broad early care and education issues. Getting these efforts off the ground produced challenges and lessons that we hope will be instructive to others in taking on similar efforts.

### ***1. A shared community vision, based in part on workforce-related assessments and data, provides a strong foundation for ECE higher education efforts.***

The groundwork that Alameda and Santa Clara Counties laid over several years exemplifies the value of such a foundation for a successful higher education system in ECE. The common denominators in this process for both counties included:

- An active Child Care Planning Council and First 5 planning process;
- A large-scale assessment and/or other data (such as a CARES database) identifying the county-specific profile and needs of the ECE workforce;
- A commitment to understanding the county-specific research, and an ability to set goals and targets based on the research;
- A knowledge of the research linking the quality of care to the educational levels of the ECE workforce; and
- An overall goal of moving workforce

members onto a degree path, facilitated by local incentive programs.

### ***2. In order to move the vision forward, regular forums must be established or adapted to facilitate communication among the key players who impact ECE higher education in the county.***

In Alameda County, First 5 Alameda County holds regular meetings of its Professional Development Coordinators and Career Advocates to discuss challenges and successes in their colleges and programs, and to brainstorm and problem-solve about cross-county and cross-institution issues. First 5 Alameda County also relies on its ECE Advisory Committee and the Local Child Care Planning Council's input on a consistent basis.

In Santa Clara County, the E3 Institute facilitates monthly meetings among community colleges, universities and community partners to allow for dialogue and collaboration, and to create a more centralized, seamless and accessible system.

In creating these forums and fostering and reinforcing these relationships, program planners in the two counties have learned the following lessons:

- Meet often;
- Contract with individuals at the colleges, universities and agencies – or preferably, contract with these institutions – to pay for participants' time to attend meetings;
- Allow for time to discuss how the overall vision fits with each of the educational and community

institutions;

- Define what outside funding can accomplish (e.g., purchase additional classes to meet student needs) vs. what systemic changes are needed;
- Provide data specific to the educational institutions and for the county as a whole (e.g., defining trends);
- Ask the educational institutions what types of ECE workforce data they would like, and if possible, provide them with it;
- Understand that it can take time to create change within colleges and universities, since they are used to working autonomously, and since child development departments are not always fully supported within their own institutions;
- Build trust, making sure that all participants feel heard; and
- Continue to reinforce your overall goal, which, in Santa Clara and Alameda Counties, was to help the ECE workforce move along a college degree path.

***3. County vision and resources are necessary but insufficient for creating systemic change in higher education. Outside seed funding, and ongoing financial support, are critical to success.***

To support their higher education efforts, planners in both Alameda and Santa Clara Counties used their local CARES initiatives to leverage additional funding from AB212 (for state-subsidized center staff) and First 5 California (for non-subsidized program staff). For most of the new programs, they also used separate local First 5 funds, which served as seed money for planning and initial

implementation.

Equally important, however, is the long-term sustainability of these programs, which requires larger funding commitments. A number of national, state and local entities may be tapped to support and provide leadership for innovative efforts in ECE higher education. These include:

- The California Department of Education;
- The California Department of Social Services;
- The Community College Chancellor's Office, the California State University Chancellor's Office, or the University of California Office of the President;
- Individual colleges and universities;
- Community and state-level private foundations;
- National foundations; and
- Professional associations, such as the California Association for the Education of Young Children, the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, or unions.

***4. Efforts should begin with improving the county's existing ECE higher education infrastructure, and then progress toward developing new programs.***

Taking stock of what currently exists in the community, and taking the opportunity to make existing resources more responsive to the higher education needs of the ECE workforce, will create a more efficient system overall.

In both Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, local child care resource and

referral agencies and other community partners worked with community colleges as the key avenue for improving the ECE professional development system. To facilitate this process, the E3 Institute in Santa Clara County paired community-based organizations with community colleges.

In Alameda County, the decision to work initially with the community colleges was based on three factors:

- Very few ECE staff were required to hold even an AA degree, and therefore, most were in need of lower-division credits.
- The community colleges were experienced in the ECE field, but needed additional resources to reach new students and improve their offerings.
- The local four-year public institutions were generally not providing courses or programs for ECE providers.

In Santa Clara County, additional contributing factors included:

- fragmentation of professional development opportunities;
- isolation of the ECE workforce;
- a lack of clear degree paths; and
- minimal collaborative planning among representatives across higher education systems.

***5. Creating systems to guide students onto a more intentional and planned path early in their education can enhance their success and prevent obstacles from arising later.***

Planners in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties now have a clear goal for CARES participants to move onto a degree path. From CARES program data and from experience, they learned that a significant portion of the ECE workforce had previously taken courses somewhat arbitrarily, without clear guidance or consideration about future goals or aspirations.

Alameda County now requires CARES participants to be on an AA degree path, giving stipends only to those who have prepared a professional educational plan and undergone college math and English assessments, and only if the courses they take are part of their plan. With funding from First 5, each college has added a second Professional Development Coordinator to facilitate this process.

Santa Clara County planners have bolstered communication and education between Guidance and Child Development Departments in the community colleges through College Liaisons, and now require CARES participants to complete a Professional Development and Education Plan.

## **Lessons Learned: At the Institutional Level**

In planning for and implementing these efforts, the individuals within the various institutions of higher education in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties faced numerous challenges that took creativity and often compromise to resolve. For the following discussion, we have grouped these challenges and lessons learned into five categories: (1) internal/external partnerships; (2) infrastructure issues; (3) recruitment and selection; (4) student supports; and (5) evaluation and adaptation.

### ***1. An effective planning process for new ECE higher education efforts involves a strong partnership between stakeholders both within and outside the college or university.***

Partners external to institutions include such county- and community-level partners as First 5 administrators, center directors and institution alumna. Individuals within institutions include faculty and administrators from departments of child development and other relevant departments, administrators from the Dean or President's office, the Financial Aid office, and the institution's fundraising arm. Within this framework, a variety of approaches can work.

#### *Community-Based Providers*

In planning for Merritt College's Emerging Teacher Program (ETP), the college's Early Childhood Department met with representatives of ECE programs

that were employers or ECE training providers in the community. These local programs had previously approached First 5 Alameda County about the need for a college program to help English language learners acquire their General Education units – one that would be accessible for working students through evening or weekend classes, with a realistic “floor” of credits required for acceptance. Merritt College administrators (including the Dean and Vice President of Instruction) and the English and Counseling Departments (including the college Professional Development Coordinator) were also involved in developing the program.

#### *Influential Alumnae*

A Mills College alumna who is also the Program Director of the Association of Children's Services (AOCS), a longstanding provider of child care and ECE training in Oakland, worked with the college to initiate its Child Development BA Program for Working Professionals, with support from First 5 Alameda County. Another AOCS staff member, also a Mills alumna, has provided contract services to coordinate the program planning process. AOCS has also offered its facilities as a practicum and class location site.

#### *Local ECE Expertise*

For UC Berkeley's Minor program in Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Childhood, the involvement of the local ECE community was crucial in developing the practicum requirement for students in the Teacher Permit Track. Initially, the required practicum was to be located only in the UC Berkeley campus child care centers, and there was

no requirement that it be taught by an experienced teacher trainer who also had direct experience working with young children. The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) and the project's funder, First 5 Alameda County, encouraged the planning committee to consider involving community-based child care centers as practicum placements, and to ensure that practicum instructors not have only theoretical and practical knowledge about child development but also pedagogical expertise. As an additional practicum option, CSCCE and First 5 Alameda County also encouraged the planning committee to consider making UC Berkeley a member of the Jump Start Network, a national program that pairs trained college students with young children in one-to-one partnerships designed to develop language, literacy and social skills. Negotiations with Jumpstart are underway.

### *Favorable Political Climate and Dialogue*

At CSU East Bay, a favorable political climate and dialogue around ECE issues during the planning process, both inside and outside the university, helped a great deal in moving the project forward. A March 2006 summit of Community College and CSU Chancellors, focused on ECE and higher education planning in relation to Preschool For All, was particularly influential. At a time when colleges and universities in the East Bay were looking to expand enrollment, the CSU East Bay Chancellor saw that the ECE program could make a strong contribution and lent support to it, along with the Chair of the Human Development Department and other faculty members.

## ***2. Challenges related to infrastructure (or lack thereof) within institutions of higher education may require the most flexibility and creativity from planners and implementers.***

Infrastructure-related challenges are among the most significant in establishing or expanding programs in ECE, because they pertain to the inherent makeup of college and university institutions, and often involve confronting entrenched policies or rules in order to create change. The following are some instructive cases from recent experience in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties.

### *Accessibility for Students*

At Mills College, the relatively small size of the institution means that the same classes are generally not offered at multiple times during the day, and even fewer are offered during late afternoons or evenings to fit the schedules of working students. Planners of the Child Development BA Program for Working Professionals have also faced some resistance from faculty members about teaching late afternoon or evening classes. As a result, graduation within an optimal period of time may prove difficult for working professional students, because of challenges in accessing the classes they need.

CSU East Bay has found itself torn between the desire to meet student needs and the need to uphold its own financial viability. On one hand, the university would like to increase student access by offering more convenient class locations in the community, and on the



other, its standard policy is that any class it offers must be fully enrolled or else financially supported to make up for any loss of revenue. In the case of the new BA program, CSU East Bay has already formed partnerships with area community colleges, which are often more conveniently located for students, and may offer classes at these campuses. Unless the classes are fully enrolled, however, university policy would dictate canceling them because they are not cost-effective. But in the case of some other university programs, outside funding sources to pay for instructors have allowed such off-site courses to be offered. Ultimately, the lesson here concerns how funding for a new program is spent; one kind of supportive approach is to offer scholarships to students and/or release time for professors to advise them, but another or additional perspective is to use funds to increase the accessibility and convenience of classes.

De Anza College has faced similar issues concerning the funding and accessibility of classes. Although the Literacy and Academic Program has yet to be launched, some challenges faced while administering the ELQuIP neighborhood classes may be instructive. Financing the classes was relatively complicated because of their off-campus location, and because two different financing methods were used. The more commonly used method was to finance the classes through the Department of Contract Education at De Anza, meaning that Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC) purchased classes from the college, including any hours outside of the instructors' regular teaching load. Through the other method, in which the classes were part of the instructors' regular load, PACCC was only responsible

for reimbursing students for their costs. The two scenarios created administrative confusion for program administrators that might have been avoided by choosing and administering one method alone.

### *Faculty Issues*

#### Faculty Workload

For UC Berkeley's Minor and Master's programs, concerns from faculty about adding to existing teaching loads made the idea of interdisciplinary programs – in which teaching responsibilities would be distributed across departments and schools – quite appealing. University protocol, however, required that the review of Master's projects be done by tenured members of the Senate Faculty. In an effort to ease faculty concerns about teaching loads, the planning committee sought to distribute the work not only among involved faculty but also others on campus with practical expertise, such as staff of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. These concerns also led to an emphasis on designing programs that used as many existing courses as possible, rather than creating new courses. For the Minor program, an Executive Committee has been formed, along with an Affiliated Faculty Committee composed of representatives from the involved departments and CSCCE, and the requisite lead Senate Faculty member will be from the School of Social Welfare. The Master's program will use the same Executive Committee but will have a broader interdisciplinary Affiliated Faculty Committee, and will divide oversight and administrative responsibilities between an Academic Director (a tenured faculty member from the Department of Psychology) and an Academic Coordinator

from CSCCE.

CSU East Bay planners have also faced a challenge involving faculty commitment to the new BA program, but have learned that the ease with which a new program is offered can depend on a particular department's configuration at the time of the program's planning and launch. The Human Development Department, for example, currently has several new, non-tenured faculty members, which has worked to the advantage of the program, since they have been highly motivated to undertake new ventures as they work toward tenure. As a result, there has been no shortage of offers to develop and lead new classes.

#### Faculty Buy-In

Securing buy-in from involved faculty is a prerequisite to developing or expanding an ECE higher education program. Although partnerships between internal and external stakeholders during the planning process are extremely important, they by no means ensure that all parties will agree. It is essential to discuss thoroughly with faculty the need for and benefits of the program, and enlist their partnership in shaping it, so that they will willingly participate and support it once it's launched.

At CSU East Bay, planners were required to secure four levels of approval: from the Department of Human Development's Curriculum Committee, composed of current department faculty; from the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences; from the University Curriculum Committee; and from the University Senate. Perhaps surprisingly, securing Department of Human Development

approval, and convincing department faculty that the new program would be valuable, was a significant challenge. Faculty were hesitant at first for several reasons: they felt compromised by existing workloads, they were concerned about becoming or being perceived as a "teacher training department," which fell outside of their mission, and they were wary of launching something that they might be unable to change later.

To respond to these concerns, department members who had been involved in program planning, and who had attended the March 2006 community college and CSU summit in Sacramento, needed to present to fellow faculty members what they had learned about the need for and importance of ECE workforce training, and the positive effects of ECE in a human development context for young children. Planners also worked to blend the new program into the department's current offerings, ensuring that the majority of courses were already being offered.

At UC Berkeley, during planning for the Minor program, some committee members were concerned about a possibly low level of interest among current UC students. This concern was significantly allayed by an e-mail survey of 111 UC Berkeley undergraduates from the School of Social Welfare, the School of Education and the Department of Psychology about their interest in an Interdisciplinary Minor in Early Childhood Studies. Conducted by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) at the University, the survey showed that the vast majority of students were either "very interested" (54 percent), or "interested" or "somewhat interested"

(another 40 percent). The committee also reviewed recent undergraduate activity, demonstrating that many students had been creating their own minor programs.

In addition, some members of the UC Berkeley committee feared that the Minor and Master's programs would not be sufficiently rigorous and academic in nature, as opposed to training-based, and might therefore be inconsistent with the university's standing as an institution. They felt that although Berkeley students could develop professional skills in their studies, they should be exposed to theory and data in an intellectual pursuit, as opposed to learning applied information. The discussions and resolution that ensued focused on the following:

- Applied experience for students would actually enhance their academic experiences, and this could provide a powerful incentive for participating in the programs.
- Berkeley had a historic role of taking leadership in developing innovative "flagship" programs.
- For the Minor, settling on the program name of "Early Childhood Studies" helped provide the necessary philosophical shift in program emphasis for some committee members.
- For the Minor, the compromise of creating two tracks, Teacher Permit and Generalist, created an approach that includes both applied and more purely theoretical aspects.
- For the Master's program, framing the desired goal as a focus on leadership and diversity in the ECE field was a helpful step forward.

#### Faculty Experience and Qualities

Teaching faculty in ECE higher education programs will ideally possess a combination of expertise in ECE settings, a theoretical orientation in early childhood development and education, experience with or understanding of nontraditional students, and a connection to or understanding of the demographic background of the students in the program.

Planners and implementers of Merritt College's Emerging Teacher Program (ETP) for English language learners felt that instructors would need to be flexible, creative and nurturing, while also maintaining the rigor required of all students at the college. Given the fears and challenges that English language learners often face, the instructors, and the program coordinator/counselor who would lead cohort meetings and teach the counseling classes, should also have a strong understanding of ESL issues, and would ideally have learned English as a second language themselves, in order to serve as role models for the students.

The quality of course instruction is crucial to the strength of higher education programs. Instructors of Early Childhood Education students also need training, education and support in order to help their students succeed. This is particularly true for those who work with English language learners; for this reason, Merritt College has provided two trainings to faculty, including those who teach in the ETP, in an approach known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE).

At UC Berkeley, in planning for the

teaching of courses for the Minor program, CSCCE strongly encouraged Early Childhood Education Program Committee members to use instructors with direct, practical ECE experience to teach the courses most specifically focused on early care and education principles and practice (“Early Development and Education,” and, for Teacher Permit Track participants, “Practicum in Early Development and Education”).

National Hispanic University has faced the challenge of finding qualified instructors when its funding allows only for part-time or adjunct positions; the dearth of appropriate candidates is particularly pronounced for the Spanish-speaking cohorts and for classes offered during the daytime. It is especially difficult to find MA-level instructors who are not already working full-time during the day, and even more so to find such individuals who can teach in Spanish. Thus far, the ECE certificate program has had some success in using faculty from the university’s Child Development Program, which focuses on education in Grades K-2.

#### *Communication Among Relevant Departments Within an Institution*

At community colleges, strong links between Guidance Departments and Child Development Departments can create a seamlessness that bolsters internal administration and promotes greater student success. Although there has recently been a great deal of attention to the topic of articulation among community colleges, and between two- and four-year institutions, internal links between Guidance and Child Development Departments *within* community colleges

are also highly beneficial.

Traditionally, these two departments operate in relative isolation of each other; as a result, counselors in Guidance Departments often know little about the intricacies of requirements in the ECE field, such as the Child Development Permit, and Child Development Department staff and faculty often know little about such guidance issues as transferability of units. In such a case, students are forced to gather and integrate information from multiple departments on their own in order to receive a complete picture. Failing this, they can easily become confused, discover that they lack the necessary credits and types of courses to pursue their academic and career goals, or even drop out of college altogether in frustration.

Both Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have developed successful responses to these challenges. In Alameda County, First 5 Alameda County initiated a program of community college-based Professional Development Coordinators who have ECE student advisement backgrounds and are stationed in Child Development Departments, working exclusively with Child Development students. The Coordinators also inform and educate the college counseling departments on ECE issues. In Santa Clara County, the E3 Institute created a system of College Liaisons – two individuals within each community college, one of whom is usually the Child Development Department Chair – to help students, especially CARES participants, to navigate the college system.

**3. The student recruitment and selection process for new ECE higher education programs requires careful assessment of students' readiness to participate successfully.**

Experiences in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have shown that there can be a significant gap between applicants' qualifications "on paper" to participate in a higher education program, and their actual readiness in practice.

In terms of recruitment, individuals currently involved in professional development efforts such as CARES can be likely candidates for higher education programs, but they are by no means the only potential candidates. The size of a community may also dictate the recruitment method; in larger counties, a CARES database or something similar can be extremely helpful, but in smaller counties, such a tool may be unnecessary, as community and institutional players may already know whom to target.

While the selection process will likely adhere to the general admission requirements of the sponsoring college or university, the particular program goal (for example, to create new and diverse leadership, or to move English language learners through their General Education courses toward a degree or certificate) may call for different requirements as well.

The planners of San Jose State University's recent Master's program cohort believe that the relatively high attrition rates stemmed at least in part from the fact that students may not have been as qualified, committed or ready as

they needed to be to achieve success. They have concluded that screening candidates more carefully, and using a more formal and selective application process, could have improved the student completion rates for the program. Relying solely on the CARES database for recruitment, for example, may have excluded a number of strong candidates, because Santa Clara County's CARES program requires participants to work a certain number of hours per week directly with children. Many center directors and administrators do not work directly with children on such a regular basis, if at all, at this point in their careers, but might well have been appropriate candidates for such a Master's program.

CSU East Bay's recruitment and selection efforts have yielded some surprising results and lessons. Most importantly, a significant number of students in the current candidate pool for the new BA program do not have the transferable units they need to transfer into an upper-division level, even though they hold AA degrees. Since many community colleges have two AA tracks – one for those who plan to transfer, and another for those who do not – it is quite possible to receive an AA without the courses required for transfer to a four-year institution. The planners therefore found it challenging to secure a group of eligible students to begin the cohort in January 2007. The overarching lesson is that Counseling and Child Development Departments must work closely together to help community college students develop clear and coherent education plans, informing them of all of their options and the related requirements.

The target population of Merritt College's Emerging Teacher Program is English language learners, and the program's goal is to move them through the required General Education courses to reach the teacher level of the Child Development Permit Matrix. It was necessary for planners to decide on several key factors in the student selection criteria, including the English language ability level of entering students, and a realistic floor of prerequisite credits. Although the community planning partners originally advocated for allowing entering students to have a lower level of English language ability, the college was able to demonstrate that an ESL intermediate level was necessary for students to succeed in General Education classes taught in English. The college ultimately compromised with the community partners, however, on requiring only nine Child Development credits for entry into the program, rather than 12.

***4. Student support services, while often costly, are a critical element of ECE higher education programs, increasing student success rates.***

Even after the most careful selection process to identify a pool of students who are college-ready, many students are still likely to need significant levels of support. A large number of ECE students in higher education programs can be defined as "nontraditional" – older than the traditional college age of 18-21, returning to college after a short or long absence, working full-or part-time, and/or raising children – and research demonstrates the importance of student support services in the success of nontraditional students (Purnell et al., 2004). Colleges and

universities in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have developed a variety of responses.

*Student Cohorts*

Merritt College organizes its Emerging Teacher Program participants – all of them working students – into a cohort that moves through the program together. Newly developed student supports for ETP include monthly cohort meetings in addition to classes, and tutoring services that are available at students' workplaces at lunchtime and after work hours. The bilingual-bicultural ETP coordinator leads the cohort meetings and counsels students on their educational plans and course selection.

Data collected on Chabot College's Spanish-speaking cohort have shown that most of these students do not go on to take other classes at the college once they complete the cohort program. The reasons for this trend are not entirely clear, but students may require more support services, as well as transition or "bridge" classes, to move into classes taught entirely in English. The role of the new Professional Development Coordinator at Chabot is to lead the effort to offer such services and to add transitional components to the course sequence.

The team implementing CSU East Bay's new BA program anticipate that working professional students may not be able to manage the load of four courses per semester and a summer session. They are also concerned that specific academic skills, such as synthesizing and analyzing texts, may be challenging for those transitioning from a community college to

a four-year institution, particularly in the Human Development subject area, which relies heavily on theory. Further, while the plan to provide numerous online courses will improve accessibility in some ways, there are concerns that students may not have the technological experience or skills to complete these courses successfully. In response, planners are considering the following student supports: small cohorts of approximately 20 students; cohort meetings that combine general student support with speakers and discussions on a variety of relevant topics, such as time management; individual student meetings with the program coordinator; academic advisors; and “enhanced” early childhood mentors who would be available to discuss issues beyond what occurs in the classroom, such as balancing work, school and home life.

In planning for UC Berkeley’s Master’s program, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) initially encouraged a cohort model, but some members of the planning committee hesitated about setting these students apart, which would possibly keep them from integrating into the larger university community. As a compromise, students will take the core seminar as a cohort during the first summer, and will then continue with other students during the academic year. Since UC Berkeley is largely configured to educate “traditional” students, however, there is little student support available on campus during the summer, and there are few part-time or evening programs. The planning team has not yet resolved this issue, but it illustrates the challenge of providing basic supports for nontraditional students at an institution that has generally not been set up to work with them.

### *Course Content and Sequencing*

In developing the course sequence of Merritt College’s Emerging Teacher Program, the planning team was aware that prospective cohort students might be resistant to the introductory ESL class, because the credits earned would not count toward those required for the Teacher Permit. The planners were also aware that students had many misperceptions about course requirements. As a result, ETP begins with a three-week half-credit counseling class taught by the program coordinator, aimed at breaking myths about course requirements and developing a trust with the counselor, the program and the institution. The cohort then moves on to a credit-bearing Music Appreciation class, which fulfills the Humanities General Education requirement and can help build student confidence. At that point, students move on to the first ESL class, providing a foundation for the subsequent required General Education courses.

Chabot College’s Child Development Department has recently made changes in its Spanish-speaking cohort course offerings to better accommodate the needs of students. In summer 2006, it began offering a preparatory one-unit class conducted in Spanish for students entering the cohort in the fall. The class emphasizes writing and study skills, acting as a hands-on complement to individual meetings with the Professional Development Coordinator. As of fall 2006, in a reorganization of the class schedule to better accommodate student needs, paired classes are held each semester for a full day on Saturdays, and after two semesters, students receive their Associate Teacher

certificate. To facilitate the process of moving on to classes in English, students who receive their certificate in the spring are offered a more advanced class over the summer on developing study skills in English. During the summer, they also have the opportunity to take their next required Early Childhood Development class with the same teacher, but this time in English; one goal of the class is to help English learner students gain confidence about taking classes alongside English speakers.

Based on feedback from other programs, planners for Mills' Child Development BA Program for Working Professionals anticipate that some students may find it challenging to complete certain General Education course requirements, particularly math. One solution is for students to take Math 001, a course for non-majors, which they will take as a cohort for additional support.

Other issues in offering student supports include determining the types of incentives and requirements involved in mentoring programs, based on the professional development level of participants; intensive advising on college campuses, including guidance around transfer; assistance with computer and writing skills; child care assistance; transportation; and evening and weekend classes.

A forthcoming policy brief on student supports by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment will discuss a wide variety of efforts and their efficacy with nontraditional students.

**5. As “works in progress,” new or expanded programs should be evaluated and adapted as necessary on an ongoing basis.**

Merritt College's Emerging Teacher Program has used several forms of evaluation that have contributed to ongoing program improvements. First, the college has used student feedback during cohort meetings, as well as student performance, as key sources of information. Students have advocated in particular for changes in the timing of classes and meetings. Class activity revealed that students were struggling with how to use a tutor; as a result, the tutor was brought directly into the classroom during instruction and computer lab time. Class time, homework and cohort meetings also brought to light the students' lack of technological skills; the instructor therefore adapted the class to a combination of instructional/lecture time and computer lab work.

ETP is also benefiting from a formal program evaluation provided through First 5 Alameda County, which is tracking student demographics, the kinds of support that students receive, how helpful these supports are, and ETP's impact on dropout rates. A survey of 15 cohort members for the 2005-2006 academic year revealed that their most common barriers, in order of prevalence, were the times when classes are offered, transportation, financial need, and a lack of computer skills. The most frequently sought types of support, in the following order, were help with education plans, homework assistance, tutoring, help with English writing and speaking, and transcript review. Most students surveyed



had sought and received such assistance or support outside of the classroom, and many had done so on multiple occasions. Follow-up interviews with four cohort students identified overall satisfaction with teachers' understanding of English language learning, and a sense of developing independence and self-confidence. Future evaluation activities will include surveying and interviewing ETP teachers about their experiences in receiving training in teaching English as a second language.

Coordinators of Chabot College's Spanish-speaking cohort have collected data for several years on cohort members' participation in the class sequence and their ongoing educational and career plans, but have decided that more in-depth analysis is necessary to better understand student limitations and needs, and have begun to conduct English language assessments of students. The Child Development Department also plans to hold focus groups and interviews with members of the most recent cohort to learn more about their educational and career decision-making processes, and what other kinds of support could assist them with the transition to English.

For San Jose State University's Master's program, one lesson learned for ongoing program improvement is the importance of exit interviews of all students – not only those who complete the program, but those who leave it prematurely.

## **Conclusion**

Over the past two decades, our knowledge has grown immeasurably about the importance of the first five years of life and early learning. But while the early years have been the focus of a great deal of research (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000), there has been comparatively little effort to translate this into how practitioners are prepared for working in settings with young children.

Advocates encouraged by such research have been the main impetus for institutions of higher education to rethink their programs, expand their offerings or develop new initiatives. But most communities are still on the front end of program development, focusing mainly on launching new programs and making them accessible, and many ECE students are still facing significant challenges in attending and completing college- and university-based programs. Further, because of the relative newness of many of these efforts, the field has yet to examine the extent to which various ECE programs are producing effective teachers and providers.

Similarly, seed funding for many of these programs was made available by local entities, bolstered by the favorable political climate inspired by the Preschool for All movement and Proposition 82. A new challenge comes in the wake of the measure's defeat to keep up the momentum and secure funding to sustain programs over the long term.

Yet Alameda and Santa Clara Counties have made particularly significant progress in bolstering their professional development systems, and expanding or

establishing higher education programs for the early care and education workforce, a number of which are now institutionalized within colleges and universities there.

We hope that their experiences and lessons learned, as detailed in this report, will serve as useful guides for other communities throughout California.

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