

CHILDREN NOW



An Education Primer

Leveraging the Local Control Funding Formula: Making the Case for Early Learning and Development in Your School District

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An Education Primer

Leveraging the Local Control Funding Formula: Making the Case for Early Learning and Development in Your School District

Summary

After decades of research, policy discussions, and legislation promoting finance reform, in 2013, California adopted a major change in how schools are funded and held accountable: the **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**. This new funding model is the most comprehensive education finance reform implemented in California in nearly 40 years, and will bring sweeping changes to the state's K-12 system. School leaders, in partnership with their communities, will be provided more flexibility and planning opportunities to make the best decisions for their local students, while being held to a new accountability structure that focuses on improving student outcomes long-term. Most importantly, those students traditionally underserved – low-income students, English learners, and foster youth – will receive additional, unprecedented funding under LCFF and school districts will have an opportunity to pursue innovative, coherent, and holistic approaches to meeting all students' needs.

The reach of LCFF does not end there, however. Implementation of the new finance model also provides an exciting opportunity for **Early Learning and Development (ELD) advocates** to expand access to the programs and services that prepare our young children for academic and lifelong success. Experience tells us that ELD can and should be a prominent component of any K-12 reform strategy, given that ELD initiatives – such as high-quality preschool and infant and toddler care – can make a great difference in student outcomes. A strong body of research shows children's social-emotional and cognitive development during the period from birth to age 5 greatly influences the degree to which they will be prepared for kindergarten and perform throughout school. With effective preparation and community engagement, local early learning advocates can capitalize on this unique opportunity provided under LCFF implementation to position **ELD at the forefront of California's public agenda for the next decade.**

Our intent in developing this document is to help communities leverage the LCFF priority-setting process to *promote access to high-quality ELD programs at the local level*. The challenge, of course, will rest with the many competing priorities and pressures districts face as they re-emerge from the Great Recession and attempt to rebuild a robust educational program for all students. In addition, while districts fare differently under LCFF – some will see more significant increases in coming years, all will receive flexibility and greater budget predictability. Many districts, especially those which will see increased dollars focused on supporting students in need, should target investments in high-quality ELD programs. At a minimum, **every district** should highlight ELD as a critical strategy for meeting California's accountability priorities for education. These increased financial investments, and the documentation by all districts of the importance of early learning, will support the longer term goal of ensuring that all children have access to high-quality programs and an equal opportunity to learn starting at birth.

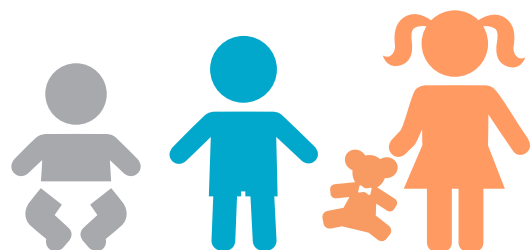
How to Use This Primer

This document is primarily targeted for community and parent organizers, ELD advocates, local First 5 Commission leaders, and school and civic leaders who are interested in making a compelling case to increase services that benefit children aged 0-5 in their community. The information will help facilitate effective collaboration among education and community leaders to highlight early learning by describing the structure and opportunities of LCFF and the current rationale for pursuing ELD expansion in the context of LCFF.

In addition to the principle content in the primer, there are additional documents included in the **appendix** that can be used as stand-alone documents to helpfully inform parents, educators and partners. These materials include: a fact sheet on LCFF, a one-page leave behind document on the importance of ELD, summaries of compelling ELD research, and a school district budget timeline.

Over time, these materials will be supplemented with additional information based on the needs of the field. And because planning and budgeting is only the beginning of the process to ensure programs are achieving tangible outcomes for kids, Children Now will be developing supplementary materials to support communities as they work to implement and refine their approach.

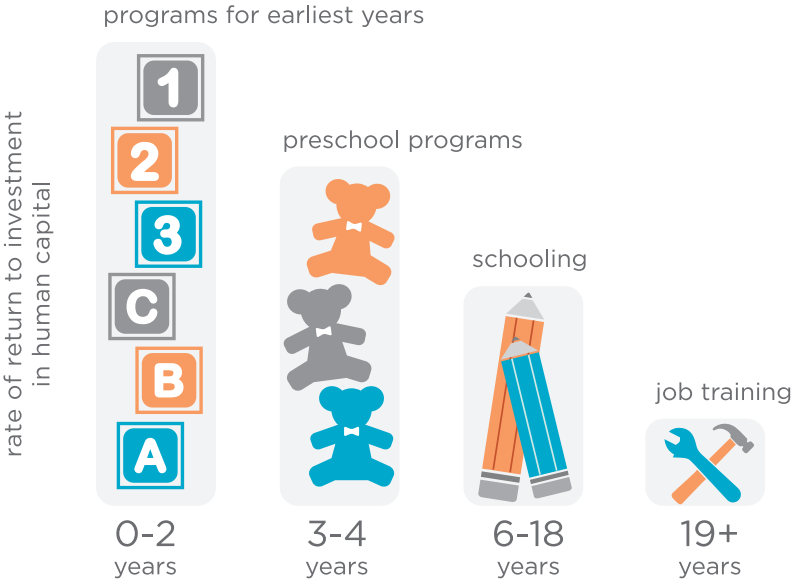
To receive **updates** on these materials and stay apprised of best practices and the most recent developments across the state, we invite you and/or your organization to sign up for The Children's Movement of California at: www.childrennow.org/join



The Vision of LCFF and Early Learning: Tying it together

Research shows that publicly-funded **ELD investments** are among the most cost-effective initiatives districts can pursue to improve the outcomes for kids. While ELD occurs mostly outside of the finance and governance structures of K-12 today, LCFF creates an opportunity for better integrating ELD into the K-12 system and enables districts to meet accountability goals for most of the state priority areas established under the new finance model.

Communities and districts that are interested in expanding their ELD programs and services can use the planning, prioritization, and budgeting activities of LCFF to determine the appropriate segues to promote ELD as a relevant learning strategy for K-12 schools. With this in mind, the needs and assets at the local level, including ELD programs and services, should inform the approach of developing a school district’s vision, budgets, and programs. Long term, districts can measure their success by how well they address the needs of children across many issue areas to create better outcomes for students in K-12 and beyond.



Governor Brown signed the Local Control Funding Formula legislation into law on July 1, 2013

LCFF Overview

For ELD advocates to understand how to leverage the LCFF implementation process to promote local early learning and development services, they must first understand how LCFF functions, differs from California’s prior funding models, and changes the way districts are held accountable to the state and community.

A New System of Finance and Accountability:

Governor Brown’s new **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)** replaced a state funding system burdened by earmarks and outdated formulas with one that is designed to achieve two critical goals: (1) allocate education funding more equitably and rationally so that students with greater barriers to learning receive additional resources; and (2) better serve students by allowing local educators the flexibility to respond to the needs of their communities.

The result is a **new, streamlined school funding system** that will direct more funds to high-needs students and give educators, parents, and community members a greater voice in how resources are invested locally. In concert with these changes, LCFF also generates new ways to measure how well schools are doing beyond student test scores: schools must now report on how they are addressing priorities like college and career readiness, student engagement, and school climate, to name a few.

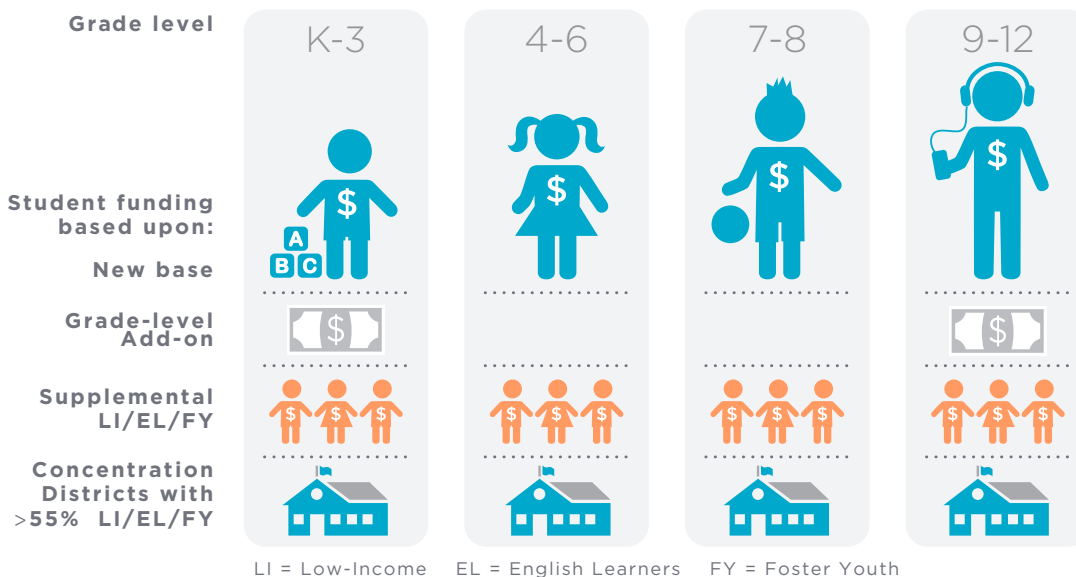
How LCFF Works

LCFF is an allocation model for the vast majority of state and local education funding. It seeks a more equitable distribution of resources than did California's prior funding model. By itself, LCFF does not increase the state's overall investment in public education, but a combination of additional temporary revenues from the passage of **Proposition 30** and a recovering state economy has resulted in a large infusion of new resources to invest in LCFF.

In 2014, California began the transition to the LCFF allocation model. Under LCFF, both traditional district and charter schools will receive "base funding" for each student. The amount will be the same for all schools, and will vary only by grade level--- recognizing the higher costs of class size reduction in early grades and the costs of such things as career and technical training in high school. Supplemental funding will be provided for students in **three major groups** that traditionally have not been funded at levels research has indicated will lead to their success: low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. LCFF also provides additional funding for districts whose student population houses 55 percent or more high needs students district-wide, recognizing that high concentrations of those students increases greater need overall.

Proposition 30

The trend toward cutting education was stemmed in 2012 by Proposition 30, a stopgap measure intended to prevent deep cuts to education funding. Prop. 30 begins to phase out in 2016 and expires in 2018.



At full implementation, districts will be provided with 20 percent more funding for each student in one or more of these categories to serve the additional educational needs of this group of students. Similarly, districts serving a **concentration** of these higher need students will receive 50 percent more funding for each student above the 55 percent concentration threshold. The LCFF funding model will cover more than 80 percent of state and local education operations funding; only a small number of other programs – such as special education and expanded learning programs – will receive targeted funding outside of LCFF.

Once they receive their funding from the state, school districts will have considerable **flexibility** to spend these resources on the learning strategies they believe will best meet local students' needs and the communities' priorities. This expanded flexibility also comes with additional responsibility: districts will be subject to a broader **accountability** system than they've been subject to in the past. Districts will now have to be transparent to ensure

that the targeted students who generate supplemental funds are served effectively. But for perhaps the first time in decades, districts will have the opportunity to pursue innovative, coherent, and holistic approaches to meeting *all* students' needs.

How LCFF Differs from Recent Finance Structures

LCFF is a dramatic transition from California's older education funding model. It promotes greater district transparency and accountability, allows districts to more easily plan their budgets in advance, and provides more flexibility for districts to use funds to target the specific needs of students and communities.

Greater Transparency

The new LCFF dramatically reduces the number of state funding requirements; requires coherent planning and budgeting by districts; requires opportunities for communities to voice their interest in district planning and budgeting processes; and ensures that district plans and accountability reports are made available to the public for viewing. These shifts will make it possible for Californians to better understand how schools are funded and see how the money is spent to improve teaching and learning for all students.

Predictability to Plan

While California's school funding will still be subject to volatility resulting from the state's economy and budget situation, LCFF eliminates a second source of funding volatility for schools. Based on current economic projections, the new law anticipates that it could take *eight years* for LCFF to be funded at its target level – which is loosely based on the state's peak education funding levels in 2007, plus modest growth. With this funding target, districts can begin to plan and anticipate funding levels, year by year, pending dramatic changes to the overall state budget. In addition to restoring every district to pre-recession funding levels, when full LCFF implementation is reached, targeted students will receive nearly \$10 billion more than currently is targeted to serving them; with strong planning on the state and local levels, this commitment of funds has the potential for extraordinary impact on high-needs kids. Finally, LCFF's multi-year planning process includes time for priority-setting, so districts will experience less programmatic instability even in the event of California's economic volatility.

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California's previous funding model

In the past, schools received core funding for each student, called a “**revenue limit**,” which varied considerably from district to district since it was based on funding levels and revenue sources of the early 1970's¹. In addition to their revenue limits, districts received “**categorical funds**,” which were targeted to specific district programs (like gifted education) and services (like professional development). While well-intentioned, categorical funds unfortunately did not allow educators much flexibility to adapt to student needs or circumstances. At the “peak” of this system, state funds were set aside for more than 120 categoricals. In recent years, particularly during the recession, our state began to consolidate them to about 40 funding/programmatic sources.

While LCFF supplemental funding targets some of the same students that several major categorical funds did, LCFF is not prescriptive about how schools meet the needs of those students as was the categorical-based funding system of the past. Under LCFF, for example, it is legitimate for a district to use student funding generated at the high school level to support initiatives that improve 3rd grade literacy and keep English language learners on track to graduate from high school, if they so desire.

LCFF's Approach to Accountability

The LCFF model also dramatically changes school district planning and accountability in California. At the center of the LCFF implementation infrastructure is a document called the **Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)**, a three-year plan, updated annually by each school district, that outlines how each district will achieve local and state priorities and how funding supports activities related to those priorities (*see link below*). While the LCAP encompasses the district budget, it also must describe how funding directly supports specific populations and schools with large numbers of low-income, English learner, and foster youth students. Thus, for the first time, districts are required to adopt a plan that it is aligned to their district and school goals, as well as to their budget.

Using the LCAP, districts must develop measurable three-year goals for student outcomes that respond to **eight priority areas** including: Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation, student achievement, student engagement, school climate, parental involvement, course access, extent to which teachers are credentialed, and student outcomes in other subject areas (*see sidebar*). Additional local priorities can be included in a district's LCAP, as well. Before a district can submit an LCAP to its county office of education, however, it must be reviewed and evaluated in a **publicly-vetted process**, allowing the community to weigh in on the determination of goals and strategies for the district and its schools.

In summary, LCFF's accountability approach is simple: (1) the state defines its highest **priorities**; (2) districts, in consultation with their communities, develop **measurable student outcomes** linked to those priorities and any additional priorities defined locally; (3) districts describe how they will attain all of those goals and **expend resources** to do so; (4) districts will be held **accountable** for achieving those goals.

Evolving Accountability

LCFF-LCAP also extends the reach of accountability: districts are not just accountable to the state, they are broadly accountable to their communities, by virtue of required involvement of their communities in the planning and reporting processes. In addition, as accountability evolves at the local level, the state's role in accountability is also

changing. The state is in the process of establishing a broader array of progress measures that extend beyond academic indicators; already, new laws have determined that the accountability index for high schools

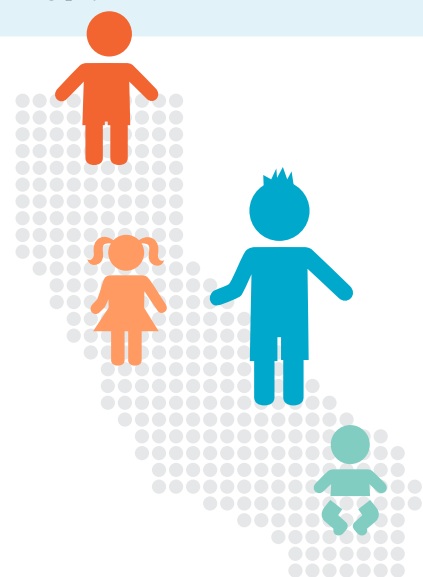
LCAP Template

To view the state adopted LCAP template, visit :

www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc

8 State Priorities

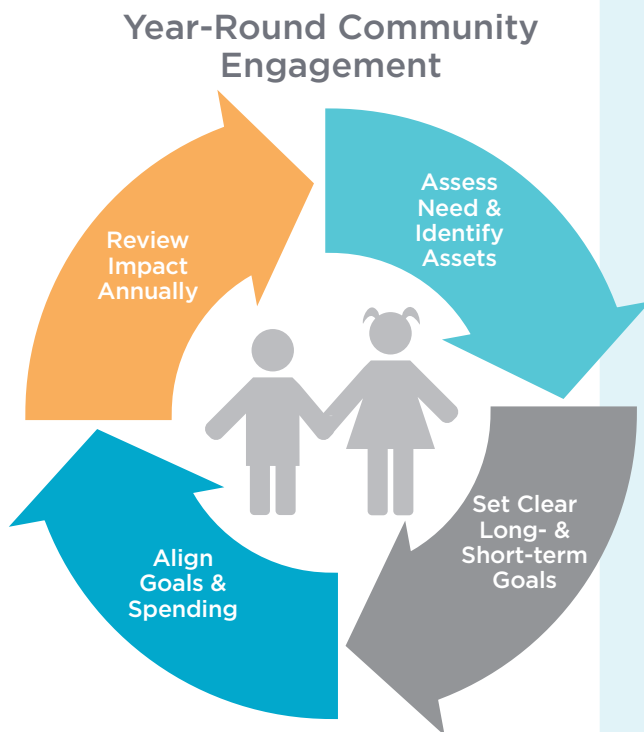
1. Providing all students access to fully **credentialed teachers**, instructional materials that align with state standards and safe facilities.
2. Implementation of California's academic **standards**, including the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math, Next Generation Science Standards, English language development, history social science, visual and performing arts, health education and physical education standards.
3. **Parent involvement** and participation, so the local community is engaged in the decision-making process and the educational programs of students.
4. Improving **student achievement** and outcomes along multiple measures, including test scores, English proficiency and college and career preparedness.
5. Supporting **student engagement**, including whether students attend school or are chronically absent.
6. Highlighting **school climate** and connectedness through suspension and expulsion rates, local surveys, and other locally identified means.
7. Ensuring all students have access to **classes** that prepare them for college and careers, regardless of what school they attend or where they live.
8. Measuring other important **student outcomes** related to required areas of study, including physical education and the arts.



be comprised of no more than *40 percent student test scores*. In addition, the state is transitioning to new learning standards, based on the **CCSS** and the **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)**, as well as new assessments aligned to those standards. New assessments for mathematics and English language arts will be given a test run in spring 2014, but will not yet produce individual student scores. The lack of student scores likely will require a pause in the state accountability index that relies heavily on these results. Further state-level accountability steps also include the creation of the California Collaborative on Education Excellence, which will provide technical assistance and intervention services for districts that need it, and the adoption of an LCAP evaluation rubric by the State Board of Education expected no later than October 2015.

LCFF'S Requirement for Community Engagement

As noted previously, LCFF creates a distinct role for stakeholder involvement in the district planning/budgeting process to transition to the new funding model. To be clear, the **district school board**, or other governing entity, remains the local decision-maker, since it adopts both the LCAP and the district budget by vote. But LCFF strengthens *governance, accountability, and transparency* by requiring that boards seek community input from those who elected them. This provides a unique opportunity to leverage community interests and assets to promote student success, which can result in an enhanced educational program that is responsive to local conditions. At the same time, it can promote greater community buy-in and support for public education over the long run.



LCFF includes minimum requirements for engaging parents and the community

- **LCAP public review**– A district’s LCAP must be made available for review by the public, who must be given an opportunity to comment on the LCAP in a hearing that is separate from the hearing in which the LCAP is adopted.
- **Parental advisory committee** – The district will need to solicit input from an advisory committee of parents/guardians who represent the students of the district, especially parents of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth throughout the development of the LCAP.
- **English language learner advisory committee** – Districts with at least 15 percent English learners also must engage an English learner advisory committee to provide input on the development of the LCAP.
- **Community transparency** – The superintendent must notify the community of opportunities to provide comments regarding the proposed LCAP and must respond to those comments in writing.

Making the Case for ELD as an LCFF-Specific Approach

Throughout California, school and community leaders are currently discussing how to implement LCFF to best meet the needs of students, parents, and the broader local community. For ELD advocates, it is essential to *capitalize on this opportunity* by meaningfully engaging in the district LCFF planning and budgeting processes and making a strong case for ELD inclusion. Incorporating ELD into school district vision, plans, and budgets hinges on employing several interrelated strategies, which show education leaders ELD is a key part of education reform that will help districts meet their new, heightened accountability requirements under LCFF.

In the rest of this primer, ELD advocates will be guided through the main components necessary to advocate for early learning programs and services at the local level.

Effective advocacy should focus on:

- **Sound research:** Keep kids at the center of the effort by providing compelling ELD research and impact data
- **Partnerships:** Build relationships within and outside of ELD to effectively partner locally
- **Local Assessment:** Understand and communicate fully the local context and the needs of kids within the community
- **Local Approach:** Tailor the approach to best meet the local needs
- **Multi-Year Plans:** Keep kids as the driving focus and develop multi-year plans

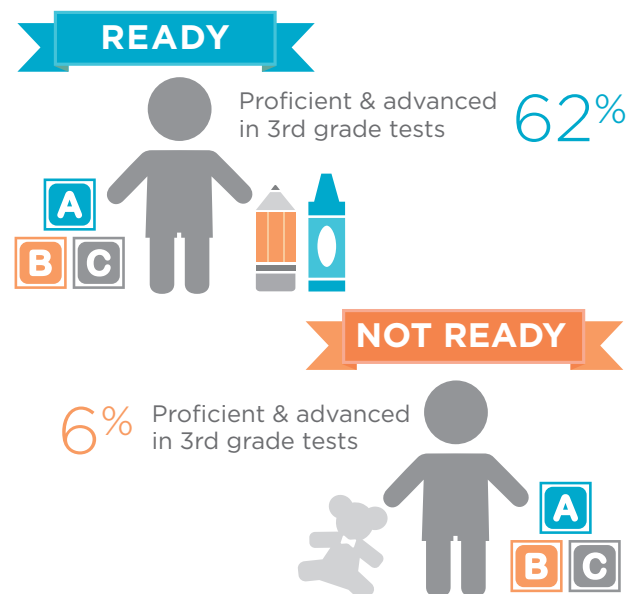
promoting authentic and meaningful engagement between the community and schools will require local leaders and advocates to partner in an ongoing way

Authentic and meaningful **engagement** between the community and schools will require local leaders and advocates to partner in an ongoing way. Through the deliberate work recommended in this primer, schools and communities can improve communication and trust for the benefit of all students, starting with our youngest children.

Early Learning Research

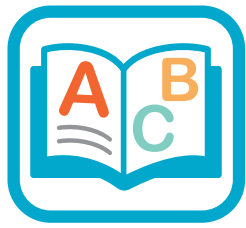
Promoting Early Learning and Development within the local planning and budgeting dialogues required by LCFF will be greatly improved by demonstrating the *strong linkage between ELD outcomes and LCFF/LCAP objectives* backed by a large body of research. At the end of this primer, you will find a **summary** of a broad selection of research that supports ELD expansion by making direct connections to targeted kids under LCFF or to LCFF/LCAP priority areas. We urge ELD advocates to become familiar with these materials and be prepared to share them in an effort to enlist support for incorporating quality ELD services into the K-12 education system.

Well-prepared kindergartners are much more likely to meet state standards in 3rd grade



The findings are compelling:

Research has found the achievement gap **begins to show as early as 18 months of age**ⁱⁱⁱ in vocabulary differences between children who have high vs. low exposure to a rich language environment, and these early vocabulary

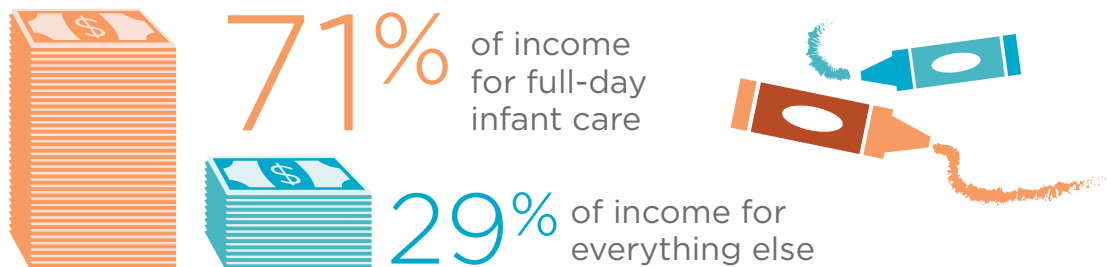


differences are predictive of 3rd grade reading ability. These findings, as well as a large body of research (*detailed in the appendix*), conclusively show the positive effects of a rich array of ELD initiatives on many measures of student success, from graduation to student achievement, as well as on cognitive and social outcomes. These effects are particularly beneficial for those students LCFF was specifically designed to support: high-needs kids who disproportionately enter kindergarten underprepared to learn, struggle to catch up, and often miss the key milestones that are essential to future opportunity and success.

Additionally, in high-quality ELD settings, kids not only gain academic knowledge, but also develop **critical skills** such as learning to pay attention, regulate emotions, follow directions, and complete tasks.

Yet, we also know that many high-needs kids have **limited access** to the quality ELD opportunities that can better prepare them for success in school and later in life. Much of this lack of access can be tied to **cost**. California center-based preschools cost 44 percent more than the annual income of a family of three living in poverty,ⁱⁱⁱ on average, while a single parent earning minimum wage typically spends 71 percent of his/her salary on infant/toddler^{iv,v} care. Even among kids who do have access to preschool, only 15 percent of the kids^{vi} who could benefit most from attending high-quality, center-based programs proven to deliver the strongest results actually attend these programs.

Yet the high cost of child care can be out of reach for many families



Based on single-parent minimum wage income of \$16,640/yr.

LCAP state priority areas

ELD research and LCFF can be directly linked through the **specific state priority areas** that must be addressed in the LCAP for all kids in a district, as well as for the sub-groups that generate supplemental funds under the new formula. More specifically, ELD demonstrates a proven impact on at least **four** of the LCAP's planning and reporting priorities: *student achievement, student engagement, school climate and parent involvement*.

LCAP Priorities: How ELD Research Aligns

Student Achievement

- Over 120 studies – including one evaluating 31 school districts in New Jersey – found that quality preschool programs produced lasting gains – with cognitive benefits equivalent to reducing at least half the achievement gap between students.^{vii, viii}
- Quality preschool programs can lead to a significant reduction in special education placements up to 48 percent, according to research.^{ix}

Student Engagement (e.g. school attendance, chronic absenteeism, graduation)

- A California study found that those who attended a quality preschool program were absent 4.5 fewer days in kindergarten than their peers.^x
- Numerous studies of ELD and pregnant/parenting teen programs show improved graduation rates ranging from 7 percent to 55 percent higher than students who did not participate.^{xi}

School Climate (e.g. suspension/expulsion, school connectedness)

- Research shows high quality preschool has positive effects on children's social-emotional development, including self-esteem, achievement, social behavior, and problem-solving motivation.^{xii}
- Several studies demonstrate that participants in quality preschool or voluntary home visiting programs had lower rates of crime or arrests as youth or young adults.^{xiii}

Parent Involvement

- Studies found parents who are engaged in their child's preschool education are more likely to remain engaged during elementary school.^{xiv}
- Parents whose children were enrolled in a quality infant and toddler care program were more likely to read to them daily than other parents and were more supportive of their children's efforts to develop language and learning abilities, according to research.^{xv}

Building Relationships to be an Effective Partner

For ELD advocates to position Early Learning and Development effectively within LCFF implementation, they must build **enduring and effective partnerships** with school districts and stakeholders. Fostering such collaboration does not occur overnight, however; strategic planning and budgeting that fully engages all stakeholders is a year-round process that requires a shared responsibility between the district and its community.

A strong foundation for building relationships between ELD advocates and the local school community can emanate from:



Sharing knowledge of why ELD is

important: As described above, you can be an effective partner by sharing compelling research that demonstrates why ELD is important as a driver of significant student outcome gains, and why it is particularly relevant as an approach within LCFF. Again, under LCFF, districts have significant flexibility in how they spend funding, but they clearly must focus on determined priorities. Hence, ground your understanding of ELD's proven impact in the LCFF priority areas of student achievement, student engagement, school climate, and parent involvement.

Understanding your districts' fiscal context: It is important to remember that the California made massive cuts to education over the past several years – financial estimates suggest it will take another seven years to restore education funding to 2007 levels – and many districts are struggling with capacity issues and are under pressure to address countless competing priorities as the budget improves. Even though LCFF changes how districts can spend their money, it will take time to phase in the new system both at the state and local levels. Therefore, each district will need to prioritize investments and make very difficult trade-offs based on the prioritization of needs and the availability of scarce resources. Being familiar with the fiscal context of your district will establish a foundation for a respectful and realistic engagement about programmatic and service priorities.

To become more familiar with your local district, advocates can gather information on a few key areas pertaining to budget and student population.

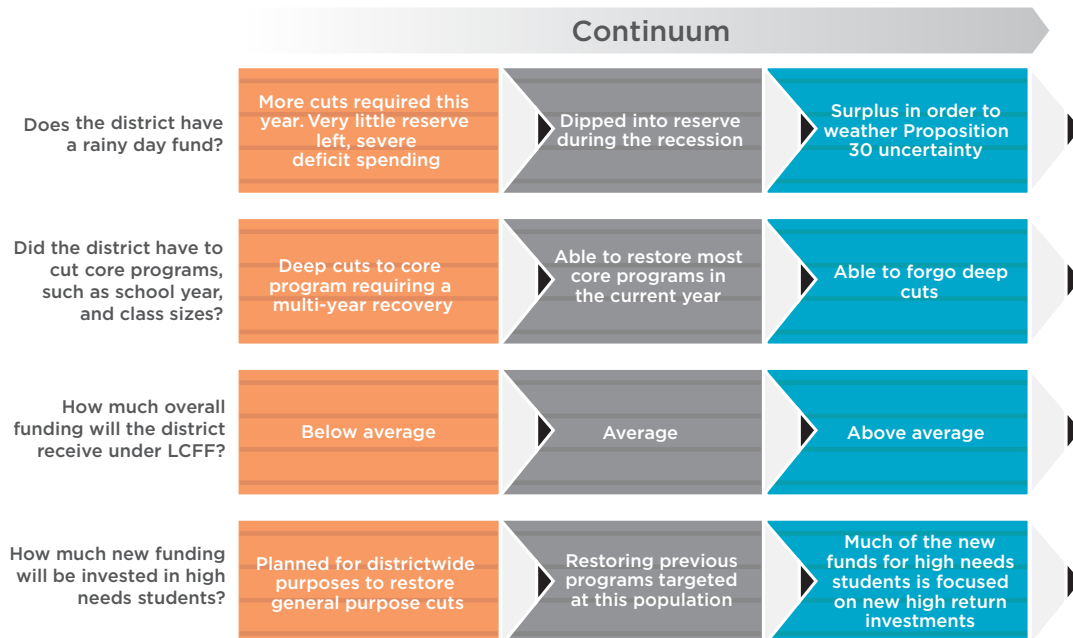


Some questions to ask are:

- Is the district's student enrollment growing or declining?
- Does the district have many LCFF-targeted pupils or few?
- Does it have a budget surplus or a balanced budget? Or does the district need to make difficult choices in order to bring its budget into balance following the recession?
- Has the district earmarked future funds via its collective bargaining agreements?
- Does the district need to invest funds to pay off retirement benefits?
- Finally, is the district expecting an incremental or substantial increase in funding under LCFF?

So what should you look for at the local level?

Every district will be unique and could be in multiple columns



Creating key partnerships: Across the state, school leaders and local stakeholders are coming together to engage in LCFF and LCAP planning and implementation activities. A key first step for ELD advocates would be to identify potential local partners who share your ELD objectives. These might include your local First 5 Commission, Local Child Care Planning Council, Child Care Resource and Referral agency, ELD service providers, local business leaders, parents, teachers, labor, and civic leaders, or members of local government (including school board members), among others. Determine how active they already are regarding any aspect of LCFF or other education issues; many districts are expected to start with identifying community priorities, so it is useful to understand all of your partners' potentially competing priorities – as well as in the ELD arena. Once you understand the level of focus and involvement from potential partners, you can begin to strategically reach out to form alliances and collaboratively determine your optimal local ELD agenda.

The Local Landscape

While LCFF and LCAP create new processes, the district planning process itself is not new, and LCAP preparation will not happen in a vacuum, nor is a focused ELD conversation likely to occur in one. As with the budget context, it will benefit you to know more about the district's existing plans – and planning process – investments, and services to better understand where ELD can fit in. (*See Appendix: District Budget & Planning Timeline.*)

Understand the district's planning process: It is critical to understand when you can be most effective, what barriers you will face, and what opportunities exist to promote ELD. This will require that you explore the process within which you hope to make progress.



Key questions for you to explore include:

- Does the district have a multi-year strategic plan in place? If so, how does it intend to connect that with the new LCAP?
- What is the district's current budget planning timeline? For most, the timeline required to make LCFF and LCAP work (see Appendix, *budget timeline*) is new.
- How will the old approach be reconciled with a planning and budget timeline that would work effectively for LCFF adoption/implementation?
- What is the process for engaging stakeholders in the development of the district's LCAP and budget?
- Who among board members, leadership, or staff is driving the process? Which key players – who might be receptive to advocacy for ELD – are not yet participating?
- Are you or your partners aware of other best practices for engagement that might be brought to the district's attention?



Identify the student outcomes that will drive the local conversation: The priorities and timelines driving LCFF and LCAP will put kids' interests at the center of planning and budgeting.



To participate effectively in an LCAP conversation about goals and outcomes that drive planning, it will be useful for you to know such things as:

- Does the district have an existing formal vision for student outcomes?
- Which student outcomes, if any, have become focal points for the district/community?
- Are there additional outcomes, based on data, that should be elevated?
- Do any linkages exist between those priority student outcomes and what you know about the impacts of effective ELD services?

Assess the local needs of kids in your community: It is essential that there is accurate, timely data on the needs that exist for children ages 0-5 in your community in order to effectively promote ELD. A particularly powerful tool to bring to the table would be a *supply/demand gap analysis* related to the availability of high-quality service programs. In many communities local First 5 Commissions, childcare planning councils, or Head Start/Early Head Start operators and the school districts themselves have some/all of this data.



This analysis should address the following:

- What is the supply of high-quality ELD programs in your community?
- What is the impact of those programs on children's outcomes in relation to the 8 priority areas in LCAP, as well as those driving the local conversation?
- What is the demand for programs (e.g., full-day or half-day) in your community?
- Is there an unmet need for services? If so, where, and for which populations of kids?

Determine district readiness for ELD: You also would benefit from being aware of the capacity and assets that exist, or could readily be built, to provide the ELD services you are promoting. ELD service delivery can be a costly proposition, particularly because of facilities costs, so understanding the assets that could be brought to bear can be a mitigating factor in your local deliberations.

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It would be useful to work with your district to explore the following:

- Does the district currently have a range of ELD services, or did the district previously have programs that were eliminated or modified? If so, where are the personnel and other program assets today?
- Does the district have state or federal funds that could be leveraged?
- Are local philanthropic funds available to support ELD in your community?
- What quality improvement initiatives and support systems are available in your region?
- What community partnerships are in place that could support program expansion?
- Does the district have existing facilities, or ones that could be retrofitted, for ELD use?
- Does the district systematically track kindergarten readiness? If so, what are they learning?

Tailor the ELD Approach to Best Meet Your Community Needs

After assessing local need, building effective partnerships, and understanding your local district's context, you and your ELD partners should determine what is the most appropriate early learning and development approach that best fits your community's needs. This can include augmenting and improving an existing local program, or ensuring that ELD is included in districtwide initiatives, such as professional development.

Key Components^{xvi}

As you collaborate to enhance ELD offerings, you should bear in mind that numerous studies have identified the following as valuable components of effective early learning programs:

- A well-trained, stable, and adequately paid workforce that receives on-going intensive supervision and coaching;
- Use of data and developmentally-appropriate child and teacher assessments for continuous improvement with a focus on improving teacher-child interactions;
- A focus on the whole child, including social-emotional and self-regulation skill-building;
- Meaningful parent engagement;
- Small class sizes and student-teacher ratios; and
- Strong connections and alignment between comprehensive 0-5 programs and policies with local transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1-3.



Pursue a Multi-Year Vision

LCFF brings with it some cultural changes; among them is the ability to create *long-term district service delivery and expenditure plans*. This is something that has never been possible in the past environment in which districts often learned of their one-year budget levels after the school year had begun.

Under LCFF, districts have (1) a requirement to provide rolling three-year plans for LCAP and an accountability structure that measures their progress against those plans; (2) an estimated eight-year trajectory of budget allocations that allows them to contemplate multi-year investments or savings; and (3) the flexibility to invest today in strategies that they know will take several years to achieve. These circumstances bode well for a strategy of planning for and pursuing long-term ELD investments.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that many districts made draconian cuts to their “core programs” during the recession, and in addition to rebuilding programs for all students, they will need to quickly demonstrate an increased investment in low-income students, English learners, and foster youth in order to meet the equity foundation of LCFF.

These dynamics nevertheless afford opportunities for promoting ELD. First, advocates can promote the inclusion of ELD as a component of district program and capacity rebuilding – not only to expand ELD programs, but also as a part of key opportunities such as leadership capacity building or professional development supports. Second, even when district budgetary pressures preclude immediate investment in ELD, the presence of a multi-year plan will allow education leaders and stakeholders to commit to the ELD objectives early and then make incremental investments toward achieving that goal in subsequent years.

many districts made draconian cuts to their “core programs” during the recession, and in addition to rebuilding programs for all students, they will need to quickly demonstrate an increased investment in low-income students, English learners, and foster youth

Collaborate to Develop a Vision: We encourage ELD proponents to participate in multi-year planning to achieve their goals.



As you collaborate to develop a long-range vision, we encourage you to continually consider the following questions:

- What program approaches (e.g. preschool, teen parenting support, home visiting) would best fit the local need?
- What are the demographic trends in your community?
- How many kids would be served?
- Which student populations would be served?
- What quality improvement efforts would be put in place?
- What resources would be necessary to achieve this vision?

Identify the first strategic programmatic

investments: The initial steps in building toward a vision are often the most important, since they are necessary to establish the trajectory toward success and the commitment to pursue that trajectory. It is essential to very strategically determine the investments that could be made in year 1 or 2 of LCFF implementation to build progress toward the multi-year vision, and to determine which investments could be made in years 2 and 3 that would align with the LCAP and firmly establish the foundation of continued, long-range investments in ELD.

Free tool

The California Department of Education has a free tool for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten teachers.

Visit:
<http://drdpsr.org/index.html>
for more information.

Some examples of early investments that set the stage for further commitment in the future include:

- If the district isn't tracking how prepared kids are for kindergarten, provide teacher training to implement a kindergarten readiness observation tool. (see side bar.)
- If coordinating with existing community-based programs is a focus, explore joint professional development opportunities or co-hosting parent educational programs or align goals and metrics.
- If there is a demand for full-day preschool but the available spaces are all half-day, invest to expand to full-day beginning in communities where there is highest need.
- If ELD preschool and child care programs are in place expand on-going coaching, supervision, and professional development and/or participate in the local Quality Rating and Improvement System effort if available in your county to improve quality.
- If ELD preschool and child care programs are in place, and the focus is on expanding services to reach more kids, invest in hiring additional staff in multiple configurations; acquiring instructional and developmental materials; or identifying and repurposing facilities.



In Conclusion: Making Early Learning a Foundation for K-12 Success

California's new education finance model, LCFF, provides an exciting opportunity for early childhood advocates throughout the state. LCFF's focus on improving outcomes for all kids, with a more intentional focus on the state's most vulnerable students – the same kids who benefit most from early learning opportunities – means that advocates are well-positioned to make the case for greater investment in ELD programs and services in all communities. Through LCFF implementation, districts will be developing short-term and long-term strategies for improving student outcomes, which provides a prime opportunity to establish Early Learning and Development as a core education program for all K-12 schools. Showing district leaders how a solid body of research on ELD aligns with LCFF priority areas will allow advocates to make an effective case that these programs are essential to support kids and help districts meet their accountability goals. Early learning advocates can and should actively engage K-12 stakeholders now to ensure they recognize the value of early learning and provide more young children with access to these opportunities, especially those traditionally underserved.

So what do these reforms in California mean for our kids? At its most basic, that what we aspire for children, and what they dream for themselves, is the driving focus in all of the work that is done locally in the state. Improving student outcomes in multiple areas, including Early Learning and Development, should become the central goal to how we collectively evaluate success over the long haul. Just as early learning and development is the foundation of kids' long-term success, it can become the foundation of California's new vision to serve all K-12 students better.

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To receive updates on these materials and stay apprised of best practices and the most recent developments across the state, we invite you and/or your organization to sign up for The Children's Movement of California at: www.childrennow.org/join

ELD & LCFF
INFO SHEET



Strengthen ELD in your community through LCFF

As an advocate for **Early Learning and Development (ELD)**, you can now work with your district to encourage investments in early learning programs and services in your community through implementation of the state's new education finance model, the **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**.

Signed into law in 2013, LCFF provides districts with more funding for vulnerable students and more flexibility in spending their education dollars to best meet their students' needs. Your local school district is currently in the process of drafting a budget and an accountability plan to ensure it meets the new requirements under LCFF. As part of this process, your district is required to gather the community's input to make these decisions.

This requirement provides ELD advocates an **unprecedented opportunity** to work in partnership with the school system and community to push for the high quality ELD opportunities that research shows help improve outcomes for children in K-12 and beyond.

To guide you through this engagement process, Children Now has created a primer (see www.childrennow.org/lcffprimer) that provides a comprehensive overview on LCFF and a **step by step** guide on how to leverage it to make the case for ELD. We also provide summaries of key early learning research, district budget and planning timelines, and lists of questions to ask your school leaders.

Districts are now drafting their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs), a document that will hold them accountable to meeting LCFF's eight priority areas on student and school improvement.

How Research Links LCFF and ELD to LCAP's Priority Areas

Priority: *Increases Student Academic Achievement*

- ELD promotes achievement gains, narrows the achievement gap
- Preschools reduce special education placements

Priority: *Strengthens Student Engagement*

- Preschoolers have fewer absences in kindergarten
- ELD programs improve graduation rates

Priority: *Improves School Climate*

- Preschool promotes social-emotional development
- Preschool and home visitation programs lead to reduced crime

Priority: *Promotes Parent Involvement*

- Parents engaged in preschool remain engaged in K-12
- Parents read to their kids more often when in infant/toddler programs



3 Ways to Get Started



Share the Research that Proves ELD Helps Reduce the Achievement Gap

- Promotes academic and social development
- Develops critical lifelong learning skills

Understand the Dynamics in Your Local District

- Familiarize yourself with the district's budget and planning process
- Assess the existing ELD needs and assets in your community

Engage & Build Relationships with Stakeholders in Your Community

- Identify local resources and partners to work with
- Develop an ELD approach that fits your community's specific needs



Local Control Funding Formula

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) represents the most comprehensive education finance reform for California's schools in 40 years. Passed with bi-partisan support in the 2013-14 State Budget, LCFF will:

- Target an historic **investment** to benefit high-needs students – those in lower-income households, English learners, and students in foster care.
- Grant school districts and communities more **flexibility** and local control to make decisions that are most responsive to the needs of their students.
- Make school districts **accountable** to provide the programs and resources necessary for all students to succeed while making it a priority that high-needs students be educated on a level playing field with their peers.
- Provide parents and community members with unprecedented **access** to their school district's budget and planning processes, and provide opportunities to help shape its priorities and approach.

Community engagement, transparency and accountability are key to success.

One of the most important features of LCFF is providing an opportunity for student, parent, and community voices to be heard as important budget decisions are being made. LCFF provides a framework for districts to work with their communities and implement locally-tailored approaches to achieve greater student outcomes. The **Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs)** are the central documents in this process.

To set the foundation for this local work, the LCAPs are designed so that districts will need to respond to specific state priorities as they develop their local goals and investment approach, such as:

- Providing all students access to fully **credentialed teachers, instructional materials** that align with state standards and **safe facilities**.
- Implementing of California's **academic standards**, including the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the English language development, history social science, visual and performing arts, health education and physical education standards.

Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

The LCAPs are designed to:

- Describe measurable, multi-year goals for student outcomes.
- Demonstrate how the district's budget will help achieve those goals.
- Assess how well the plan's strategies improved outcomes each year to encourage continuous improvement.

- Engaging **parents and the local community** in the decision-making process and the educational programs of students.
- Improving **student achievement** and outcomes along multiple measures, including test scores, English proficiency, and college and career preparedness.
- Supporting **student engagement**, including whether students attend school or are chronically absent.
- Highlighting **school climate** and connectedness through suspension and expulsion rates local surveys and other locally identified means.
- Ensuring all students have access to classes that prepare them for **college and careers**, regardless of what school they attend or where they live.
- Measuring **other important student outcomes** related to required areas of study, including physical education and the arts.

Although school district governing boards remain the local decision-makers, adopting both the LCAP and the district budget by public vote, LCFF creates a distinct role for **stakeholder involvement** in the district planning/budgeting process. This provides a unique opportunity to leverage community interests and assets to promote student success.

The law includes minimum requirements for engaging parents and the community:

<p>LCAP Public Review – A district’s LCAP must be reviewed by the public, who must be given an opportunity to comment on the LCAP in a hearing that is separate from the hearing in which the LCAP is adopted.</p>	<p>English learner advisory committee – Districts with at least 15 percent English learners also must engage an English learner advisory committee to provide input on the development of the LCAP.</p>
<p>Parental advisory committee – The district will need to solicit input from an advisory committee of parents/guardians who represent the students of the district, especially parents of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth throughout the development of the LCAP.</p>	<p>Community Transparency – The superintendent must notify the community of opportunities to provide comments regarding the proposed LCAP, and must respond to these comments in writing.</p>

While meeting the minimum requirements of the law is a necessity, promoting authentic and meaningful community engagement – and thus gaining the maximum benefit of this collaboration – will require school and community leaders to do *more than the minimum*.

Throughout California, school and community leaders are discussing how to implement processes that will meet the needs of students, parents, and the broader local community so that they can meaningfully partner in their district’s planning and budgeting process. Executing this process effectively will take time, commitment, and a willingness to consistently review and improve the strategies that are pursued. But through this deliberate work, schools, and communities can improve communication and trust for the benefit of all kids.



Making the Case for Early Learning & Development Investments

A strong body of research conclusively shows the impact of a rich array of early learning and development (ELD) initiatives on many measures of K-12 student success, from graduation rates to student achievement, as well as positive effects on cognitive and social outcomes. This research provides two direct linkages between **Early Learning and Development (ELD)** and **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**. *First*, it demonstrates that ELD's impacts are particularly strong for those students LCFF was specifically designed to support: high-needs children, specifically low-income, English learners and foster youth, who disproportionately enter kindergarten underprepared to learn, struggle to catch up, and often miss the key milestones that are essential to future opportunity and success. *Second*, research demonstrates a proven impact of ELD on at least four of the eight state priorities that are required to be included in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) planning and reporting. To support your understanding of the benefits of ELD, we encapsulate the key research findings related to LCFF objectives below.

The Impact of Quality ELD in Relation to LCFF State Priorities: Key Findings

ELD and High-Needs Kids: What Research Tells Us

In high quality ELD settings – where there is a focus on language-rich interactions between kids and well-trained teachers and caregivers – kids not only gain academic knowledge, but also develop critical learning skills, such as paying attention, regulating emotions, following directions, and completing tasks. Numerous studies demonstrate that these effects are stronger for high-needs kids than for their peers – as seen in much of the research cited below. Yet, we also know that given program costs,^{xxi,xxii} students with the greatest needs are the least likely to access the ELD opportunities that can better prepare them for success in school long-term.^{xxiii}



Student Achievement

- Over 120 studies – including one evaluating 31 school districts in New Jersey – found that children attending high-quality preschool produced gains through high school equivalent to at least half the achievement gap between low-income and other students.^{xxiv}
- Preschools that are part of the California State Preschool program produced gains of seven percentiles for language and math, with even larger gains for specific literacy skills.^{xxv}
- Perry Preschool kids outperformed their peers on intellectual, language, and school achievement tests. At age 14, the study found that 49% of participants met “basic achievement” levels, versus 15% of the control group.^{xxvi}
- Abecedarian Project participants had higher reading and math achievement scores throughout the school years up to age 15.^{xxvii}
- Quality preschool programs can reduce special education placements by up to 48%.^{xxviii}
- Quality, evidence-based home visiting programs produced statistically significant benefits for children, including increases in school readiness.^{xxix}
- 82% of low-income children who participated in the Parents as Teachers home visiting program and attended preschool were ready for school at kindergarten entry – a higher percentage than their affluent peers who did not participate.^{xxx}

Please see *Education Primer Leveraging the Local Control Funding Formula* for reference citations.



Student Engagement

- Early academic performance in preschool and early elementary is one of the most consistent predictors for dropping out of high-school.^{xxxii}
 - The high school graduation rate for mothers in California's Cal-SAFE program, which provides academic and support services to teen parents and their children, was a full 55 percentage points higher than the overall rate for teen mothers - 75% vs. 20%.^{xxxiii}
 - The Perry Preschool program produced better high school graduation rates compared to the no-program group - 77% vs. 60%.^{xxxiii}
 - Abecedarian Project participants were more likely to still be in school at age 21 - 42% vs. 20% of the control group - and more likely to have graduated from or be attending a four-year college - 36% vs. 14%.^{xxxiv}
 - Participants in Chicago Parent-Child Centers were more likely to finish high school (82% vs. 75%) than their peers.^{xxxv}
 - A review of more than 120 studies found that quality preschool favorably impacted social abilities and school progress.^{xxxvi}
 - A study of over 600 California kids found that those who attended a quality preschool program were absent an average 4.5 fewer days in kindergarten than their peers.^{xxxvii}
 - Children enrolled in Cal-SAFE were more likely to be up-to-date on their immunizations (by 13 percentage points) than the California average.^{xxxviii}
-



School Climate (e.g. suspension/expulsion, school connectedness)

- Perry Preschool participants were less likely to be involved in crime than the control group, in particular, committing fewer drug crimes in early adulthood (9% vs. 25%).^{xxxix}
 - Quality preschool positively impacts the development of kids' self-esteem, achievement, social behavior, and motivation to solve problems, complete tasks, and improve their own abilities.^{xi}
 - Long-term impacts of one high-quality home visiting program include a 59% decrease in youth arrests.^{xii}
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Parent Involvement

- Parents who are engaged in their child's preschool education are more likely to remain engaged during elementary school.^{xiii}
- Parents of children in the Perry Preschool program had more positive attitudes toward their children's schooling at age 15 than parents of children in the control group.^{xiiii}
- The Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program produced a 48% reduction in child abuse and neglect.^{xliv}
- Parents of Head Start preschool children are more likely than non-Head Start parents to read to their children frequently.^{xlv}
- Parents whose children were enrolled in a quality infant and toddler care program were more likely to read to them daily than control group parents (57% vs. 52%) and were more supportive of their kids' efforts to develop language and learning abilities.^{xlvi}



Early Childhood Research

Numerous studies—at the national, state, and local levels-- have demonstrated the lasting benefits of early learning programs and initiatives for all young children, especially those who are low-income and English learners. Research shows that a child's exposure to a high-quality preschool and early learning opportunities contributes to higher academic achievement, increased high school graduation rates, and greater readiness for college and careers. These outcomes have also proven to bring community benefits, such as lowering substance abuse and crime rates, which provide a cost savings for localities long-term.

A few of these studies are listed here:

National and State Studies

1. Preschool Education and Its Lasting Effects

This analysis of numerous studies concludes that preschool programs produce an immediate cognitive impact equal to a child moving from the 30th percentile to the 50th percentile on achievement test scores. It also cites the long-term benefits on graduation rates, grade repetition, special education, and social behavior. All children benefit from quality preschool, but the largest benefits are likely found for low-income children.

Barnett, W. Steven, Preschool education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit, 2008, <http://nieer.org/resources/research/PreschoolLastingEffects.pdf>.

2. A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions

This analysis of 123 studies of early childhood interventions found significant effects on cognitive and social skills as well as school progress. Through statistical analysis, it identified average effect sizes of treatment-control early childhood studies to be 0.231 for cognitive outcomes, 0.137 for school outcomes, and 0.156 for social outcomes. The National Institute for Early Education Research cites findings from the study showing that among quality programs with certain instructional techniques, students experienced cognitive benefits equivalent to at least half the achievement gap between white students and students of color, or between low-income students and their peers. Such benefits lasted through high school.

Camilli, Gregory, et al., "Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development." *Teachers College Record* 112.3 (2010): 579-620, http://spot.colorado.edu/~camillig/Papers/38_15440.pdf.

Barnett, W. Steven. Getting the Facts Right on Pre-K and the President's Pre-K Proposal. National Institute for Early Education Research, 2013, <http://www.nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/Getting%20the%20Facts%20Right%20on%20Pre-K.pdf>, accessed November 2013

3. The Abbott Preschool Program

Abbott provides quality preschool to children in 31 high-poverty New Jersey communities that are home to about 25% of that state's children. A 5th grade follow-up study found test score gains for children who participated in the program – those who attended one year of preschool gained 10-20% of the achievement gap between white students and students of color, and students with two years of preschool experienced even larger gains, equal to 20-40% of the achievement gap. The study also found that Abbott lowered grade retention and reduced special education placements.

Barnett, W. Steven, et al., Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up. National Institute for Early Education Research, 2013, <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>, accessed February 2014.

4. Oklahoma's Universal Preschool Program

A study of 838 children in Oklahoma's universal preschool program found statistically-significant gains for children who participated. Children who attended preschool scored higher on tests of early literacy and math, experiencing 28% more growth over the year in vocabulary, 44% more growth in math, and 88% more growth in print awareness. Tests of print awareness concepts found particularly strong increases for low-income children.

Lamy, Cynthia, W. Steven Barnett, and Kwanghee Jung. The Effects of Oklahoma's Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program on Young Children's School Readiness. National Institute for Early Education Research, Dec. 2005, <http://nieer.org/resources/research/multistate/ok.pdf>, accessed February 2014.

5. Benefits for Low-Income Students and Dual-Language Learners

This report reviews existing research on the effectiveness of preschool programs, showing that all children, including those in middle-class families, strongly benefit. These benefits exceed costs, even for middle-income children. However, the strongest benefits are seen for low-income children. Additionally, studies suggest that dual-language learners experience positive effects as strong, and sometimes stronger, than their peers who only speak English.

Yoshikawa, Hirokazu. Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education. Society for Research in Child Development and Foundation for Child Development, 2013, <http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20on%20Preschool%20Education%20FINAL.pdf>.

6. The Perry Preschool Study

The High/Scope Perry Preschool study looked at the effects of quality preschool education on a group of low-income African-American children, finding strong short- and long-term impacts. Children who attended the Perry Preschool program were more likely to graduate from high school than children in the randomly-assigned control group (77% vs. 60%). Children in the program performed better on school achievement tests and had more positive attitudes toward school in general. They were also less likely to be involved in crime than the control group: in early adulthood, participants in Perry had fewer drug crimes (9% vs. 25%) and by age 40 had fewer overall arrests (36% arrested five or more times vs. 55%). The preschool program also had significant impacts on median annual earnings and employment rates.

"The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40: Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions" excerpt from Schweinhart, Lawrence J., et al., Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope, 2005, http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf.

7. The Rate of Return to the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program

James Heckman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist at the University of Chicago, estimated a strong rate of return from the Perry Preschool program. Through comprehensive analysis, Heckman estimated that an annual social rate of return of a quality preschool education was 7-10%. This means that for every \$1 spent on the program, it produced between \$7 and \$10 each year in return, through increases in tax revenue from higher earnings and decreases in government spending on the welfare and criminal justice systems.

Heckman, James J., et al., "The Rate of Return to the HighScope Perry Preschool Program." *Journal of Public Economics* 94 (2010): 114-28. http://heckman.uchicago.edu/sites/heckman.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/Heckman_et_al_2010_RateofRtn-to-Perry.pdf.

8. College and Career Readiness

A report of the federal Committee for Economic Development reviewing three high-quality preschool programs – the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child-Parent Center – found benefits that indicate increased college and career readiness. Participants in these programs had higher high school completion rates than students who did not participate: 71% vs. 54% for Perry, 70% vs. 67% for Abecedarian, and 66% vs. 54% for Chicago. Participants were also more likely to attend college than the comparison group: 33% vs. 28% for Perry, 36% vs. 12% for Abecedarian, and 24% vs. 18% for Chicago. For the two studies that included employment data, the report shows that Perry and Abecedarian participants were more likely to be employed at the age of data collection: 71% vs. 59% for Perry and 70% vs. 58% for teen mothers in Abecedarian. The report also shows that Perry Preschool participants had higher monthly earnings at age 27: \$1219 vs. \$766.

Galinsky, Ellen. The Economic Benefits of High-Quality Early Childhood Programs: What Makes the Difference? Families and Work Institute for The Committee for Economic Development, 2006, http://sitemaker.umich.edu/carss_education/files/ced_economic_benefits.pdf, accessed February 2014.

9. The Effect on Special Education

This report shows that quality early learning programs have positive effects on special education costs. Quality programs with the most rigorous studies found the strongest effects, with reductions in special education placements ranging from 40-48%.

High-Quality Early Education: Cutting Crime and Saving Up to \$300 Million a Year in Bay Area Education Costs. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, http://www.fightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/reports/Report-BayArea_Special_Ed_Early_Ed.pdf.

10. The California State Preschool program

A 2008 study on the impact of the California State Preschool found that it “produces substantial gains in children’s language, math and literacy development.” The report compared data on children in over 200 State Preschool classrooms with data for kindergarteners in areas served by those preschools. It estimated gains of 7 percentiles for language and math, with even larger gains for specific literacy skills.

Barnett, W. Steven, Carollee Howes, and Kwanghee Jung. California’s State Preschool Program: Quality and Effects on Children’s Cognitive Abilities at Kindergarten Entry, working paper, 2008.

11. Benefits of Expanding Quality Preschool in California

A RAND Corporation study found that quality universal preschool for California’s four-year-olds would have significant positive impacts. Even a part-day program that only served 70% of four-year-olds in the state would produce estimated benefits including reductions in special education use (by up to 9%), the number of high school dropouts (by 14%), and the number of children with a juvenile petition (by up to 10%). Some counties would see even larger impacts at the local level – for example, special education use in L.A. County would decrease by up to 11%, and Central Valley counties would see a 22% decrease in high school dropouts. Researchers estimated that these benefits would translate into dollars saved – \$2.7 billion in net benefits per year to the state as a whole.

Karoly, Lynn A. County-Level Estimates of the Effects of a Universal Preschool Program in California. The RAND Corporation, 2005, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2005/RAND_TR340.pdf.

Local Studies

12. Educational Outcomes for Preschool for All Participants in Redwood City School District

Stanford University conducted an analysis of Redwood City, California students who participated in the San Mateo County Preschool for All program. Controlling for demographic factors, children who attended preschool for two years had higher proficiency rates in multiple kindergarten subjects than children who did not attend. In first grade, the highest-need students who had attended Preschool for All maintained higher adjusted proficiency rates in multiple subjects. For example, listening/speaking proficiency rates were 7% higher than for comparable children who had not participated in the preschool program. First grade English language learners who had attended preschool had stronger reading and work study skills than their non-preschool counterparts.

Sanchez, Monika. Educational Outcomes for Preschool for All Participants In Redwood City School District - Update. Stanford University, John W. Gardner Center, 2012, http://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/resources/publications/PFA_IssueBrief2012_final%209.24.12.pdf.

13. The Sobrato Early Academic Language Program for Dual-Language Learners

A third year evaluation of the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) program for dual-language learners in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties found that it has been highly effective in improving language, literacy, and cognition for children, as well as family literacy. Children in the program entered preschool with low scores that were similar to comparison groups, but their scores increased by the time they entered kindergarten. Their overall scores in Spanish, along with and English reading and writing, were higher than comparison groups. In fact, SEAL children scored higher than district and state averages in English reading and writing.

The Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) program overview, <http://www.sobrato.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Educating-English-Language-Learners-April-2013.pdf>.

14. Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile, by Fresno County Office of Education

Fresno County Office of Education found an increase in school readiness among Fresno students who had attended preschool. Fifty-percent of students who attended preschool were “Ready to Go,” (as defined by a local kindergarten readiness assessment tool) while only 21% of students without preschool experience were “Ready to Go.” The office concluded that these results support “published data [that] overwhelmingly demonstrates that preschool attendance is an critical component of kindergarten readiness.”

Copher, Michele C., and Christina Collosi. Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile. Presentation. Fresno County Office of Education, 2013, <http://ksep.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/For-F5FC-Jan-30-KSEP-Presentation.pdf>.

Other Early Childhood Intervention Studies

15. The Abecedarian Project

The Abecedarian Project was a randomized, controlled study that provided quality early care and education for low-income infants and children through age five (and did include a school age intervention up to age 8 for some participating children). The study found higher achievement scores in reading and math for children who received quality early intervention. This effect continued throughout the school years – up through evaluation at age 15. Children who had received the Abecedarian intervention also had fewer special education placements and grade retentions. They were more likely to be in school at age 21 – 42% vs. 20%, and 36% had attended either graduated from or were attending a four-year college, compared to 14% of the control group.

Pungello, Elizabeth P., Frances A. Campbell, and W. Steven Barnett. Poverty and Early Childhood Educational Intervention. Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University, 2006, <http://www.law.unc.edu/documents/poverty/publications/pungelloandcampbellpolicybrief.pdf>.

16. The Chicago Child-Parent Centers

The Chicago Longitudinal Study evaluated the impact of the publicly-funded Chicago Child-Parent Centers, which currently provide education and family support for children ages 3 to 5 years (and previously up to nine years.) In an evaluation of more than 1400 participants over 25 years, the study found that the program produced strong, lasting benefits. Participants were more likely to finish high school (82% vs. 75%) and attend a four-year college (15% vs. 11%) than their peers in a comparison group. They were less likely to be arrested (48% vs. 54%) or abuse drugs or alcohol (17 % vs. 23%).

Reynolds, Arthur J., et al., “School-Based Early Childhood Education and Age-28 Well-Being: Effects by Timing, Dosage, and Subgroups,” *Science* 333.6040 (2011): 360-64, <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/333/6040/360.full>, accessed January 2014.

“Chicago Public Schools: Child Parent Center,” <http://www.cps.edu/Schools/EarlyChildhood/Pages/Childparentcenter.aspx>, accessed February 2014.

17. Quality Infant and Toddler Care

A study of Early Head Start, a quality infant and toddler care program, found benefits for social-emotional development of participants. Children in the program showed stronger social-emotional skills (such as engagement and attentiveness) and had less aggressive behavior than children in the control group. And participants scored higher on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test, which assesses receptive language (score of 83.3 for the quality care group vs. 81.1 for the other group). Additionally, positive effects were observed for parents of children in the program: they provided more emotional support to their children and read to them more frequently (57% reported reading daily to their child, vs. 52% of parents in the control group).

Making a Difference in the Lives of Infants and Toddlers and Their Families: The Impacts of Early Head Start: Executive Summary. Mathematica Policy Research, 2002, <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/ehsfinalsumm.pdf>.

18. Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness

This comprehensive review by Mathematica, in conjunction with a Department of Health and Human Services working group, assessed research on home visiting programs that serve families with children from the prenatal stage to age five. In a broad literature review, the project identified 14 evidence-based home visiting models, including Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families America. All of these models had at least one study that showed statistically significant benefits for children, including increases in school readiness, positive parenting practices, and children’s health.

Avellar, Sarah, et al., Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Review: Executive Summary. OPRE Report #2013-42. Mathematica Policy Research, 2013, http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/HomVEE_Executive_Summary_2013.pdf.

19. California School Age Families Education Program (Cal-SAFE)

Cal-SAFE programs run by school districts throughout the state support pregnant and parenting students and their children. A report to the California legislature showed a substantial increase in graduation rates for students in the program – over 75% versus just 20% for teen mothers in general. Over 65% of Cal-SAFE students planned to enroll in college or pursue employment after finishing the program. Moreover, the program produced benefits for the children of teen parents as well. Over 75% attended a Cal-SAFE sponsored child care program, with 94% of these children up-to-date on immunizations. This is 13 percentage points higher than the immunization rate (81%) for California children of comparable age.

Cal-SAFE – 2005 Legislative Report. California Department of Education, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/pp/legreport.asp>.



BUDGET & PLANNING

District Budget & Planning Timeline

Where LCFF and ELD Fit In

Engaging your school district at the right time with the right information is critical to having an impact on the **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)** and the development of the **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)** at the district level. The district budget process is quite complex and is driven by many inputs and requirements, such as the availability of the state budget and requirements to submit certain reports and plans. As importantly, a deadline for a local board to take an action may require several months of internal processes by various school and district players be executed in advance.

To guide your participation, begin by creating a **calendar** that captures critical deadlines related to the development of your district’s budget and LCAP. The timeline below includes many of the critical processes within each year’s budget and accountability cycles in a typical school district. Dates and specific actions will vary by district, however; your local leaders can help you to identify a more specific timeline that will maximize engagement opportunities and impact.



Late Summer - Fall

The beginning of a school year in late summer/early fall is when key data on the prior school year often becomes available. This data supports internal analysis that can drive decision-making for the next year. This is the optimal time to begin engaging the community in the planning and budgeting processes for the district.

Events:

- Year-end fiscal report for the prior year is received;
- State assessment data is released;

Districts should:

- Identify and engage the stakeholders that need to participate in the LCFF/LCAP process to ensure broad community representation and meaningful engagement. This will include forming any advisory committees statutorily required for specific budget or accountability purposes;
- Begin LCFF/LCAP community input sessions:
 - Initially, articulate the LCFF/LCAP process to be used (including timelines), and establish goals for stakeholder engagement;
- Collaboratively perform a district needs assessment:
 - Review data related to the goals identified in the LCAP for the current school year, including student achievement, prior levels of community engagement, and past expenditures;
 - Review the comprehensive set of current school and district plans; eventually, these may be interconnected with the LCAP;

- Monitor current year progress and determine whether adjustments to funding decisions and anticipated activities in the LCAP for years 2 and 3 are needed;

What you can do:

- Watch for district notifications regarding the planning and budgeting processes. If necessary, ask district personnel for this information;
- Familiarize yourself with relevant district outcomes data, plans, and financial priorities;
- Familiarize yourself with research that supports ELD;
- Share local ELD supply, demand, and outcome data;
- Talk to district leaders about your interest in participating on committees;
- Identify community assets and partnerships; and
- Attend any public hearings prepared to actively participate.



Winter

In winter, key aspects of the state’s budget and allocation processes provide local districts with meaningful information that shape budget adjustments for the current school year. Districts also begin developing formal projections for the upcoming school year. Together, this information guides initial plans for the next school year.

Events:

- December, districts review their prior year audit report**;
- By Dec 15, districts certifies first interim budget report**;
- District fiscal and enrollment data for next year provided;
- In January: Governor proposes state budget; Department of Finance projections under LCFF give estimates of district-by-district revenue that will provide reasonable parameters for planning;

Districts should:

- Evaluate changes to the current year’s enrollment, revenue & expenditure projections and determine necessary adjustments;
- Evaluate changes to next year’s enrollment, revenue & expenditure projections;
- Review personnel needs and staffing plans;
- Use LCFF/LCAP community input sessions to set a local

vision and prioritize strategies into a multi-year blueprint for improving teaching and learning and student outcomes;

What you can do:

- Attend hearings, monitor district website and communications to understand data and planning updates;
- Participate actively in the public processes for establishing district priorities for the three-year LCAP including;
 - Advocate for inclusion of ELD within the comprehensive scope of district plans/budget;
 - Articulate a vision for ELD investment and the potential role of the district; and
 - Break down the investments into manageable annual intervals that build on one another.



Spring

In spring, districts receive additional information from the state regarding the current school year’s budget and allocations, and they are finalizing their projections for the next school year. Even though budgets will not be adopted until early summer, districts are required by law to provide notice of possible layoffs for the subsequent school year, so staffing projections are considered months in advance of the budget adoption. This period will be critical for the determination of program and spending priorities.

Events:

- By March 15, district certifies second interim budget report;**
- In May: Governor revises budget proposal for next year;
- Individual school site plans, where required, are submitted to district board;

Districts should:

- Use LCFF/LCAP community input sessions to shape investment strategies into a preliminary LCAP;
- By March 15, preliminary layoff notices must be sent;**
- In May: Final notices of certificated layoff sent out;** project final revenues & expenses; draft initial budget based on LCAP planning;

- Late May: District leadership prepares final LCFF budget and LCAP;

What you can do

- Participate actively in the public processes for establishing the preliminary and final LCAPs including;
 - Advocate for inclusion of ELD within the comprehensive scope of district plans/budget;
 - Articulate a vision for ELD investment and the potential role of the district;
 - Break down the investments into manageable annual intervals that build on one another; and
- Review layoff plans to understand preliminary priorities and key tradeoffs district is prepared to make.



Summer

Early summer sees the finalization of several budget, planning, and accountability processes at both the state and local levels. In the context of community engagement, this is a period to observe the initial rollout of school and district plans.

Events:

- By June 30, final state budget (governing the next school year) is adopted;**

Districts should:

- By July 1, adopt final budget for next year and submit it to county superintendent;**
- By July 1, district board approves its LCAP applying to the next three years;**
- Begin implementation of school site plans;
- Late August–September, District public hearings to review any changes in projected income/expenditures and county superintendent’s recommendations;**

What you can do:

- Attend public hearings regarding district budget changes; and
- Monitor district information sources regarding rollout of plan; **remember this is a continuous improvement cycle!**

** indicates statutorily required process

Footnotes

Please note: many of the infographics come from Children Now's *2014 California Children's Report Card*. For more information see www.childrennow.org/reportcard

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