

First 5 Contra Costa

Early Childhood Education Strategy Review Session Report



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Introduction

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Strategy funds programs to provide services in three areas: The Professional Development Program for Early Childhood Educators (PDP), The Early Learning Demonstration Project (ELDP), and the Inclusion Program (providing assistance for providers serving children with special needs). This Strategy Review Session and report focuses only on the PDP and the ELDP.

- **The Professional Development Program** offers ECE providers professional networking opportunities, support, training resources, and financial incentives to increase their education and professional training.
- **The Early Learning Demonstration Project** provides grants and support to help ECE programs enhance the quality of their programs and move toward or achieve national accreditation standards. ELDP sites receive monetary grants, training and staff support, funding for classes, facilities improvements, educational materials, and mentoring programs.

The ECE Strategy Review Session report presents qualitative and quantitative program data and recommendations. Most data are presented by year since each program's inception, spanning 2001-2007 for the PDP, and 2005-2007 for the ELDP, in order to show how the programs have changed over time. The data presented are from a variety of sources including self-reported demographics, participation records, surveys, interviews and focus groups. A more detailed description of the methodology and data sources can be found in the Appendix.

The report is organized by the following three goal areas and includes data for each of the strategies used to achieve those goals:

- **Goal 1: Increase the professional development of ECE providers**
Strategy: Professional Development Program (PDP)
 - ✓ Strategy 1a: Stipends and incentives
 - ✓ Strategy 1b: Professional advisory system (Community College Advisors, Professional Growth Advisors – PGAs - and Professional Plans)
 - ✓ Strategy 1c: Accessibility of education (tutoring, cohorts, scholarships, higher education, and collaboration)
- **Goal 2: Improve the quality of family child care programs and child care centers**
Strategy: Early Learning Demonstration Project (ELDP)
 - ✓ Strategy 2a: Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and monetary grants
 - ✓ Strategy 2b: Accreditation and monetary grants
 - ✓ Strategy 2c: Technical assistance
- **Goal 3: Increase services to diverse ECE providers and programs**
Strategy: Targeting specific providers and geographic areas

Findings

Goal 1: Increase the Professional Development of ECE Providers

Strategy: Professional Development Program (PDP)

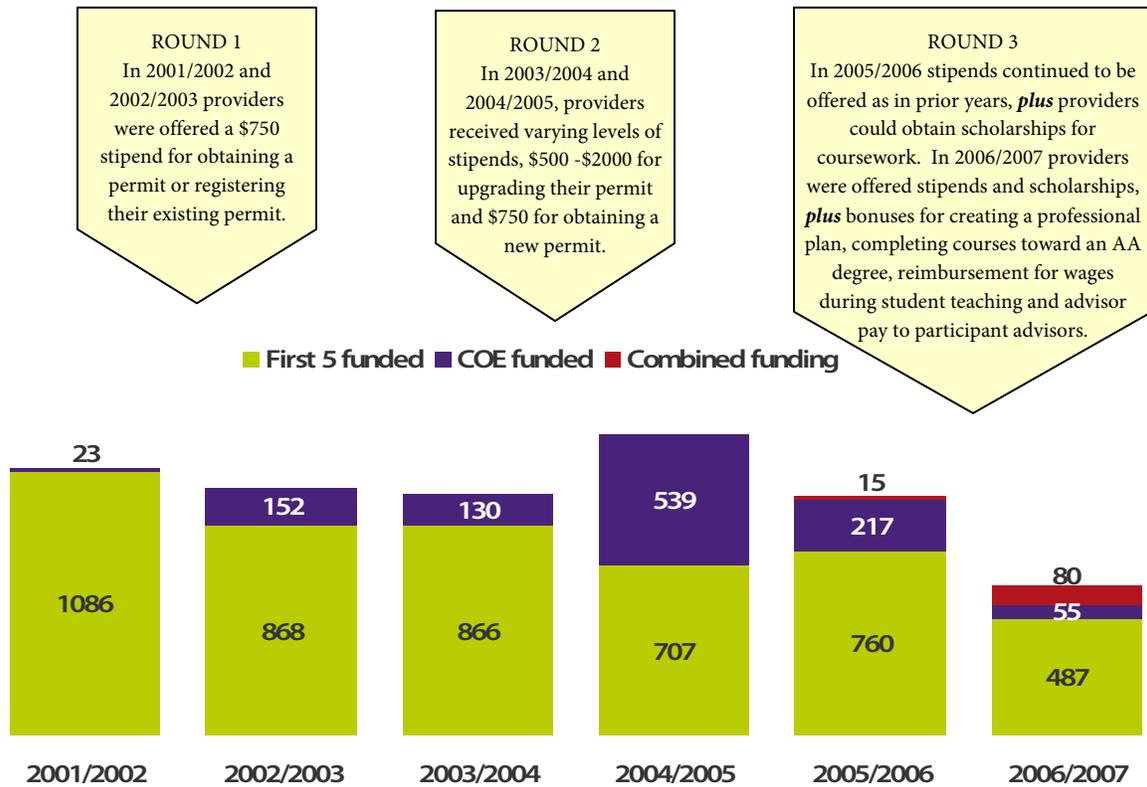
The PDP has evolved since its inception in 2001, from a program based on providing after-the-fact stipends for the attainment of and advancement on the California Child Development Permit Matrix (see Appendix B) to a comprehensive program that also provides up-front support to help providers move toward a degree. The investment in 2005/2006 through 2008/2009 was directed at providing academic advising and peer-to-peer support; scholarships to support tuition and other educational costs; cohort classes to help non-English speaking students obtain ECE units and ECE students to obtain math credits; tutoring, and other educational support services. In addition, program and incentive opportunities were added for providers working at all levels of education – from providers in non-licensed care settings to providers at the highest levels of education.

Stipends and Incentives

Since 2001, providers who met minimum eligibility criteria could receive stipends and other incentives as a result of a leveraging of First 5 Contra Costa, Early Learning Opportunity Act (ELOA), and AB212 funding.¹ In the first two rounds (2001 through 2003 and 2003 through 2005), First 5 Contra Costa funded most stipends and incentives for participants, regardless of where they worked. In round 3 (2005 through present), providers working in state-funded programs received some or all of their incentives from County Office of Education (COE) whereas providers working in family child care programs and private centers received all of their incentives from First 5 Contra Costa.

Exhibit 1 shows the number of providers who received stipends and other monetary incentives through their participation in the PDP, since the program's inception. The PDP was implemented in three rounds, each offering stipends to individuals who met specific program criteria. These criteria are described in the arrows.

Exhibit 1 Components of the PDP and Number of PDP Participants, 2001-2007



- ✓ In total, 3,060 unduplicated providers have participated in the PDP for one or more years since 2001/2002 (data not shown). Of note:
 - Half of providers (47%) who ever participated in the PDP participated two or more years.
 - Nearly 40% of providers who participated in 2006/2007 also participated in 2005/2006.
 - A significant drop-off occurred in Round 3. Only 20% of providers who participated in 2004/2005 also participated in 2005/2006.

Exhibit 2 shows the level that providers in the PDP attained on the Child Development Permit Matrix.

- ✓ In FY 2006/2007, only 514 of the 622 providers participating in the PDP reported their level on the Child Development Permit Matrix. Data show that:
 - More than 50% of providers hold permits at the entry levels (Assistant and Associate Teacher).
 - Nearly one-quarter of providers hold permits at the Teacher and Master Teacher levels.
 - Nearly one-quarter of providers hold permits at the highest levels (Site Supervisor or Program Director).

Exhibit 2 Permit Level of PDP Participants, 2003-2007

Permit Level	2003/2004 n=651	2004/2005 N=431	2005/2006 n=760	2006/2007 N=514
Assistant	15%	21%	20%	19%
Associate Teacher	44%	32%	35%	34%
Teacher/Child Center Permit	15%	16%	15%	15%
Master Teacher	6%	10%	8%	8%
Site Supervisor	11%	18%	17%	20%
Program Director	3%	4%	5%	4%

In FY 2006/2007, providers were able to obtain stipends and incentives for a variety of professional and educational activities.

- More than 40% of providers participating in the PDP received a stipend for obtaining a new Permit (at any level) or for upgrading or renewing their existing Permit. Of the 268 stipend recipients, 106 participants received a \$750 stipend for obtaining a new Permit and 162 providers received between \$500 and \$2,000 for increasing their Permit level.
- Additional incentives are offered to assist providers in returning to school and for providers who complete yearly professional development requirements. These additional incentives are explained in the “Accessibility of Education” section (p. 6).
- Based on survey results, the stipend program is making an impact on retention. The proportion of providers agreeing that the stipend they received contributed to staying at their current job was 74% (n=106).ⁱⁱ
- The vast majority (91%, n=147) of survey respondents reported that they provide higher quality of care as a result of their participation in the PDP.

While all focus group participants valued the stipend system, changes made in stipend criteria in 2006/2007 reduced the number issued from previous years. Additionally, focus group participants reported the following:

- A number of providers reported difficulty navigating the system with regard to requirements and number of types (seven) of incentives. The word “overwhelmed” was frequently used to describe the sentiment.
- Some providers also felt that the new requirements themselves did not necessarily contribute to the drop off, but rather the difficulty in understanding how to meet them.
- Informants expressed a need for combining the differentiated stipend and bonus requirements into one “package” of requirements that provide a yearly stipend.

Professional Advisory System (Community College Advisors, Professional Growth Advisors –PGAs - and Professional Plans)

Community College Advisors

A cornerstone of the PDP program is the advising services. Six full-time advisors work with identified groups of providers. In 2005, all three community colleges hired a full-time Community College Advisor to work with existing and potential ECE students, and to coordinate the educational advising, coursework, and tutoring. The Contra Costa Child Care Council has employed a full time PDP Family Child Care (FCC) Advocate since 2004 to help family child care providers fulfill the requirements of the PDP. Since 2001, COE has had at least two Liaisons to work primarily with providers in state-funded programs.

- ✓ 93% (148/160) of PDP participants who responded to the survey stated that their overall experiences with the advising services were either good or excellent, and 90% (144/160) of respondents said the supportiveness of the advising services to reach their needs was either good or excellent.

The quantitative data above was confirmed by interviewees:

- The PDP college advisory system was universally reported as extremely helpful and valuable to advancing professionalism within the field.
- Students credited the Advisors as being crucial to their retention in college.
- The emotional as well as educational support provided by the Advisors was recognized as most valuable to students; the ESL students were especially appreciative of the Advisor system.
- Both students and Advisors felt that strengthening the PDP college advisory system was needed.

Professional Growth Advisors (PGAs)

In 2006/2007, the PDP instituted a professional growth advising program whereby providers at the Site Supervisor Child Development Permit level or higher could be paid to advise their PDP peers. Interested individuals were required to meet the PDP requirements and apply for the “PDP Professional Growth Advisor” (PGA) position to work with one of the Community College PDP Advisors and/or FCC Advocate.

- ✓ Twenty-three providers became trained PGAs and received stipends for their advising support services.

Comments from focus group participants regarding the PGA system included:

- The PGAs provide needed support to College Advisors who are often stretched in attempting to meet the counseling and enrollment needs of PDP applicants.
- The system expands networking among the provider community and promotes extended support beyond the initial meetings between PGAs and advisees.
- A better understanding of the California Child Development Permit is developed among providers who would not have attempted to apply for a Permit without counseling from the PGAs.
- The system does not provide enough preparation for the PGAs to feel comfortable working with groups of providers, who come from a wide range of backgrounds and needs.

- PGAs serving the various colleges do not have regular communication with each other, which is needed to develop consistent tactics and forms of assistance.

Professional Plans

In 2005/2006, providers were offered training and assistance to complete a Professional Plan, stating their professional and educational goals. Starting in FY 2006/2007 the Professional Plan, instituted by First 5 California regulations, became a requirement for PDP participation.

- ✓ In 2006/2007, 471 providers received an incentive for developing and completing professional planning activities.

The PDP Professional Plan requirement elicited thoughtful comments from providers and College Advisors:

- Institutionalizing a system for planning and organizing a career trajectory is important for professionalizing the field, and helpful to the individual provider.
- The First 5 California Professional Plan requirement does not include resources needed for provider technical assistance, nor monitoring of activities to adequately help individuals reach Professional Plan goals.
- The First 5 California Professional Plan is confusing and duplicative of the existing *Professional Growth Plan* already required for the Child Development Permit and the *Community College Education Plan* (the *Education Plan* is based on an academic needs assessment which is very helpful for PDP applicants in long range planning).
- Professional planning could be of help in projecting and meeting county-wide professional education trends if there was a better way to track and analyze people's needs and different groups' needs (eg: tracking ESL providers through their journey to completing their plans and identifying what classes or courses were most challenging to most of the providers).

Accessibility of Education (tutoring, cohorts, scholarships, higher education, and collaboration)

Tutoring, Cohorts and Scholarships

In 2005, in response to provider feedback about educational challenges, the PDP began offering support services to enable providers to access education and professional development activities, including scholarships, tutoring, and cohort math and ESL classes.

- ✓ In 2005/2006 providers received approximately 4,000 hours of group and individual tutoring as a required part of their math cohort, and ESL-ECE linked cohort courses, and as optional support for successful completion of their GE and ECE coursework. In 2006/2007, providers received approximately 3,000 hours of tutoring through First 5 Contra Costa dollars and additional tutoring was provided through other funding sources.
- ✓ In 2005/2006, 6 cohort classes were offered in basic and transferable math and ESL-ECE linked classes. In FY 2006/2007 each college offered at least 2 cohort classes per semester, for a total of at least 12 classes, providing approximately 240 students with basic math, transferable math, and ESL-ECE linked classes.

- ✓ 348 providers received scholarships or other types of course incentivesⁱⁱⁱ in 2006/2007 to work toward their degree in ECE.
 - Over half (85/144) of survey respondents said they would not have gone back to school if it were not for the PDP.

Interviewee reports on tutoring and cohorts included:

- The ESL groups interviewed were very satisfied with the work of the college cohort courses, and tutoring.
- There were many quotes similar to the following: – “...I would not have stayed in school without the Link [ESL-ECE linked cohort] Classes...” “...I never thought I would go to college until this program...” “... the classes have helped me understand my own children and I can help my friends understand what their children are going through and doing...”
- Some of the materials used in cohort classes need improvement, and tutoring needs to be increased.

Higher Education

In order to facilitate providers’ attainment of Bachelor’s Degrees, First 5 Contra Costa made a one-time investment in the development of an ECE curriculum at California State East Bay (CSUEB) that is fully articulated with course offerings at the community college level. The Commission’s investment included staff time to develop an ECE minor within the Human Development program, with the expectation that a Child Development major would be introduced as interest grew.

First 5 Contra Costa is a leader in creating and supporting the higher education system for ECE.

- Not only has the Commission developed a BA program offered at the San Pablo and Concord campuses, but it has launched an MS cohort at the Concord campus as well.
- The Commission’s CSUEB BA and MS programs are being replicated by a neighboring county.
- The BA and MS coordinators suggested allowing students who are not yet working in ECE to participate.

Two significant systems change achievements of the BA and MS programs are:

- Faculty from the CSUEB Education and Human Development Departments are working together to plan the program, which has prompted a new appreciation of the child development focus in both departments.
- Child Development students are working side by side with K-12 teacher preparation students, which is resulting in a shared knowledge base and better understanding of child development on the part of the K-12 student teachers.

Focus groups provided the following additional information:

- The need to track, evaluate, and document progress of students and the system itself has been cited by observers of the programs. This is especially important as Contra Costa is playing a leadership role for other counties and universities.

- Students were aware and expressive about the incredible opportunity being provided through the BA program. All stated that the work involved in achieving their goals is overwhelming, and they provided suggestions for changes to help those students with this.

Several “value added” elements were noted by the students:

- One was the model they exhibited for their own children (“Mom is getting a degree; I can too!”).
- Another was the “education contagion” that developed among colleagues. Co-workers have begun to understand that it was possible to return to school. In one center, it is now automatically expected that staff will continue their education.
- Another example is that parents in the centers and family child care programs are proud and appreciative that their children’s teachers are advancing professionally.

The CSUEB Coordinator reported a very low drop out rate, and an overall 2.6 grade point average among the BA students. Students and the Coordinator (interviewed separately) provided several suggestions for improving the BA process.

Collaboration and Support

The ECE Strategy is currently implemented as a collaboration between First 5 Contra Costa; Contra Costa County Office of Education; the Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development; Contra Costa College; Diablo Valley College; Los Medanos College; Contra Costa Child Care Council; and California State University of the East Bay. Through monthly collaborative meetings and day-to-day procedures, PDP supports the efforts of agency partners to increase the education and professionalism of early care providers.

- ✓ Most participants who responded to the survey in 2006/2007 (89%, n=139) agree or strongly agree that the collaboration between First 5 Contra Costa, County Office of Education, the Contra Costa Child Care Council and the colleges works effectively to carry out the PDP.
- ✓ The ECE strategy has a partnership with the Contra Costa Child Care Council which supports outreach activities for the Family Child Care Association, and oversees the Early Learning Alliance, Inclusion Project, and the ELDP.
- ✓ The ECE also partners with the Contra Costa County Office of Education to offer programs and incentives for providers in state subsidized programs through AB212, provide technical assistance, process Child Development Permit applications and hold workshops for providers.

Interviewees provided many examples and ideas on collaboration and support efforts of PDP:

- The work with Family Child Care Associations was rated as a great success by the Association participants and the Contra Costa Child Care Council staff; concrete and measurable outcomes (eg: reformation of the Associations and better training opportunities) were noted.
- The College Advisors observed that a more unified approach to education and professionalism is now present across the county. Organizations which had not previously connected with each other are developing a shared vision for ECE professional standards and goals.
- The collaborative efforts of agencies create a better understanding of the importance of formal education and a stronger platform for the work of college instructors.

- The County Office of Education staff member noted that although there are differences in programs administered by the COE and First 5 Contra Costa, she values the partnership and hopes that it will continue to strengthen the shared goal of ECE professional education. She would also like to find a way to leverage the two funding sources and better capture the First 5 California matching funds.

Goal 2: Improve the Quality of Family Child Care Programs and Child Care Centers

Strategy: Early Learning Demonstration Project (ELDP)

The ELDP, which began in 2004/2005, strategically invests in a select group of family child care programs and child care centers throughout Contra Costa County by putting into effect a measured approach for program improvement that strengthens and enhances the quality of each site's standards and practices. By combining the expertise of all the stakeholders, the ELDP ensures real quality outcomes are attained for children. Each site, selected based on target criteria, works with an ELDP facilitator to develop and implement an "enhancement plan" for program improvement. Assessment tools from the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and tools used to reach National Accreditation are used to support and direct program improvement efforts. Each site is eligible for a grant (amount based on size and type of program) to carry out the improvements stated in the enhancement plan.

- ✓ Since 2004/2005, the ELDP has provided services for 36 family child care programs and 16 child care centers that have committed to increase quality.
 - These 52 provider sites have cared for a total of 3,010 children in Contra Costa County.
 - Of those, 44 sites (29 family child care programs and 15 child care centers) have successfully completed the program (85%). Successful completion means that the program showed overall improvement and met at least 80% of the improvement goals on their enhancement plan. For many programs, the goal is reaching accreditation status.

Environmental Rating Scales and Monetary Grants

Environmental Rating Scales (ERS)^{iv,v} assess process quality of ECE provider sites on a 7-point scale. Higher scores on the ERS indicate higher quality and are related to more positive child development outcomes in areas that are considered important for later school success. The ERS scales allow the observer to examine the quality of what children experience in a program and to rate how well a program is meeting children's needs – to see whether children receive the protection, learning opportunities and positive relationships necessary for successful development.

- ✓ Exhibit 3 (below) shows that both family child care programs and child care centers in all three quality categories made improvements during their involvement in ELDP.
- ✓ Sites improved at different rates, which can be seen when grouping provider sites by their initial ERS category.

Exhibit 3 ELDP Pre-Post Scale Improvements by Category

Category	Type	N	Mean Pre*	Mean Post*	Average % Improvement	Total of Grants
High	Child Care Centers	8	6.58	6.91	5%	\$268,000
	Family Child Care Programs	2	6.32	6.80	8%	\$20,000
Medium	Child Care Centers	5	5.38	6.63	23%	\$172,000
	Family Child Care Programs	20	4.73	6.42	36%	\$152,000
Low	Child Care Centers	2	3.81	5.32	40%	\$42,000
	Family Child Care Programs	7	3.78	5.99	59%	\$55,000

*Pre-post scores reflect only those sites that have completed the ELDP program and have a pre and post ERS score.

*Within each quality category, grant limits are determined by program size. Small family child care programs were eligible to receive up to \$5,000 and large family child care programs could receive up to \$7,000 per contract; small centers were eligible for up to \$15,000 and large centers were eligible for up to \$25,000 per contract. By design, programs were able to participate for up to two contract cycles. The total amount of funds reflects the total amount of funding received by the program over the course of their work with ELDP, combining small and large programs within the quality category.

Programs that meet the goals of their improvement plan by the end of their contract year are eligible to receive a second year of grant funding to update the enhancement plan and continue improvement goals. Within each grant year, no more than 50% of funding may go to facilities and materials, and at least 50% of funding must go to early childhood educator development, including training, team building activities, incentives, and coursework. While many programs are able to reach accreditation within the one year grant period, half of family child care programs and two-thirds of centers entered a second year of funding with the goal of reaching accreditation status.

The ERS rating from the initial evaluation site visit determines the quality category that the program is assigned. The 7-point scale is not evenly weighted, and therefore surface changes at the low levels may increase the post-ERS score several points; on the other hand, deeper changes by initially high-quality programs may reflect less than a point in the post-ERS score.

- ✓ Programs initially evaluated with an ERS score of 3.99 or below were categorized as “low quality”. Programs that are categorized as “low” quality tend to:
 - Prioritize safety and basic program needs.
 - Work with the facilitator to shift thinking about what quality is.
 - Purchase basic program materials (e.g., a child-size table).
- ✓ Programs initially assessed in the “medium” category typically enter the ELDP program with an ERS score between 4.0 and 5.99. Programs that are categorized as “medium” quality tend to:
 - Invest in specialized materials (e.g., special education or ESL materials).
 - Replace older furnishings with newer furnishings.
 - Incur staff costs to engage in relationship-building and joint training opportunities.

- ✓ All programs in the “high quality” category (initial ERS rating of 6.0 or higher) worked toward increasing their score on the ERS as well as meeting accreditation standards. Programs categorized as “high” tended to use grant funds for:
 - Accreditation materials, the cost of the accreditation visit and other associated fees.
 - Lower staff-child ratios as required by accreditation standards.
 - Staff salaries and benefits to engage in self study and meeting time, and to increase individuals’ levels of education.

In focus groups, past and present ELDP providers reported a number of concrete quality improvements that the program helped them to achieve:

- Increased knowledge for themselves and among staff about the importance of quality improvement and about crucial issues, such as positive, developmentally appropriate teacher-child interactions.
- Expanded development and documentation of program policies and procedures.
- Better results than ever before with maintaining quality among staff.
- Ability to utilize a more intentional approach to improving the program.

Both center-based and family child care ELDP providers reported that the program had the following broader impact on them, their programs and the ECE field as a whole:

- Vastly increased networking, peer support and idea-sharing among providers of all levels.
- Increased cohesion among providers and linkages to professional development opportunities and supports, especially for family child care providers.
- Greater “word of mouth” communication among providers in the community overall about professional development opportunities, which has led to greater awareness of the value of professional development in the field.
- Higher self esteem and pride among providers as a result of improving the quality of their programs and practices.
- Retention and ongoing engagement in the field of some longstanding providers, who, prior to participation in the ELDP, had considered changing careers.

Accreditation and Monetary Grants

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation processes measure early childhood education programs against rigorous national standards on education, health, and safety. Provider sites achieving accreditation are recognized nationally as providing a superior level of care and education that benefits children with greater readiness for and success in school.

- ✓ During the first three years of the ELDP, 19 provider sites achieved accreditation. Of those 19 provider sites, 12 were family child care programs and 7 were child care centers.

- ✓ As a result of their participation in the ELDP, every site in the “high” category from 2006/2007 or prior has either achieved accreditation or is awaiting their accreditation visit.
- ✓ Most programs in the “medium” category and a few programs in the “low” category also reached national accreditation status or are waiting for their accreditation visit.
- ELDP participants on the accreditation track generally saw becoming accredited as a “point of arrival” and were extremely pleased when they had achieved it, though nearly all agreed it was an enormous amount of work. Objectively, however, particularly when examining the cost of accreditation itself - in addition to ELDP grants – it is extremely expensive and labor-intensive. It is also difficult to discern from current data which providers it really helps most.

Technical Assistance

Hands-on technical assistance from ELDP staff in working toward an “enhancement plan” is a key component of the ELDP as a complement to monetary grants and previously-described assessments.

Strategies that ELDP participants reported in focus groups as particularly effective included the following:

- The program’s combined approach of using grants, hands-on support and professional development opportunities such as workshops and classes.
- In particular, the gentle, non-judgmental nature of the direct guidance and support provided (also referred to by many participants as “hand-holding”), at least in part driven by the personalities of the involved staff.
- The emphasis on initially identifying programmatic needs and goals and on pursuing and reaching them.
- The “customized” method of working with programs on their specific areas of need.

Goal 3: Increase Services to Diverse ECE Providers and Programs

Strategy: Targeting Specific Providers and Geographic Areas

While PDP activities have been available countywide since the beginning, in 2005/2006 the PDP emphasized outreach to family child care providers, providers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and providers serving children in areas of low supply and low-performing school attendance areas (low Academic Performance Index (API) areas).

The following exhibits show how the PDP is achieving these goals by comparing the data for 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 (darker shade) to previous years. Where relevant and available, data comparing child care providers in the PDP to children in Contra Costa are presented. These data show that:

- ✓ The PDP is reaching a more ethnically diverse provider population:
 - More Hispanic/Latino, African American, and Asian/Pacific Islander providers participated in 2006/2007 than in prior years.
 - The PDP is serving a higher proportion of African American providers and lower proportion of Hispanic providers compared to the county's 0-5 population.

Exhibit 4 Race/Ethnicity of PDP Participants, 2001-2007

	01/02 n=1062	02/03 n=982	03/04 n=982	04/05 n=1223	05/06 n=765	06/07 n=316	Contra Costa children 0-5 ^a
Ethnicity							
African American	17%	17%	16%	15%	18%	20%	8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%	13%	15%	17%	20%	18%	10%
Hispanic/Latino	13%	13%	17%	18%	16%	19%	32%
White	56%	54%	50%	47%	45%	40%	41%
Multiracial	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Other	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	3%	<1%

^aContra Costa County children ages 0-5. Source: State of California, Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000–2050. Sacramento, CA, July 2007.

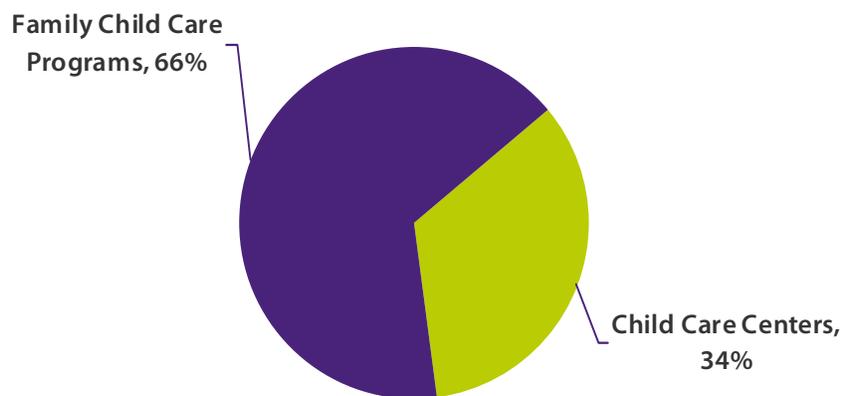
- ✓ The PDP is reaching more family child care providers in recent years than in previous years, which is a goal of the PDP.
 - Exhibit 5 shows that one-fifth of providers receiving stipends in 2006/2007 worked in family child care programs.

Exhibit 5 PDP Participants by Work Setting, 2001-2007

Work Setting	2001/2003 n=3042	2003/2004 n=700	2004/2005 n=432	2005/2006 n=736	2006/2007 n=553
Center child centers	85%	85%	89%	82%	79%
Family child care	15%	15%	11%	18%	21%

- ✓ By design, the ELDP is serving a majority of family child care programs compared to child care centers.

Exhibit 6 ELDP Participants by Work Setting, N=44



- ✓ The PDP is serving a more geographically diverse provider population:
 - More providers in the east part of the county are participating in the PDP than in earlier years. Of the 27% of providers who were located in the east part of the county in 2006/2007, 20% were considered near east (Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch) and 7% were in the far east (Oakley, Brentwood, Discovery Bay) (data not shown).
 - Of the providers who obtained a permit stipend, 76% (200/263^{vi}) were located in the target areas (low-performing school areas (low API areas) (data not shown)).

Exhibit 7 Location of PDP Participants, 2001-2007

Region	2001/2003 ^a n=3042	2003/2004 ^a n=700	2004/2005 ^a n=432	2005/2006 n=433	2006/2007 n=539
Central (Concord, Pleasant Hill, Martinez, Clayton)	38%	41%	37%	24%	25%
East (Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley, Brentwood, Discovery Bay)	17%	17%	24%	30%	27%
West (Pinole, El Cerrito, Hercules, Richmond, San Pablo, Rodeo)	29%	27%	26%	31%	32%
South (Walnut Creek, Alamo, Orinda, Moraga, San Ramon)	16%	16%	13%	15%	16%

^aData are from previous annual reports

- ✓ The ELDP is also reaching providers in target low-performing school areas (low API areas). A requirement of the ELDP program is that at least 80% of programs accepted be in target areas.
 - In fact, 81% of programs participating since 2004/2005 have been located in target areas.
 - In focus groups, a small handful of providers – both center-based and family child care – questioned the program’s prioritization of children in low API areas; they stated that it was an unequal distribution of resources and that all providers should have access. They also felt this priority was sometimes not possible to maintain because children do not always enroll in programs in their neighborhood. Therefore, programs may not actually reach the intended population of children living in low API areas.
- ✓ Exhibit 8 presents the location of ELDP sites by region and illustrates the geographic distribution of ELDP sites across the north, east and west parts of the county.

Exhibit 8 ELDP Provider Locations by Region

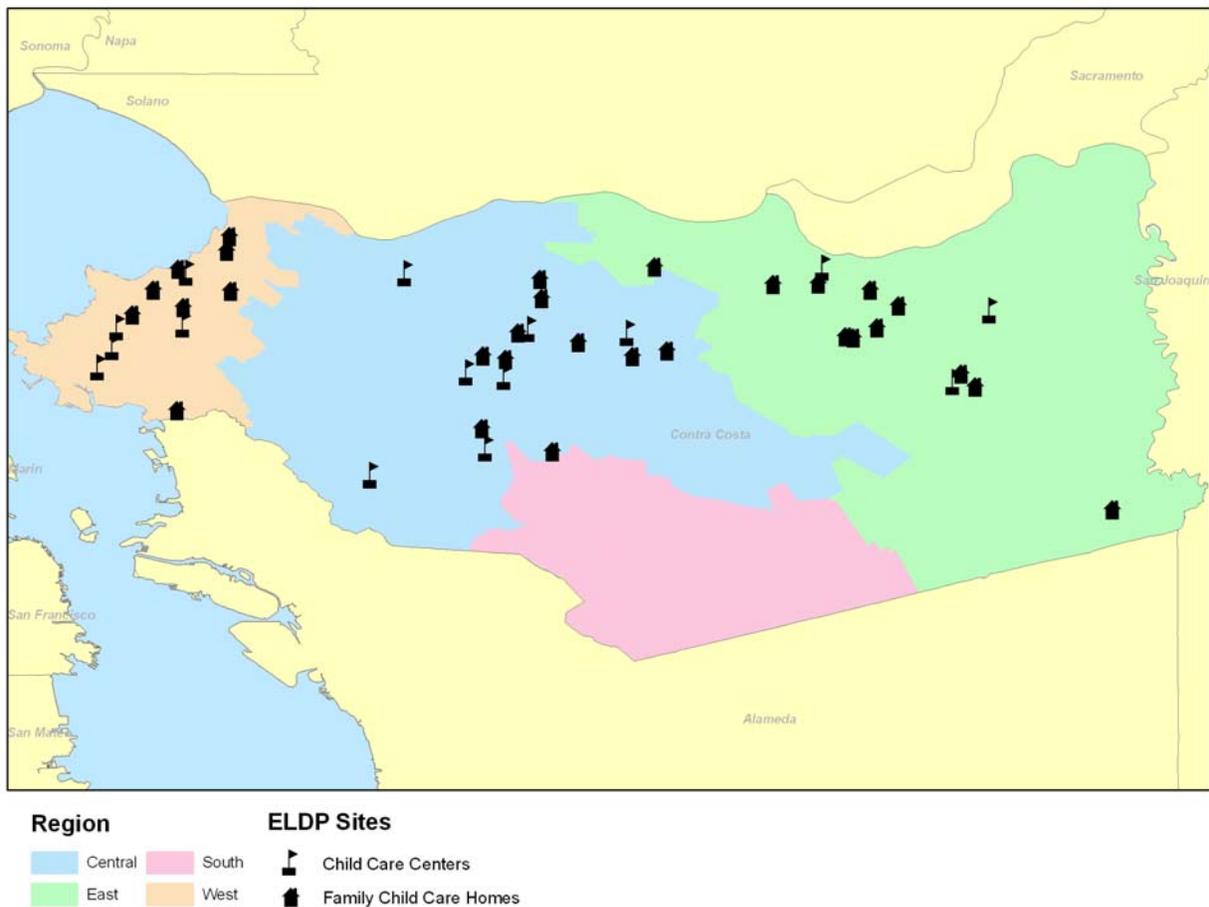


Exhibit 9 PDP Participants Language Spoken at Work, 2005-2007

Language	2005/2006 n=376	2006/2007 n=481	Contra Costa County^a
English only	71%	69%	73%
Another language only	3%	4%	5%
English and another language	26%	27%	21%

^aContra Costa County household language. Source: US Census 2000.

- ✓ Exhibit 9 shows the languages PDP participants reported speaking at work and compares these to the languages spoken at home for the county's population.
 - The languages PDP providers reported speaking at work is similar to the languages spoken at home for the county.^{vii}

Note

The qualitative data throughout this report are reflective of the input from interviews and group meetings. The individuals who expressed their thoughts and needs realized that they and their colleagues were better prepared and gaining more confidence and competence in their work due to the Commission's programs. However, the most often stated appraisal by groups and individuals was that First 5 Contra Costa needs to join with others, and take leadership in movements to improve ECE wages and professional status, as well as professional education, in order to improve the staff turnover rate.

Challenges and Recommendations

Since First 5 Contra Costa County embarked on a new, expanded ECE strategy in 2005, it has developed a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of ECE and preparing the workforce for higher levels of education and training through a variety of progressive and thoughtfully designed programs. First 5 Contra Costa has shown that agencies, colleges, universities, and individuals can come together to address new ways to improve the services that families and children receive.

Throughout the interviews conducted for the qualitative review of the PDP and ELDP, consultants heard of the Commission's openness and ability to learn from the practitioners in ECE and related fields. Among the many positive statements that informants made about the Commission staff, they were described as "... thoughtful and flexible..."; "...wanting to really help the community and willing to listen to us..."

Overall, the ECE Strategy Review demonstrates that First 5 Contra Costa County is off to an impressive start of meeting the overarching goals of individual professional development and ECE program quality improvement in a comprehensive way. The challenges and recommendations listed in this section come from those interviews and from the consultants' review of similar statewide efforts and current ECE professional development best practices.

It should be noted that the First 5 Contra Costa County is not alone in facing most – if not all – of the challenges identified below. A number of counties across the region and the state face very similar hurdles.

This section follows the same format as the rest of the report, addressing the same goals and strategies described earlier. However, the findings are organized in a slightly different format as follows:

- Section 1: Programmatic Recommendations
- Section 2: Strategic Recommendations

Section I: Programmatic Recommendations

Programmatic change includes specific approaches within the major strategies (PDP, ELDP) and are based on findings and interpretations of both qualitative and quantitative data. The majority of our programmatic recommendations speak to ensuring that the needs of the providers and programs served – and ultimately the children and families affected – are met with a high level of responsiveness and fluidity. They are process oriented, and admittedly, a few would require an increased investment by the Commission for the sake of increasing efficiency, and some would potentially reduce administrative expenses.

Goal 1: Increase the professional development of ECE providers

Strategy: Professional Development Program (PDP), including incentives and stipends, higher education courses and programs, and the professional advising system

The PDP has accomplished a great deal of success over the last several years and should be maintained and, if possible, expanded. Major challenges and recommendations are listed below.

1. There is confusion and misunderstanding among providers about the different components of the program; clarity and orientation on the PDP needs strengthening. Recommendations are:

- Establish a regular one unit class at the community colleges conducted by First 5 staff and/or College Advisors that orients students to the PDP, how it connects to the ELDP and related resources.^{viii}
 - Increase the number and training capacity of Professional Growth Advisors (PGAs) to assist at the one unit class and in other venues.
 - Cross-train PGAs and California Early Childhood Mentors to serve as community based resources on the PDP system (see also ELDP #3 and Professional Advisory System #1).^{ix}
2. The PDP Track and Bonus system is complex and needs to be simplified for providers and to promote effective administration and clarity of the program. The PDP Incentive Tracks are organized to match the First 5 California track system. Three of these tracks (see a. below) provide rewards for participants to complete college credits and advance on the Child Development Permit Matrix. PDP has added several small “bonus stipends” that fall within the Incentive Tracks. Recommendations are:
- Consolidate Entry, Permit, and Degree Incentive Tracks that address the same goals into one continuum with different entry and exit points. This would assist providers’ work toward short and long range objectives and reduce administrative costs while retaining compliance with First 5 California matching funds.
 - Combine three of the bonus stipends (Professional Plan, Quality Improvement, and Course Completion) into one requirement for a yearly stipend.
 - Research and develop a comprehensive PDP database to better organize and track the system and link to ELDP.^x
3. Targeted ESL providers and others who are not ready for college work require specialized assistance. We and focus group participants recommend that First 5 Contra Costa:
- Institute incentives for college preparatory courses, including ESL. This would bolster student confidence and provide them with tools to move on.^{xi}
 - Increase group and one-on-one tutoring for students, during class time as well as outside classes; coordinate with the California Early Childhood Mentor Program to recruit tutors.
 - Research course materials that may be more appropriate and “user friendly”, including basic child development text books in languages other than English that are now available and used in other programs.
 - Provide training and consultation to college instructors on working with ESL students.^{xii}
 - Conduct community college admission procedures for groups of students with translators available.
 - Institute pre and post ESL assessments with each Link class and monitor individual readiness of individual students to move to next classes.^{xiii}
4. Balancing work-school-family is a universal challenge, especially for professionals such as ECE practitioners who are often of child rearing and child bearing age. The providers and others interviewed recognized that this “balancing act” is an ongoing issue and offered specific suggestions:

- Continue (and increase when possible) classes on weekends and evenings and at accessible locations.
 - Offer additional support and referrals to students, including but not limited to Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program (EOPS), Program for Adult College Education (PACE), financial aid, counseling, and others.^{xiv}
 - Offer child care during evening classes.
 - Offer book and transportation support, including accounts at the college book stores as part of or in addition to the stipend.
 - Create a lending library of texts to be borrowed for the full semester.
 - Pay for substitutes for release time for classes.
5. The BA students shared concerns about the work-school-family balance and noted several more challenges. Most often mentioned was the full course load of upper division classes and the need for a more realistic picture of the academic expectations prior to starting the program. Recommendations include:
- Provide a way for applicants to really “test” themselves on whether they can handle the program before enrolling (develop a questionnaire that includes such areas as “How many hours a night can you really spend on homework?” “Does your family have a good idea of how hard this will be for them and you?”).
 - Ask students who have gone through the program to talk to applicants and prospective students about their experiences.
 - Encourage students to acquire the syllabus and expectations of a specific course before registering.
 - Improve the scholarship process so that students have advance notice in time to register for classes before they are full.
 - Allow students to take fewer courses per quarter and still maintain scholarships.
 - Help applicants ensure that their supervisors are involved and supportive before starting the program (e.g., sponsor an orientation for employers).
 - Ensure that the scholarship will continue for a certain length of time so that students have a sense of how long they will have to work on the degree and that the support won’t “run out” unexpectedly.
 - Provide more help with developing computer skills, working in hybrid classes, and asking for support and networking (cohort meetings, discussions with First 5 staff, etc.).
 - Conduct a longitudinal evaluation of the BA and MS programs.
6. Few forums exist across the region or state in which First 5 staff and ECE strategists can share experiences, support one another, and generate data that will help with the present and future direction of professional development and quality improvement efforts. Recommendations are:
- First 5 Contra Costa should continue its work with the Bay Area Professional Development Collaborative (or BAPDC).^{xv}

- First 5 Contra Costa should work with its counterparts in other counties to form a group focused on quality improvement (made up of staff from ELDP and similar programs) to share ideas, challenges and solutions on an ongoing basis about such issues as assessment tools and readiness analysis.^{xvi}
 - First 5 Contra Costa should join with its First 5 counterparts that have also developed pioneering BA programs for the ECE workforce at four-year institutions by participating in a longitudinal study of BA programs for the ECE workforce. The results of this study will be invaluable in determining the future direction of the program at CSUEB and other colleges.^{xvii}
7. Current Professional Growth Advisors (PGAs) feel a lack of coordination and consistency among them; PDP participants have difficulty understanding and completing Professional Growth Plans and PGAs have difficulty guiding them in how to complete the plans. Recommendations include:
- Develop a coordinated, streamlined mentoring system, to include PGAs, mentors needed for post-ELDP quality maintenance efforts, and the Early Childhood Mentor Program.
 - Within the mentoring system, create different areas of focus from which mentors can choose and strengthen and coordinate mentor recruitment, training and networking activities.
8. Providers at the upper end of experience and education in the PDP (Track V, pre-BA) feel that there is a lack of leadership and educational opportunities at their level. Recommendations are:
- Feed PDP participants at this level directly in to the mentoring system (described above).
 - Develop a new “leadership option,” as an educationally-focused counterpart to mentoring and/or for upper-level PDP participants who likely are in administrative positions at centers or operate their own family child care home programs.^{xviii}
9. College Advisors are overwhelmed with their current responsibilities and PDP participants need more advising supports than the current capacity allows. Related recommendations include:
- Designate at least one longtime and experienced provider to oversee and coordinate the mentoring system across programs AND/OR
 - Hire additional College Advisor(s) to oversee mentoring and assist with existing overflow.

Goal 2: Improve the quality of family child care programs and child care centers

Strategy: Early Learning Demonstration Project (ELDP), including environmental rating scales, national accreditation, monetary grants and intensive technical assistance.

The ELDP is among a number of programs that First 5 organizations across the state are using to assess and improve program quality. The challenges identified here are shared among many of these quality improvement programs in other counties as they learn more about the nature of assessments and maintaining the gains achieved.

1. Environmental rating scales are not comprehensive because the tools used do not examine teacher/provider-child relationships and interactions. ^{xix} Recommendations include the following:
 - Research relevant aspects of other quality improvement tools and incorporate them into the ELDP assessment process.^{xx}
 - Leverage dollars and expertise from existing ECE mental health consultation to assist in assessing teacher/provider-child relationships and interactions.

2. A number of providers are initially confused about how to use and prepare for quality improvement assessments. Recommendations are:
 - Strengthen provider orientation to assessment tools, requiring a combination of group and individual training and including videos and live testimonials from longstanding ELDP participants or veterans.

3. After completing the ELDP, there is minimal ongoing connection to the program for providers; it is also as yet unclear if quality is being maintained over time following program completion.^{xxi} We recommend that First 5:
 - Develop a coordinated system for quality maintenance that includes - at minimum - a well-organized, integrated mentoring component (see #7, above) and regular, quarterly maintenance visits for ELDP graduates.

Section II: Strategic Recommendations

Strategic change includes broader issues, questions, and discussion for the Commission and staff to consider regarding thinking ahead about the key strategies. For example: are the strategies, as now constructed, the best ways to work toward the Commission’s Goals? If not, do they require significant change or just re-ordering of activities? What are the risks involved (internally and externally) in proposing or making changes? What are resources to help the Commission and staff discuss the questions and issues?

Goal 1: Increase the professional development of ECE providers

Strategy: Professional Development Program (PDP), including incentives and stipends, higher education courses and programs, and the professional advising system.

It is recommended that in order to optimize the benefits of the PDP for its members and for administrative efficiency, its delivery mechanisms should be streamlined into one “road” for providers, with well marked and paved entry and exit ramps. Currently the system appears (and in some cases is) disjointed, with incentive (stipend) requirements that do not connect or scaffold effectively. Streamlining requires that the PDP:

- Consolidate the three stipend “tracks” and four bonus stipends into one system.
- Combine provider Professional Plans and Child Development Permit Professional Growth Plans with an academic assessment and plan (eliminate redundant and duplicative steps for PDP members and gain a clearer picture of overall professional development needs).
- Reorganize and strengthen the College and PGA Advisory System.
- Create stipends for providers who are taking college preparatory courses, including ESL.

Making these changes is impacted by budgetary issues. Currently, First 5 Contra Costa receives a 25% match (one dollar for every four spent by Contra Costa) from the First 5 California Commission for PDP activities that are approved as eligible. The PDP must also comply with certain structural and participant requirements set by First 5 California in order to receive the match.

Exploratory questions on this recommendation include, but are not limited to:

1. *Is it possible to reorganize the PDP without jeopardizing all of the matching funding?*
 - Several counties (including Alameda) are conducting CARES systems that do so. Reorganization would require stronger coordination and planning with College Advisors, and development of a web-based data system to track and manage the program. Despite this significant change, Alameda's reorganized system is proving successful in the first two years.
2. *If PDP could not be reorganized without loss of some state matching funding, what could First 5 Contra Costa "live with"?*
 - Currently, about 500 providers are receiving stipends and many more are attending classes, and moving toward degrees. A better analysis needs to be conducted of how many individuals would be impacted under different configurations of the "matching funds."
 - Another consideration is that AB212 resources (professional development and quality improvement funding for state subsidized programs) could be better coordinated with the PDP to mitigate reduction in First 5 California funding.
3. *Can some of the reorganization take place without fundamentally changing the current PDP strategy?*
 - YES. There are several suggestions in the Programmatic Recommendations section that would help clarify the system to providers and simplify incentive organization.
4. *Why is it important for Contra Costa to start planning for PDP change now?*
 - In addition to the staff and Commission's desire to serve more individuals more efficiently, a new First 5 California CARES RFP will be issued in 2008 or 2009. Starting now will allow Contra Costa to think through possible scenarios for that RFP.
5. *Are there resources for investigating these issues?*
 - YES. Several other counties are facing the same issues and finding the same barriers with the First 5 regulations.
 - The Northern California First 5 CARES Commissions have a tradition of strong peer support, and we suggest that First 5 Contra Costa tap into that tradition for problem-solving discussions on this topic.
 - "Working 4 Quality Child Care," a non profit technical assistance agency, collects and distributes materials, provides advice on CARES issues, holds bi-monthly meetings, and holds a yearly state-wide conference on these types of concerns.

Goal 2: Improve the quality of family child care programs and child care centers

Strategy: Early Learning Demonstration Project (ELDP)

The ELDP appears to be expensive and it is unclear at what baseline of program quality efforts should be focused to achieve the greatest benefit for the cost. For example, The NAEYC Accreditation Program is an expensive and rigorous model that may not be the most effective way to assist even programs that initially have a relatively high baseline of quality.^{xxii} An additional, related challenge is that the current parallel quality improvement structures that serve state subsidized (AB212) centers through the County Office of Education (COE) and non-subsidized programs through the ELDP is confusing for the ECE community and inhibits cost savings.^{xxiii} It is recommended that First 5 Contra Costa investigate more cost-effective alternatives to accreditation and mechanisms to streamline the ELDP and COE technical assistance to increase efficiency and cost savings.

Exploratory questions and answers on the issues include, but are not limited to:

1. *Are there less expensive models than NAEYC accreditation that might be appropriate for Contra Costa?*
 - YES. Among the models that should be reviewed are those used by Los Angeles County (STEP – See Appendix C), North Carolina, and Oklahoma, as well as the California Title V standards.
2. *The relationship between providers and ELDP staff is crucial to ELDP's success. How can we ensure that it is maintained and still deliver a cost effective program?*
 - This is a key question across the state and the nation among quality improvement program administrators. Cost analyses are being conducted on a “relationship based model” which will be released by the University of North Carolina in early 2008.
 - First 5 Contra Costa and ELDP staff should also meet regularly with neighboring counties that are exploring the same issues.
3. *Does First 5 PDP matching funding impact ELDP?*

Not directly, but it is important to look at PDP and ELDP together, for several reasons:

 - If the 2009 First 5 California CARES matching funds are reduced, First 5 Contra Costa's budget will be impacted for all programs.
 - There may be ways to reorganize PDP and ELDP to better support each other, fiscally and programmatically. This is being explored by other counties as well.
4. *Are there other resources to explore that may assist ELDP?*

Yes, the following are three local resources that should be considered:

 - Coordinating with the Child Care Mental Health Consulting program. This approach is being piloted in Alameda County and San Francisco Counties.
 - Linking the ELDP staff with the Early Childhood Mentor Program and PGAs (see Programmatic Recommendations, above).
 - Developing linkages to maximize the respective strengths and leverage resources of the County Office of Education's AB212 program with ELDP.

Goal 3: Increase Services to Diverse ECE Providers and Programs

Strategy: Targeting Specific Providers and Geographic Areas

Reaching traditionally underserved and/or specifically targeted populations or focusing on the universal community is a common dilemma among County First 5 Commissions (and not just in their ECE programs). For the PDP, this is complicated by the First 5 California matching fund requirements mentioned earlier. However, First 5 Contra Costa has been, for the most part, successful in reaching specific groups and the entire community at the same time. In light of potential future changes in First 5 California funding, and in the ongoing search for cost effective methods of improving ECE, it is recommended that the Commission and staff explore questions such as the following:

1. *Is there a “fool proof” way of ensuring that we make programs available universally and still reach specific populations?*
 - Probably not, but consistently tracking and providing “user friendly data” on services to the targeted groups will help monitor and clarify whether there is a balance among all targeted groups and the general community being served, and if there is a group being “missed” by one or another strategy.
2. *What should be considered when targeting low API neighborhoods?*
 - The primary consideration is that it may be more expensive to serve low API neighborhoods with less return on investment than using a more universal approach that also includes providers who are ready to improve programs quickly and with less expense.
 - Although targeting low API communities is a reasonable direction to focus on when attempting to serve providers who are working with high-risk children, it does not necessarily include children who are in programs outside of their neighborhoods (therapeutic nursery schools, subsidized or public school programs located in higher income neighborhoods, children served near parents work-place, not home, etc.).
3. *How can the Professional Advisory System help us with this discussion?*
 - The College Advisors and the ELDP staff are the “front line” for assessing who is in most need of assistance, who is most ready to receive assistance and who can maximize it quickly and efficiently.
 - The quantitative data (presented earlier in this report) should be jointly analyzed by First 5 staff and Advisory staff on a consistent basis, perhaps quarterly.
4. *Should the Professional Advisory System be changed in order to be more effective with targeted services?*
 - One of the models that several counties are testing involves hiring and training additional Advisors at the College and Resource & Referral Agencies in lieu of the PGA advising system. This allows for a more efficient advisory team to help students and to identify emerging trends and needs among specific groups as well as county-wide.
5. *Any other considerations when debating this issue?*

Two that are of importance:

 - Include the targeting issue when looking at the PDP system changes to be made (e.g., matching funding).

- Consider the philosophical and ideological purposes of the goals of the ECE Strategy. It may be more important to Commission and staff that a certain population (e.g., high-risk families, ESL providers) is served than it is to institute a less expensive universal model.

Conclusion

Contra Costa is one of a handful of counties in the Bay Area and across California that is pioneering efforts in ECE professional development and quality improvement. But First 5 Contra Costa has really only just begun; as with any relatively new strategy, there is now much to fine-tune and to build on.

As the previous section details, recommended areas to focus on while moving forward include the following:

- Improve data collection systems;
- Build toward a streamlined PDP Incentive system;
- Re-examine ELDP quality improvement tools ;
- Strengthen the College Advisor System;
- Leverage resources to create a coordinated mentoring/peer advising system;
- Conduct longitudinal evaluation of the BA and MS programs;
- Collaborate with regional and state wide colleagues to promote policies and resources that advance ECE professional development and quality improvement programs.

By approaching the future ECE strategies with an eye toward building on existing strengths, streamlining programs and systems, filling gaps in services, increasing efficiency and coordination, and connecting and networking with its counterparts elsewhere, there is little doubt that Contra Costa County's ECE workforce will become increasingly professionalized. In so doing, the quality of care for children and families will improve exponentially.

Appendix A: Data Sources

Quantitative Data Sources

- ✓ Professional Development Program
 - PDP database (internal PDP program data combined with CARES data collected from the County Office of Education)
 - First 5 Contra Costa maintains an internal PDP database containing information on incentives received, information on program participation and demographic data. This database was created in the 2005/2006 program year and was combined with the County Office of Education’s CARES database in order to have a “complete” database of providers who participated since the program’s inception. Data from the 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 program years came from this database. Additionally, PDP provider’s race/ethnicity for all years was from the database.
 - PDP participant survey
 - 468 PDP participants were mailed a survey in 2006/2007. This survey collects information on provider satisfaction and the impact of the PDP program on providers.
 - Previous Reports
 - In cases where data were presented for Fiscal Years 2001-2005, data were taken directly from what was reported in previous reports.
- ✓ Early Learning Demonstration Project
 - ELDP Data Spreadsheet
 - The ELDP maintains an internal database with information on provider sites that are presently in the program or have completed the program. Recorded data include participation time period, API information, funding information, site category, program size, and Environmental Rating Scale scores. Report sections citing this data source contain analyses generated from the data contained in this document.

Qualitative Data Sources

Between September and November, 2007, consultants collected qualitative data and information for this strategy review through the following channels and sources:

11 focus groups with a total of 117 providers with the following foci:

- Family Child Care Association presidents;
- Participants in the PDP (engaged in a variety of PDP-related activities), both longstanding and new;
- Participants in cohort classes for English Language Learners (2 predominantly Spanish-speaking groups; 1 Farsi-speaking group);
- Participants in a math cohort;
- Members of the BA cohort at California State University East Bay;
- Professional Growth Advisors or PGAs (also known as CARES advisors);

- Community College Advisors;
- Center directors involved in the ELDP; and
- Family child care providers involved in the ELDP.

4 interviews with a total of 7 including:

- J. Ghou, Department Chair, Child and Adolescent Development, California State University East Bay;
- Valerie Helgerin-Lempesis, Associate Professor, Teacher Education Department, California State University East Bay;
- Theresa Hein, Professional Education Liaison, Contra Costa County Office of Education;
- Staff of the ELDP/Contra Costa Child Care Council.

Extensive review of relevant local materials, including – but not limited to – First 5 Contra Costa County Strategic Plan 2006; CARES application 2005-2008; consultation with First 5 Contra Costa program and evaluation staff.

Consultation with numerous experts on and administrators of professional development and quality improvement initiatives around the Bay Area and California; review of related program materials and efforts.

Appendix B: Child Development Permit Matrix

Child Development Permit Matrix - with Alternative Qualification Options Indicated					
Permit Title	Education Requirement (Option 1 for all permits)	Experience Requirement (Applies to Option 1 Only)	Alternative Qualifications (with option numbers indicated)	Authorization	Five Year Renewal
Assistant (Optional)	Option 1: 6 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD)	None	Option 2: Accredited HERO program (including ROP)	Assist in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program under the supervision of an Associate Teacher or above.	105 hours of professional growth*****
Associate Teacher	Option 1: 12 units ECE/CD including core courses**	50 days of 3+ hours per day within 2 years	Option 2: Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. CDA Credential must be earned in California	May provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise an Assistant Permit holder and an Aide.	Must complete 15 additional units toward a Teacher Permit. Must meet Teacher requirements within 10 years.
Teacher	Option 1: 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus 16 General Education (GE) units*	175 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 years	Option 2: AA or higher in ECE/CD or related field with 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	May provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program, and supervise all above.	105 hours of professional growth*****
Master Teacher	Option 1: 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus 16 GE units* plus 6 specialization units plus 2 adult supervision units	350 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 years	Option 2: BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	May provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program, and supervise all above. Also may serve as a coordinator of curriculum and staff development in a child care & development program.	105 hours of professional growth*****
Site Supervisor	Option 1: AA (or 60 units) which includes: • 24 ECE/CD units with core courses** • 16 GE units* • 6 administration units • 2 adult supervision units	350 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 years including at least 100 days of supervising adults	Option 2: BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; or Option 3: Admin. credential*** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; or Option 4: Teaching credential**** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	May supervise a child care and development program operating at a single site; provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth*****
Program Director	Option 1: BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) including: • 24 ECE/CD units with core courses** • 6 administration units • 2 adult supervision units	Site Supervisor status and one program year of Site Supervisor experience	Option 2: Admin. credential*** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; or Option 3: Teaching credential**** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting, plus 6 units administration; or Option 4: Master's Degree in ECE/CD or Child/Human Development	May supervise a child care and development program operated in a single site or multiple-sites; provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth*****

NOTE: All unit requirements listed above are semester units. All course work must be completed with a grade of C or better from a regionally accredited college. Spanish translation of matrix available.

*One course in each of four general education categories, which are degree applicable: English/Language Arts; Math or Science; Social Sciences; Humanities and/or Fine Arts.

**Core courses include child/human growth & development; child/family/community or child and family relations; and programs/curriculum. You must have a minimum of three semester units or four quarter units in the core areas of child/human growth & development and child/family/community.

***Holders of the Administrative Services Credential may serve as a Site Supervisor or Program Director.

****A valid Multiple Subject or a Single Subject in Home Economics.

*****Professional growth hours must be completed under the guidance of a Professional Growth Advisor. Call (209) 572-6085 for assistance in locating an advisor.

This matrix was created by the Child Development Trainee Consortium. www.childdevelopment.ca. Call (209) 572-6080 for a permit application.

Appendix C: Handout on STEP Program – Los Angeles County Office of Child Care



Frequently Asked Questions on the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP)



1. What is Steps to Excellence Project (STEP)?

STEP is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in child care and development programs.

2. Who developed STEP?

STEP was developed by the County of Los Angeles Policy Roundtable for Child Care. On December 12, 2006, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors endorsed the program and STEP was launched July 1, 2007.

The Office of Child Care, within the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Executive Office, is responsible for the coordination of STEP and its services.

3. How will STEP benefit my program?

Your program will have the opportunity to participate in one or all of the following:

- a. STEP creates a reason and a framework to engage staff, parents, and other stakeholders in a thorough program review.
- b. STEP participants will have the option to request funding to implement program quality improvements directly related to the STEP standards.
- c. STEP participants will have priority for participating in a variety of training activities aimed at improving STEP scores.
- d. STEP participants will receive – at no cost - on-site reviews using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale(s) and the Adult Involvement Scale.
- e. Participating STEP programs will be listed on the Office of Child Care Web site and actively promoted throughout the community.

4. Why is STEP necessary?

- a. Community Care Licensing regulations address health and safety, they do not address program quality.
- b. Accreditation programs by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) do address quality standards, but less than eight percent of child care centers and less than two percent of family child care homes in Los Angeles County are accredited.
- c. With the exception of Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) classrooms, objective and reliable information on child care quality is not available to families seeking child care in Los Angeles County.

- d. In 1999, it was estimated that parent fees and government subsidies for child care and development services in Los Angeles County totaled \$1.4 billion. Since 1999, the child care supply has increased and new subsidies have been introduced. Despite these investments, there is little information available on the quality of child care services being purchased.
5. Why aren't health and safety standards enough? Is child care quality really that important?
- a. **Capacity:** In Los Angeles County, we have the capacity to care for over 300,000 children in licensed child care, yet we have no idea of the quality of care provided.
 - b. **Brain development:** "How infants experience the world and other people impacts how their brains become organized, which neurons become connected, and which are discarded. Positive and nurturing experiences affect the brain in significantly different ways than do negative or stressful experiences. The majority of a child's neural connections become "hardwired" by age three, and these connections are responsible for the child's major cognitive and emotional functioning", (*Growing Up Healthy* by Rebecca Parlakian).
 - c. **School readiness:** A variety of studies have shown that children who participated in high quality child care and development programs had better cognitive and social skills upon entering the K-12 education system, lower enrollment rates in special education, higher high school graduation rates, fewer arrests and higher rates of employment than their peers who did not participate in such programs, (Examples of research on the impact of quality child development services: *The High Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40* by Lawrence Schwienhart, www.highscope.org; *The Children of the Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Go to School*, Carolee Howes, et al, 1999; *Success in Early Intervention: The Chicago Child-Parent Centers*, Arthur Reynolds).
 - d. **Closing the achievement gap:** "High quality, early education is critical to prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Research shows that high quality early education can particularly benefit low-income children and those most at risk of school failure by supporting their healthy development across a range of measures. Research demonstrates that it is the quality of a program that is most important to a young child's development. Indicators of quality that encourage conditions in which children are better able to learn and grow include low teacher-child ratios, small group sizes, qualified teaching staff, positive teacher-child interactions, parental involvement, and access to comprehensive services such as health care and mental health services", (*Reaching All Children? Understanding Early Care and Education Participation among Immigrant Families*, 2006, CLASP, www.clasp.org).
 - e. **Quality of care:** "In other words, the data suggest that most child care settings in the United States provide care that is "fair" (between "poor" and "good"). Fewer than 10 percent of arrangements were rated as providing very high quality care. Eight percent were estimated to provide children with very low quality experiences", (National Institute of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, October 3, 2006).

10. How will the STEP pilot demonstration project function?

Participation in STEP will be voluntary, including all programs (child care centers and family child care homes) with histories of compliance with licensing regulations. STEP standards are research-based or reflect best practices related to positive child outcomes. Technical assistance and support services will be coordinated and expanded to assist programs in meeting the STEP standards. In addition, STEP is aligned with licensing regulations, program standards related to various funding streams, and accreditation standards so as to minimize the administrative burdens of participating.

Separate instruments have been developed to rate child care centers and family child care homes. In general:

- a. STEP 1 is aligned with basic licensing standards.
- b. STEP 3 is largely aligned with Title 5 of the California Education Code which regulates programs funded by the California Department of Education (CDE) and with the 3-Star level of the LAUP quality rating system.
- c. STEP 5 is largely aligned with the 5-Star level of the LAUP quality rating system and the accreditation standards of the NAEYC and NAFCC. Child care providers participating in these initiatives will be able to utilize some LAUP and accreditation materials to document compliance with the quality rating system.

11. What will STEP measure?

For both child care centers and family child care homes, STEP focuses on six areas:

- a. Regulatory Compliance
- b. Teacher/Child Relationship
- c. Learning Environment
- d. Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs
- e. Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions
- f. Family and Community Connections

12. Where will STEP be implemented?

The goal of STEP is to recruit 50 percent of child care centers and 20 percent of family child care homes (210 child care centers and 400 family child care homes) within the following communities:

- a. Inglewood
- b. Long Beach
- c. Palmdale
- d. Pasadena
- e. Pomona
- f. Santa Monica
- g. Florence/Firestone
- h. Pacoima/Arleta
- i. Wilmington

These communities were identified because they have varying levels of child care infrastructure and include families of various incomes. In addition, the Healthy

Communities, Strong Families and Thriving Children Project will also be working in the Florence/Firestone, Pacoima/Arleta, and Wilmington areas.

13. Why is Los Angeles County concerned about the issue of child care quality?

- a. Children in families with annual incomes below \$15,000 are 15 times more likely to be abused, and over 44 times more likely to be neglected than those with annual incomes of \$30,000 or more, (*Executive Summary, Advancing Child Abuse and Neglect Protective Factors: The Role of Early Care and Education*, Sharon L. Kagen).
- b. Child care is a critical support service for the **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) clients**; 26.3 percent of the DCFS caseload (as reported in August 2006) was under five years of age – 16.7 percent were under two years of age. Currently, DCFS is subsidizing just over \$15 million per year of child care services for DCFS families – yet we have no information on the quality of these services.
- c. Child care is a critical support service for the **Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) clients**; it is estimated that 41 percent of children receiving CalWORKs child care are under five years of age, and 11 percent are under two years of age. In 2005-2006, CalWORKs child care allocation for Stage 1 was \$104 million – serving an estimated 16,300 children. The allocation for Stages 2 and 3 was approximately \$138 million, serving an additional 20,000 children. We have no information on the quality of these services.

14. Who else is implementing child care quality rating systems?

Fourteen (14) states have implemented rating systems using a variety of mechanisms:

- a. Evaluations of the quality rating systems in Oklahoma and North Carolina have demonstrated improvements in child care quality.
- b. In Spring 2006, United Way of Orange County launched a rating system for child care centers. There are less than 800 centers in Orange County.

15. Where can I get additional information on STEP?

Additional information on STEP is available on the Office of Child Care Web site at www.childcare.lacounty.gov. We encourage you to frequent the Web site often, as we will be posting new training opportunities and program updates on a regular basis.

Helen Chavez will be joining the Office of Child Care in mid-August to coordinate STEP. After August 20, 2007, Helen will be available to respond to your questions; her direct line will be (213) 893-0505. Prior to that date, you can contact the Office of Child Care at (213) 974-4103.

Appendix D: Early Childhood Education Program Overview 2001-2007

The Early Childhood Education Strategy funds programs to provide services in three areas: The Professional Development Program for Early Childhood Educators (PDP), The Early Learning Demonstration Project (ELDP), and the Inclusion Program (providing assistance for providers serving children with special needs).

This Strategy Review focuses only on the PDP and the ELDP, offering qualitative and quantitative analysis and recommendations.

- **The Professional Development Program** offers child care providers professional networking opportunities, support, training resources, and financial incentives to increase their education and professional training.
- **The Early Learning Demonstration Project** provides grants and support to help child care programs enhance the quality of their programs and move toward or achieve national accreditation standards. ELDP sites receive training and staff support, funding for classes, facilities improvements, educational materials, and mentoring programs.

Background:

Since 2001, the Commission's Early Childhood Education strategy has funded stipends for childcare providers through the Professional Development Program (PDP) in order to encourage their participation in training and professional education activities.

In 2002, an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of 30 representatives (including child care providers, community college faculty, parents, and agency providers) convened to develop specific funding recommendations to more closely link stipends and other incentives with improved quality in the education of young children:

These recommendations included providing:

- Financial and technical assistance support to licensed early child care settings to help them progress toward achieving and maintaining national accreditation (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children). This program is now known as the Early Learning Demonstration Project.
- Incentives for early childhood educators to increase and apply their knowledge and learning in their early childcare setting. Stipends were to be awarded based on providers completing education and training requirements to advance to successive levels of the Child Development Permit matrix, a professional certificate program for early educators.

The Commission adopted these recommendations in 2003. New services began in 2003-2004.

In 2005, as a result of information received from providers in the community and new requirements for CARES funding from First 5 California, the Commission further refined the PDP program and approved

funding an additional \$1.4 million to the Early Childhood Education Strategy through December 2008. The following new services were implemented:

- Scholarships, tutoring, and cohort classes to facilitate success in community college and university ECE programs
- New community college advisors to guide students' educational growth
- Rewards for professional growth planning and other quality enhancement activities

The following table shows the expenses for providing the services approved in 2005, including the amount of funding received from First 5 California for participating in the CARES program.

PROGRAM	AREA SERVED	BUDGET/EXPENDITURES			CURRENT CONTRACTOR(S)
		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	
PDP	Targets providers in areas of low supply, low API, and Family Child Care Providers	TOTAL expenditure: \$972,595	TOTAL expenditure: \$1,453,087	TOTAL budget: \$1,494,593	Contra Costa Child Care Council Cal State East Bay Contra Costa College Diablo Valley College Los Medanos College
		First 5 CC funded contract staff/ program expense: 635,955	First 5 CC funded contract staff/ program expense: \$734,949	First 5 CC funded contract staff/program budget: \$807,660	
		First 5 CC paid direct funds/ incentives to participants: \$155,396	First 5 CC paid direct funds/ incentives to participants: \$427,521	First 5 CC budget for direct funds/ incentives to participants: \$388,014	
		CARES match received for incentives & program: \$181,244	CARES match received for incentives & program: \$290,617	CARES expected match for incentives & program: \$298,918	
ELDP	80% are in areas of low-performing schools.	TOTAL expenditure: \$635,659	TOTAL expenditure: \$657,320	TOTAL budget: \$677,040	Contra Costa Child Care Council
		First 5 CC funded contract staff/ program expense \$311,548	First 5 CC funded contracted staff/ program expense \$328,761	First 5 CC funded contract staff/ program budget: \$367,232	
		First 5 CC expended grants to programs: 221,601	First 5 CC expended grants to programs: \$213,095	First 5 CC projected grants to programs: 194,400	
		CARES Match received for program grants and program/ staff costs: \$102,510	CARES Match received for program grants and program/ staff costs: \$115,464	CARES Match expected for program grants and program/ staff costs: \$115,408	

End Notes

ⁱ ELOA grants are federally funded one-time-only resources for local quality improvement activities, including supports for education of ECE providers; AB212 is on-going state funding that supports quality improvement activities in State Subsidized Centers only, administered by the Contra Costa County Office of Education.

ⁱⁱ 468 PDP participants were mailed a survey in 2006/2007. This survey collects information on provider satisfaction and the impact of the PDP program on providers. Any future data throughout the report that states the results are based on the PDP participant survey are from this survey noted here.

ⁱⁱⁱ Other incentives include: reimbursement for lost wages (student teaching), up-front scholarships for books and tuition and/or post-course bonuses for completing courses.

^{iv} *The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R)* (1998), by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer. The ECERS has 43 items organized into 7 subscales (Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff).

^v *The Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)* (1989), by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford. The FDCRS has 40 items organized in 6 areas (Space and Furnishings, Basic Care, Language and Reasoning, Learning Activities, Social Development, and Adult Needs).

^{vi} Five providers were missing this information.

^{vii} It should be noted that these data are limited to self-report and not all participants reported language, however it is important to demonstrate that English as Second Language Learners are part of the targeted population and First 5 Contra Costa is accomplishing that goal.

^{viii} The E3 Institute: Advancing Excellence in Early Education in Santa Clara County offers such courses at Santa Clara County's Community College and they have made a positive difference. See also Dukakis, K., & Bellm, D. (2006). Clearing a career path: Lessons from two communities in promoting higher education access for the early care and education workforce. Alameda & Santa Clara Counties, California. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, San Leandro, CA: First 5 Alameda County, & San Jose, CA: WestEd - E3 Institute: Advancing Excellence in Early Education.

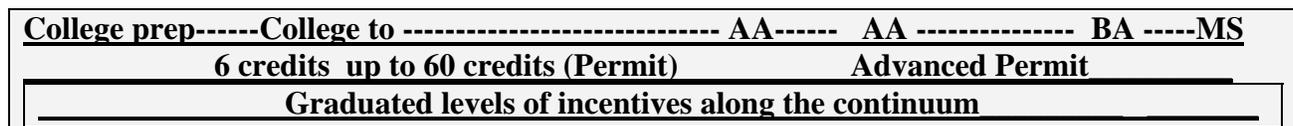
^{ix} It was noted that PGAs themselves sometimes had difficulty with determining the best way to complete a professional development plan. Assisting peers is difficult even if the PGA is well versed on the topic. It may be more effective and efficient to bolster the Community College Advisor system rather than the PGA group as a way to enroll PDP members. Cross-training PGAs with California Early Childhood Mentors, a state funded program that trains and pays for peer mentors, relates to other aspects of PDP as well. There are models for "Enhanced Mentor Projects" where First 5 Commissions partner with the established Early Childhood Mentor Programs to leverage funding from the two sources. The First 5 California Track V supports collaboration with the Mentor Program.

^x The rationale for development of a consolidated Incentive Track system to begin when the next First 5 California Matching Fund is available ('09-'10), is described below.

The First 5 California CARES matching funds require the PDP to comply with a specific incentive track system. The tracks are:

- I. License exempt (Family, Friend and Neighbor, known as FFN – this is contracted with community agencies);
- II. Entry (providers with fewer than 6 college units); provides stipends for ESL and other pre-college courses that help providers prepare for college eligibility;
- III. Permit : providers with six or more units which makes them eligible to apply for a Permit and who are working toward a higher level of the Permit, including college courses required for an AA;
- IV. Degree: providers working toward a BA, including AA course work
- V. Professional (those with a minimum of 48 undergraduate credits that qualify them for a Master Teacher level Permit; used for leadership development including peer and mentor counseling, coaching, etc.); Contra Costa’s PGAs are in this track.

As seen above, Tracks II through IV all support providers as they move from pre-college to a BA and advance on the Permit matrix. As currently designed, the PDP system appears fragmented into totally separate entities. Formatting the separated tracks into one “railroad” with different stations (entry and exit points) would reduce the complexity for providers and allow for different level stipends at different points on a continuum. In addition to potential administrative cost savings, the value of an intentional and straight forward professional development system would be reinforced in the ECE community. Graphically, the new railroad with one track would look like this



Combining some of the smaller bonuses is a first step in consolidation. The Professional Plan, the Quality Improvement Plan, and Course Completion Plan, all support providers for activities that promote a professional approach to their programs and their work with children; each bonus is \$100.00 to \$150.00. Combining the three into one requirement for one stipend per year would reduce paper work, administrative costs, and confusion on the part of the applicants. It would also help applicants understand how their different activities should support and link to advance their professional thinking and performance.

A well developed “back end” data base would sort the incentives and bonuses into the appropriate First 5 California tracks for matching funds. An improved data base would also serve as a case management tool for participants and assist greatly in planning and evaluation of the programs.

Recommended steps to take to create a new data base system:

- Conduct an analysis of current information collection to ensure that standardized questions and data collection methods are being used throughout all of the programs and activities in the programs.
- Use the information to develop a web based system that is accessible to First 5 Contra Costa staff and Community College Advisors, with level of accessibility determined by advising and administrative structure. At a minimum, the system should:
 - Enable continuous individual tracking of PDP participants by number of workshops and hours completed, units earned, types of classes taken, and number and amount of stipends received

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- Incorporate professional development and education plans and goals, location of employment and home, demographic information, type of provider (family child care, center, etc.)
 - Generate reports that summarize participant information in a variety of categories, including all mentioned above
 - Link budget and costs to activities and programs. Although not all financial records can be moved into the PDP/ELDP base, it is possible to develop a system that provides information such as cost of stipend per enrollee by year, geographic distribution of stipends, etc.

Santa Clara and Alameda Counties have developed variations of the streamlined incentive system and the data base model and are finding improved efficiency and staff cost savings (not detailed as of this date). The additional benefit of these recommendations is that Contra Costa would have a system ready to adapt to whatever changes may result from next First 5 California funding cycle.

^{xi} It is advised that First 5 Contra Costa offer incentives for ESL and others who are not yet ready for college, as allowed for in Track II of the First 5 California Matching Funds. If it is not possible to accomplish that change until a new funding cycle from First 5 California, the PDP should work with Adult Education to invite providers to take classes through them.

^{xii} Merritt College's Emerging Teacher Program for English Language Learners in Oakland has utilized a particular curriculum for such training: 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. See also Dukakis, K., & Bellm, D. (2006). Clearing a career path: Lessons from two communities in promoting higher education access for the early care and education workforce. Alameda & Santa Clara Counties, California. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, San Leandro, CA: First 5 Alameda County, & San Jose, CA: WestEd - E3 Institute: Advancing Excellence in Early Education.

^{xiii} Not all ESL students who enroll in Link classes (classes that are conducted in English with a follow up section in the students' home language or in a bi-lingual setting with the same content covered in both sections) take a subsequent ESL assessment. Therefore it is difficult to tell if these courses help people improve their English and are able to transfer their new English skills to work in other and/or more advanced courses. Furthermore, the assessments, themselves should be made more comprehensive; some only test part of the whole scope -- some people can speak well but not write in English, some people can write adequately but not speak or understand, etc.

^{xiv} An ongoing local example of this can be found at Contra Costa College(CCC): faced with a number of students struggling with academic and work-life balance issues, the Educational Advisor at CCC independently contacted the counselor at the campus Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program (or EOPS, a program that provides academic counseling and educational services; financial aid; cash grants; priority registration for required classes; peer networking; child care and transportation assistance to low-income students in good academic standing at the college) to establish a relationship. She is now able to regularly and appropriately refer students there for academic, financial and other support. In Alameda County, a liaison between the community colleges and CSUEB connects students in the BA program there to the Program for Adult College Education, or PACE, which provides services and supports to working adult students at 2- and 4-year institutions. For additional information on students supports, see also Dukakis, K., Bellm, D., Seer, N.,

& Lee, Y. (2007). Chutes or ladders? Creating support services to help early childhood students succeed in higher education. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley.

^{xv} The Bay Area Professional Development Collaborative (BAPDC) is a regional group with the goal of developing recommendations and a systems change agenda on ECE professional development issues, such as transferability, articulation, and Teacher Competency standards. BAPDC also serves as a nexus for cross county development by sharing practical “lessons learned” in ECE higher education development.

^{xvi} This could be similar to the CARES group which meets to discuss and problem solve on administrative and program areas, as well as evaluate progress of the incentive efforts and plan for future development. The group could also serve as a unified voice for the importance of quality improvement efforts regionally and statewide.

^{xvii} Current participants in the study include First 5 Alameda, Santa Clara, San Francisco and Santa Barbara.

^{xviii} This might involve offering a course for credit at the community college on leadership, including what leadership means, how to perform as an experienced leader in the ECE profession, local and statewide ECE advocacy, and more. The E3 Institute: Advancing Excellence in Early Education in Santa Clara County has worked with its community colleges to institute such a course and it has been highly successful. Similarly, create a bi- or multi-level approach to workshops with more “advanced” or current topics, so that longstanding providers at high levels on the Permit Matrix can network with peers and continue to learn and to be engaged.

^{xix} This is of particular concern because the lack of developmentally appropriate provider/teacher-child interactions has been cited as one of the most prevalent issues in the County’s ECE programs.

^{xx} The CLASS assessment tool is an example; it is based on developmental theory and research suggesting that interactions between children and adults are the primary mechanism for children’s learning and development. The CLASS consists of 11 dimensions that make up 4 broad domains.

^{xxi} In part, this challenge is a timing issue: The first wave of providers who were accredited through the ELDP are currently undergoing re-accreditation, and data from those assessments will prove useful. However, a number of focus group participants noted a gap in services following their successful completion of the ELDP, which intuitively would provide one avenue toward quality maintenance.

^{xxii} For example, the gap between licensing standards and accreditation is significant, which makes it difficult and time consuming for many programs to achieve accreditation in one sustained effort. Once attained, accreditation requires consistent follow up through the NAEYC validation process, adding a yearly expense to the center budget.

^{xxiii} ELDP and COE promote the same goals and work toward the same outcomes of improved quality as measured by a validated set of criteria. However, the current bifurcated system to develop quality improvement reinforces the division between the two types of programs by eliminating opportunities for shared education and networking. It also reduces the possibility of resource leveraging. Although AB212 funding is limited to serving state subsidized centers, it is important to develop stronger linkages in order to address this challenge.