



Opportunities to Enhance Supports for Contra Costa County's Early Educator Workforce

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Executive Summary

Contra Costa County's early childhood education (ECE) workforce is essential to children's development, family economic stability, and the region's overall economic health. Approximately 4,000 early childhood educators support thousands of children across the county's variety of child care programs (Powell et al., 2024). Despite a highly experienced and diverse workforce, persistent challenges—including low wages, limited benefits, and high stress—threaten the stability of the early childhood education field (McLean et al., 2024).

A strong body of research shows that no single intervention can stabilize the early childhood education workforce. The most effective strategies align four key elements: competitive compensation, sustained professional supports, accessible career pathways, and coordinated systems supported by data (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; McLean et al., 2024; Bernardi et al., 2024). Compensation attracts educators, while coaching and supportive leadership retain them (Morrissey & Bowman, 2024; Cavadel et al., 2022). Career pathways and apprenticeships strengthen recruitment and advancement when tied to wage progression (Abenavoli, 2025; Spaulding et al., 2019).

In Contra Costa County, there is an array of 22 early childhood education workforce supports, each with different intended outcomes, varying levels of intensity for participants (from one-time engagement to sustained engagement over years), different numbers of participants served annually, and available due to a mix of funding sources.

The existing early childhood education workforce supports in Contra Costa County can be categorized into the following three primary goals:

Recruitment:

Existing supports engage either high school students or adults and aim to recruit them to the ECE field

On-the-Job Support:

This is the primary focus of most existing supports in the county

Retention:

Only a handful of existing efforts expressly work toward this goal

Based on available data, the existing ECE workforce supports that fall within the on-the-job support and retention categories reach about 25% of the current ECE workforce. For details about each existing support, please refer to the Profiles section of the report in Appendix A. For a more detailed version of the table that includes estimates of participants served annually by each workforce support, please refer to Appendix B.

Combining this landscape analysis with existing research on what supports stability in the early childhood education field, this report identifies three priority opportunities for Contra Costa County:

1 Improve Compensation and Benefits Across the ECE Workforce

Compensation is the strongest predictor of recruitment and retention in the early care and education workforce (McLean et al., 2024; Morrissey & Bowman, 2024; Whitebook et al., 2014). Scaling wage supplements, expanding benefits, and improving working conditions are essential to stabilizing the early childhood education workforce (Child Care Aware of America, 2025; Bernardi et al., 2024). Pay parity strategies between transitional kindergarten and community programs can reduce workforce attrition and strengthen the overall child care field (Lee & Muñoz, 2026).

2 Prioritize On-the-Job Supports that Emphasize Retention

On-the-job professional supports—especially coaching, mentoring, and leadership development—are among the strongest predictors of retention in the early childhood education field (Cavadel et al., 2022; Grogan et al., 2018; Bloom et al., 2015). These supports improve job satisfaction, instructional quality, and professional belonging while reducing burnout (Harding et al., 2019; Downey et al., 2024). Sustained, job-embedded coaching is significantly more effective than one-time training (National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, 2020; Glazerman et al., 2010; National Institute for Early Education Research, 2017).

3 Expand Credentials and Credit-Bearing Advancement Pathways

Strengthening credit-bearing pathways and apprenticeships is essential for recruitment and long-term workforce stability. Limited career advancement opportunities

contribute to turnover in the early childhood education field (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; Whitebook et al., 2018). Well-designed, funded career pathways for early childhood educators improve recruitment, credential attainment, and retention (Abenavoli, 2025; Spaulding et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). Apprenticeship models reduce barriers by linking education, wages, and advancement (Abenavoli, 2025).

Next Steps

Contra Costa County has a strong foundation of early childhood education programs, partnerships, and workforce supports that can be leveraged to address ongoing workforce challenges. The following next steps could be used to strengthen and broaden collaborations and build support for future investments to address short-term and long-term needs of the early childhood education workforce.

Leverage Existing Early Childhood Education Structures and Partnerships to Develop an Action Plan:

Build on existing state-mandated and active partnerships across early childhood education stakeholders to advance discussions about next steps in each of the opportunity areas identified. Use these existing partnerships, which already understand the local early childhood education landscape, history and context, to develop a coordinated countywide action plan that includes timelines, roles for systems partners, and measurable outcomes for each opportunity.

Engage Business and Workforce Development as Key Partners:

Share findings with employers, chambers of commerce, economic development networks, the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board and its partners to strengthen recognition of early childhood education as essential economic infrastructure and expand cross-sector collaboration and investment.

Build Support for Funding to Address Early Childhood Education Needs:

Strengthen stakeholder alignment for dedicating local, state, federal, and philanthropic funding to support these identified early childhood education workforce priorities, including compensation, coaching and mentoring, career pathways, apprenticeships, and other workforce supports.



Conclusion

Stabilizing the early childhood education workforce requires a comprehensive and aligned approach. Compensation drives recruitment, while retention depends on professional supports, workplace conditions, leadership, and career pathways¹. When implemented together, these strategies drive entry into the field, improve workforce stability, and support advancement². Ultimately, a more stable early childhood education workforce brings stability to the field and to the families that depend on child care to go to work and support their own families.

¹National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; McLean et al., 2024; Morrissey & Bowman, 2024

²Bernardi et al., 2024; Spaulding et al., 2019)

Introduction



The Catalyst Initiative is a multi-year project led by the Santa Clara County Office of Education in partnership with Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo counties. First 5 Contra Costa serves as the lead agency for Contra Costa County.

The initiative seeks to increase the availability and affordability of child care and early childhood education (ECE), while also improving job quality, climate resilience, and workforce mobility. Core strategies include advocating for fair wages and financial stability within the child care field, expanding training and career development opportunities, increasing access to licensing support and financial aid, and helping programs become safer and more resilient to climate-related risks that affect young children's development and physical safety.

As part of this regional effort, First 5 Contra Costa and its ECE systems partners determined that a landscape analysis of existing ECE workforce efforts in the county and a summary of relevant research on effective ECE workforce approaches were needed.

This report identifies opportunities to strengthen Contra Costa County's ECE workforce efforts. It is informed by a comprehensive review of local workforce needs and existing strategies, including program profiles that describe participant reach, strengths, challenges, and promising practices.

Background

Contra Costa County is home to about 73,100 children under age six (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). About 29 percent of those children are Latine, 25 percent are White, 16 percent are multiracial, 13 percent are Asian, 6 percent are Black, and the rest are of another race or ethnicity. Many families in the county with children under the age of six struggle to make ends meet, and about 9 percent of these families live in deep poverty (defined as living at 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, which means an annual income of \$13,875 for a family of four). In addition, 96 percent of families with a child under age 18 in Contra Costa County have at least one parent in the labor force, and 72 percent have all available parents in the labor force (2022 American Community Survey, retrieved from Table S1901 at data.census.gov.)

To support families with child care services, Contra Costa County also houses approximately 260 licensed early childhood education centers that serve children from birth through age five, and 765 licensed family child care providers operating in their own homes, serving children ages birth through age 12. Contra Costa County's early care and education workforce includes approximately 4,000 professionals across licensed programs (Powell et al., 2024).

The Challenge

Thousands of families depend on the county's 4,000 ECE educators to care for their children so they can go to work or school to support their families. Child care programs have specific ratio requirements that vary by age. Therefore, if programs experience workforce attrition, they may not be able to serve their full licensed capacity. Furthermore, having high turnover in the workforce affects the quality of the care children receive. It is vital to recruit and retain our highly skilled workforce to ensure that children are cared for in high-quality early learning environments.

National and local research points to low compensation as one of the primary drivers of ECE workforce instability. Other factors such as working conditions, the stability of ECE program funding, and Transitional Kindergarten expansion also impact the economic viability of private, community-based child care settings for families in the county.

ECE programs' funding sources strongly influence workforce stability.

- Programs with stable public funding—such as Head Start and California State Preschool (Title 5)—generally offer higher wages, benefits, and more consistent

employment due to reliable state and federal contracts. These conditions are associated with lower turnover compared to tuition-dependent programs (First 5 Contra Costa, 2023; Powell et al., 2024). However, even publicly funded programs are experiencing increased staffing vacancies, in part due to competition from Transitional Kindergarten (TK) expansion.

The expansion of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is reshaping the ECE landscape and workforce dynamics across Contra Costa County and California.

Key impacts include:

- Declines in four-year-old enrollment in other programs as families opt into TK
- Increased competition for credentialed educators, who are drawn to higher-paying and/or better benefited positions in TK, and early care and education programs with state and federal contracts, such as Head Start and California State Preschool Program
- Programmatic shifts toward infant and toddler care among Family Child Care and center-based ECE programs that don't have large public contract(s)
- Increased staff turnover and financial instability in ECE programs that do not access public contracts

These dynamics underscore how funding structures and policy changes interact to shape workforce stability across the mixed-delivery ECE system (First 5 Contra Costa, 2023; Powell et al., 2024).

As programs downsize or close, access to care, especially in Family Child Care providers (FCCs) and private centers, declines—further destabilizing the workforce and creating a reinforcing cycle of supply shortages and workforce attrition.

Reduced supply contributes to:

- Child care deserts, where families have little or no access to licensed care
- Limited availability of infant and toddler care, the most scarce and costly care segment
- Constraints on parental workforce participation, particularly for mothers and low-income families
- Broader economic impacts, including reduced labor force participation and productivity at the local level

These system-level impacts highlight that ECE workforce challenges are not isolated to the sector—they directly affect family economic stability and regional economic growth.

Future Outlook

Contra Costa County's existing early childhood workforce is experienced, diverse, and deeply committed to children and families. However, persistent structural challenges—including low compensation, economic insecurity, health stressors, an aging workforce, and competition for credentialed teachers from TK expansion—threaten long-term workforce sustainability.

Despite ongoing economic pressures, most educators intend to remain in early childhood education.

However, sustained workforce stability will depend on improvements in:

- Enhanced compensation
- Benefits access
- Career advancement opportunities
- Professional recognition
- Leadership development
- Workforce well-being supports



Investments in the ECE workforce are essential to maintaining program quality, expanding child care access, and supporting Contra Costa County's broader economic health.

Early Childhood Education Workforce Profile



An effective early childhood education (ECE) system depends on a strong, stable, and supported workforce. The ECE workforce includes family child care providers, teachers, lead teachers, assistant teachers, site supervisors, and program directors who care for, educate, and support young children across Contra Costa County's mixed-delivery¹ early learning system.

A thriving ECE workforce is one that is valued, fairly compensated, culturally diverse, and supported through accessible professional learning and viable career pathways. ECE workforce strength directly influences program quality, child development outcomes, family economic stability, and community well-being.

Workforce Size and Composition

The Contra Costa County birth-to-five ECE workforce (Powell et al., 2024) is estimated to include approximately:

- 2,200–2,500 center-based teachers and assistants
- 500–1,000 directors and administrators
- Approximately 1,000 family child care providers and assistants

Together, the licensed early learning workforce represents an estimated 4,000 early educators countywide.

Roles examined in this report include:

- Center-based educators: directors, teachers, and assistants working in licensed, early learning programs
- Family child care providers: independent business owners operating licensed home-based programs

Transitional Kindergarten educators and Family Friend Neighbor (FFN) providers are not included in this workforce estimate. (For statewide analysis of TK workforce trends, see Montoya et al. (2022b).)

Data presented in this section primarily draws from *The Early Care and Education Workforce of Contra Costa County* report (Powell et al., 2024), which surveyed 529 educators across Contra Costa County representing three groups:

- Family Child Care providers
- Center directors, and
- Teachers/assistants.

¹California's early care and education system is commonly defined as a mixed-delivery system, in which a diverse set of providers—including public schools offering Transitional Kindergarten, community-based centers, Head Start programs, California State Preschool programs, family child care homes, and license-exempt caregivers—deliver child care services through a combination of federal, state, local, and parent funding streams (Mixed Delivery Position Paper, First 5 California, 2023).

Workforce Demographics

The ECE workforce in Contra Costa County is predominantly composed of women of color, and otherwise reflects the diversity of the children and families served.

- Nearly 40% of center teachers and assistants identify as Latina
- 38% of educators were born outside the United States

This is an asset in our county, as this diverse workforce contributes important linguistic, cultural, and community knowledge essential for culturally responsive and equitable early learning environments.



Education & Experience

A significant portion of the workforce holds postsecondary degrees and possesses extensive experience in the field, which research links to improved program quality and stronger child outcomes.

In Contra Costa County:

- 38% of center staff hold a bachelor's degree or higher
- 27% of FCC providers hold a bachelor's degree or higher
- 66% of directors have more than 20 years of experience
- 42% of FCC providers have worked in ECE for over two decades

Despite strong qualifications and long-term commitment, compensation levels do not match workforce qualifications.

Compensation, Benefits, and Turnover

Low pay and a lack of benefits contribute to turnover in early care and education, forcing some individuals to pursue careers outside the field in order to support themselves and their families (Powell et al., 2024).

Despite education and experience, compensation remains low relative to Bay Area living costs (Powell et al., 2024).

- Center educators earn approximately \$18–\$25 per hour (~\$37,000–\$52,000 annually)
- Family Child Care (FCC) providers earn approximately \$30,000–\$35,900 annually
- Center directors earn roughly \$64,500 annually

Given low compensation, a significant portion of the local ECE workforce relies on public safety net services and worry about meeting their own basic needs:

- 56% of center teachers and assistants experience food insecurity
- Many educators rely on Medi-Cal, SNAP, or other public supports
- Housing affordability concerns are widespread, particularly among Black and Asian educators

Local ECE workers earn significantly less than TK–12 counterparts:

- Teachers at child care centers without public contracts earn at least \$6,300 less annually than TK–12 educators, and Family Child Care (FCC) providers earn approximately \$16,500 less than comparable school-based educators (Powell, A., Muruvi, W., Austin, L., & Petig, A., 2024).
- Based on current salaries, Transitional Kindergarten teachers earn at least \$10,000 more than Head Start/Public State Preschool teachers, and Head Start/Public State Preschool teachers earn roughly \$8,000 more than teachers at child care centers without public contracts, as illustrated below:

Table 1: Compensation and Benefits by Early Childhood Education Setting

Setting	Typical Annual Salary	Typical Hourly Rate	Benefits
Transitional Kindergarten (TK)	\$70,000–\$135,000+*	Approximately \$40–\$67	Full school district benefits, CalSTRS pension, paid holidays/summers (depending on contract)
Head Start/California State Preschool Program (CSPP)	\$60,000–\$80,000**	Approximately \$24–\$35	Generally comprehensive benefits including health insurance, retirement, paid leave, and professional development
Child Care Centers Without Public Contracts	\$42,000–\$58,000***	Approximately \$20–\$28	Benefits vary widely; many programs offer limited or no retirement and less comprehensive health coverage
Family Child Care (FCC) Providers	\$30,000–\$35,900***	Approximately \$14–\$17****	Benefits vary; providers serving children with subsidies may qualify for retirement and other benefits through the Child Care Providers United union.

Access to benefits varies widely among the local ECE workforce:

- Many educators lack retirement plans, paid leave, or employer-sponsored health insurance.
- Benefits are more common in Head Start and Title 5 programs, where approximately 97% of centers offer health insurance.
- Family Child Care (FCC) providers face the greatest economic vulnerability.

Structural inequities in compensation and career pathways disproportionately affect these historically underserved workers³, and low compensation contributes directly to workforce turnover and career exits as educators seek financial stability elsewhere⁴.

³ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2024

⁴ Powell et al., 2024.

*Transitional Kindergarten teachers at: Mt. Diablo, San Ramon, Martinez and West Contra Costa Unified School Districts, 2025–2026 Salary Scales, available online at:

• <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1765472434/mdusdorg/oymqilslcfv3bghm7bqc/21-28MDEASalarySchedules-25-26185-day23.pdf>

• <https://d16k74nzy9emoe.cloudfront.net/b8cd4076-8398-4763-9274-13bf5dafb2d7/2025-26%20CRED%20with%201%20Furlough.pdf>

• <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1779837198/wccusdnet/s5xb29b6mrhlj029jslh/UTR26-27SalaryScheduleModel-updated3pdf.pdf>

**Lead teacher salary ranges at Contra Costa County Community Service Bureau, Unity Council and YMCA of the East Bay, available online at:

• <https://www.jobsatheadstart.org/job/mrezgx/teachers/richmond/ca>

• <https://workforcenow.adp.com/mascsr/default/mdf/recruitment/recruitment.html>

• https://www.seiu1021.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ymca_of_the_east_bay_cba_7.1.2023-6.30.2028_final.pdf

*** Powell, A., Muruvi, W., Austin, L., & Copeman Petig, A. (2024).

****calculated based on 40 hour work week, though hours are likely to exceed this number

Turnover

Low compensation and limited benefits continue to undermine ECE workforce stability.

Across California's ECE landscape, many ECE stakeholders have observed that the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten over the past several years has drawn credentialed educators from other early learning programs toward higher-paying public school positions in TK classrooms.

California is working to support a mixed-delivery system approach to early learning and Transitional Kindergarten, in which school districts, community-based organizations, Head Start programs, California State Preschool programs, family child care homes, and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers work together to serve young children and meet families' differing needs. As TK enrollment expands in Contra Costa County, providers are finding it more challenging to maintain enrollment (Marquez Rosales, June 2026).

In 2024, the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE), in partnership with the Local Child Care Planning Council (LPC) and CocoKids, convened a Mixed-Delivery Working Group to assess the current landscape and recommend concrete next steps. The group brought together roughly 30 stakeholders from across the early childhood ecosystem. Contra Costa County's Mixed-Delivery Early Care and Education (ECE) Report outlines a vision for a more cohesive, inclusive, and family-centered early care and education system.

In a mixed-delivery model, diverse providers—public schools, private centers, Family Child Care (FCC) providers, Head Start, Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN), California State Preschool (CSPP), and others—work together so families can choose the options that best meet their needs. This report distills key findings, as identified by a dedicated mixed delivery working group in Contra Costa County, across four priority areas: High Quality Options, Increasing Inclusion, Workforce Development, and Family Outreach services (Contra Costa County Early Care & Education Mixed-Delivery Working Group Report 2025).



Recent research on the ECE workforce in Contra Costa County confirms that turnover and workforce stability are significant local challenges.

Low wages, high housing costs, and more attractive/better compensated job opportunities outside of ECE remain primary drivers of turnover.

- In a recent study of local ECE workers, 95% of centers reported experiencing staffing changes since 2021.
- 32% of Family Child Care (FCC) providers and 35% of center staff reported they expect to leave the field within 3 years. An additional 25% of providers indicated they would seek a different job within the ECE field.
- Local vacancy rates exceed statewide averages, especially in non-Head Start programs.
- Head Start and Title 5 centers offer stronger benefits and staffing structures but still face recruitment challenges.

In addition to low compensation, ECE educators also report significant occupational health concerns (Powell et al., 2024):

- High perceived stress affects more than half of educators
- Concerns include infection exposure, injury risk, and long hours spent cleaning
- Approximately one-third report chronic pain conditions
- Newer educators report higher stress levels

Despite challenges, educators consistently report strong intrinsic motivation—helping children and families is highly rewarding. However, many feel undervalued and insufficiently recognized.

In addition, many demonstrate interest in continued education:

- Approximately half of educators are interested in pursuing additional degrees or credentials
- Around 20% expressed interest in the upcoming PK-3 Teaching Credential
- Educators with lower educational attainment show the greatest interest in advancing but often need clearer pathways and supports.

Existing ECE Workforce Supports in Contra Costa County

In Contra Costa County, there are an array of ECE workforce supports with a variety of intended outcomes, as well as varying levels of intensity for participants (from one-time engagement to sustained engagement over years), reach, and funding sources.

The existing ECE workforce supports can be categorized into the following three primary goals:

- Recruitment:**
existing supports that engage either high school students or adults and aim to recruit them to the ECE field
- On-the-Job Support:**
this is the primary focus of most existing supports in the county
- Retention:**
only a handful of existing efforts expressly work toward this goal

For the purposes of this report, 22 existing ECE workforce supports were organized into these three categories: recruitment, on-the-job support, and retention. Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs span all three categories. Pre-apprenticeship programs are classified under recruitment as participants are not employed in early childhood programs until they have completed the program, while registered apprenticeship programs are classified under retention as participants are existing employees seeking additional credentials to advance in their career.

The table to the right provides an estimate of the number of unduplicated individuals served by the existing ECE workforce supports in each category. Only a select number of supports were able to provide unduplicated counts across programs, so the amounts shown are likely underestimated. As shown, the existing ECE workforce supports reach about 25% of the current ECE workforce. For details about each existing support, please refer to the Profiles section of the report in Appendix A.

A more detailed version of the table, including estimates of participants served annually by each workforce support, is provided in Appendix C.

Table 2: Summary of Annual Contra Costa County Participants in ECE Workforce Supports

	Estimate of Unduplicated Individuals
Recruitment	
Youth Programs	897
Adult Programs	1,445
Total recruitment reach to individuals not necessarily working in ECE	2,342
On-the-Job Supports	861
Retention	153
Estimated total # of unduplicated individuals served	1,014
Number of ECE professional in Contra Costa County	4,000
Number of ECE professionals not served by existing supports	2,986

Note: Youth programs includes pre-apprenticeship and ROP classes; Adult programs includes community college students and adult pre-apprentices; On-the-Job Supports and Retention includes supports where individual data was available.

Most existing early childhood education (ECE) workforce supports in Contra Costa County are funded through federal and state grants or contracts, with only a limited number supported by local funding sources.



In February 2022, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors committed \$1.9 million annually in ongoing Measure X sales tax revenues to support ECE workforce initiatives. Measure X currently funds the Inclusion Initiative, the Wage Boost Program, and stipends for participants in youth apprenticeship programs. Several workforce efforts also receive support from local philanthropic organizations.

Recruitment:

Educational opportunities for individuals not necessarily currently working in the ECE field

ECE workforce supports are specifically focused on recruitment aimed to bring individuals into the ECE field by reducing financial barriers to attaining a teaching credential or ECE college units, offering practical, paid work experience in the field and opportunities for future employment in ECE programs. Some recruitment programs focus on high school students, while others focus on adults—typically parents whose children are enrolled in an ECE program or low-income community members interested in pursuing careers in early childhood education.

In Contra Costa County, these programs are operated by the YMCA of the East Bay, Unity Council Head Start, and Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE). These programs utilize an “earn-and-learn” model, combining stipends and/or internships, college coursework, coaching and mentoring to create structured entry points into the early childhood profession. As participants complete coursework and gain experience, they may transition into permanent employment with the sponsoring agency (see YMCA of the East Bay, Head Start and CCCOE Grow Your Own profiles in Appendix A).

In addition to these models that pair education with field experience, there are also opportunities to solely learn about ECE without engaging in a work experience component. High school and adult learners can enroll in early childhood education coursework through Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, and Los Medanos College. Approximately 860 high school students are enrolled in ECE coursework through the Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) or dual-enrollment opportunities (see CCCOE Grow Your Own profile).

An additional 2,000 adult learners are enrolled in ECE courses through the community college system. Further coursework and degree pathways are available through California State University East Bay, EDvance College, and Saint Mary’s College; however, enrollment data for Contra Costa County residents in these programs are not readily available.

On-the-Job Support:

A variety of professional development or support services for individuals currently working in the ECE field and/or staff in ECE programs

On-the-job supports represent the most prevalent category of workforce investment in Contra Costa County. These programs serve approximately 4,200 duplicated participants annually, and based on the data available at least 861 unduplicated participants. These supports include a variety of training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance, workshops, and professional development opportunities for center-based educators, family child care providers, and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers.

The intensity and duration of services vary considerably. Some initiatives provide one-time workshops or short-term technical assistance, while others offer sustained coaching, mentoring, and professional development over a year or more to participants continuing to engage across program years. Eligibility requirements vary based on funding source, target population, and program objectives.

Retention:

Compensation to individuals currently working in the ECE field and/or engaging in credit-bearing training which aims to help them maintain or enhance current employment

Current retention-focused initiatives include professional development and workforce support programs operated by two of county's three Head Start agencies, the Professional Development Program's stipends for college credit pathway, and the Measure X-funded Wage Boost Program administered by CocoKids (see program profiles in Appendix A).

Despite the importance of these efforts, only approximately 153 unduplicated participants are currently receiving direct retention-focused supports through these programs. This small number suggests a significant opportunity to expand strategies that improve compensation, career advancement, and other workplace supports associated with long-term workforce stability.

What the Research Tells Us About the Effectiveness of ECE Workforce Supports

A strong and consistent body of national, state, and local research demonstrates that stabilizing the early care and education (ECE) workforce requires a coordinated, multi-pronged strategy rather than a single intervention (National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine, 2015; Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2024; Office of Planning Research and Evaluation, 2024).

Compensation is foundational: persistently low wages and limited access to benefits drive educators out of the field, deter new entrants, and contribute to chronic staffing shortages (McLean et al., 2024; Morrissey & Bowman, 2024; Whitebook et al., 2014).

Additionally, compensation supports have been shown to be more effective when paired with access to job-embedded professional supports, supportive leadership, positive workplace conditions, and clear, compensated career pathways (Cavadel et al., 2022; Bloom et al., 2015; Grogan et al., 2018).

The most effective workforce strategies integrate four core elements:

- 1 **Competitive and Equitable Compensation**
- 2 **Sustained Professional Supports, Including Coaching and Mentoring**
- 3 **Accessible, Credit-Bearing Career Pathways Aligned with Advancement and Wage Progression**
- 4 **Coordinated Data Systems that Enable States and Localities to Track Workforce Supply, Qualifications, Advancement, and Retention Over Time**

(National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine, 2015; Spaulding et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

When implemented together, these elements are associated with improved recruitment, stronger retention, and greater overall workforce stability (Bernardi et al., 2024).

Compensation Initiatives: Foundational Workforce Strategy

Inadequate and inequitable compensation remains the most persistent challenge facing early childhood education nationally, impacting educators themselves, as well as children, families, businesses, and the economy.

Low compensation (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2024):

- Drives experienced educators out of the field
- Discourages new entrants into the profession, particularly those with a bachelor's degree or higher
- Undermines relational stability and, therefore, quality
- Contributes to staffing shortages that limit child care availability for families and employers



Research emphasizes that effective compensation strategies extend beyond wages alone.⁵

⁵National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2024

Comprehensive compensation packages must include:

- Competitive salaries or wage supplements
- Health insurance and retirement benefits
- Paid leave
- Educational supports (coursework, degrees, permits, credentials)
- For family child care providers: coverage of business expenses including materials, insurance, and housing-related costs

Evidence shows that strategies targeting educator compensation—including boosting wages and providing benefits, retention bonuses, or temporary relief payments—are effective at improving educator retention, program stability, and family access.

Programs in Louisiana, Washington, D.C., Virginia, and North Carolina demonstrate that sustained wage increases and pay parity strategies (Lee & Muñoz, 2026):

- Reduce turnover rates
- Improve educator job satisfaction and well-being
- Increase program stability
- Strengthen classroom quality
- Expand family access to child care

Competitive pay and benefits are necessary to attract and retain a well-qualified, educated workforce.

On-the-Job Supports: A Critical Driver of Retention

Relational and professional supports are also critical to workforce retention. Coaching, mentoring, induction, and leadership quality predict long-term workforce stability.

Ongoing professional supports significantly increase:

- Job satisfaction
- Instructional confidence
- Workplace stability
- Professional identity and belonging
- Long-term commitment to the field

These supports are particularly important in early childhood education, where educators often work in isolated environments with limited career ladders.

Early career supports—particularly sustained induction and mentoring—reduce turnover among novice early childhood educators. Structured, ongoing support processes provided to new educators over an extended period—typically one to three years—can help them successfully transition into the profession and remain in the field.

Research consistently finds that ongoing, job-embedded supports are more effective than one-time training in improving retention, practice, and job satisfaction (National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, 2020; Glazerman et al., 2010; National Institute for Early Education Research, 2017).

Professional supports—including reflective supervision, supportive leadership, paid professional development, career navigation, and wellness supports—are consistently linked to improved retention.

Research shows that these supports are most effective when they are ongoing, job-embedded, and integrated into daily practice, rather than delivered as one-time interventions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; CSCCE, 2020).

- Reflective supervision has been shown to reduce burnout and improve retention by strengthening educators' capacity to manage the emotional demands of early childhood work (Heffron & Murch, 2010; Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2023).

- Supportive leadership and positive workplace conditions are strongly associated with improved retention, with leadership practices shaping job satisfaction, stress levels, and intent to stay (Bloom et al., 2015; Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2020).
- Paid professional development and release time increase participation and retention by reducing financial and time burdens on educators (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2020; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015).
- Career advising and navigation supports improve retention by helping educators access and persist in career pathways aligned with advancement and wage progression (Spaulding et al., 2019; Abenavoli, 2025).
- Access to wellness and mental health supports improves retention by addressing high levels of stress and burnout in the early childhood workforce (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2023).

Coaching and Mentoring as Workforce Infrastructure

In early childhood education (ECE), coaching and mentoring are increasingly recognized as essential workforce supports that improve educator effectiveness, workplace stability, and retention. Multiple models are used across ECE systems, each serving different but complementary purposes. Instructional coaching focuses on improving teaching practice through classroom observation, modeling, reflection, and feedback.

One of the most widely used approaches is Practice-Based Coaching (PBC), particularly in Head Start programs, where coaches work with educators through goal-setting, focused observation, and reflective feedback cycles to strengthen instructional quality and teacher-child interactions.

Research has found that sustained, relationship-based coaching improves educator confidence, practice quality, and implementation fidelity (Cavadel et al., 2022; National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning [NCECDTL], 2019).

- Mentoring and induction models serve a different but equally important role. These approaches focus on professional socialization, emotional support, career navigation, and helping new educators remain in the profession during the highest-risk years for turnover. Mentoring relationships are particularly important for apprentices, assistant teachers, family child care providers, and educators entering the field through

nontraditional pathways. Research on educator induction consistently shows that sustained mentoring and professional support improve job satisfaction, strengthen professional identity, and increase retention (Glazerman et al., 2010; Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

- Reflective supervision is another widely used model, particularly in infant-toddler programs and mental health-informed settings. Reflective supervision emphasizes emotional support, stress reduction, and reflective practice through guided conversations and relationship-based support. This model helps educators process the emotional demands of working with young children and families and may reduce burnout and compassion fatigue.
- Leadership coaching is also increasingly identified as a critical workforce strategy. Leadership coaching supports program directors and site supervisors in strengthening workplace climate, staff supervision, organizational management, and retention practices. Research suggests that supportive leadership and positive workplace conditions are among the strongest non-compensation predictors of educator retention (Bernardi et al., 2024; Douglass, 2019).
- Peer coaching and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide collaborative, educator-to-educator learning environments that reduce professional isolation and build collegial support networks. Technical assistance (TA) coaching, commonly tied to licensing, QRIS, or health and safety systems, offers targeted support for compliance and quality improvement goals.

Increasingly, research suggests that effective ECE workforce systems integrate multiple coaching and mentoring approaches simultaneously—addressing instructional practice, emotional well-being, leadership quality, and professional advancement together.

Sustained, relationship-based supports are associated with stronger educator competence, confidence, belonging, and workforce retention.⁶

⁶ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; Bernardi et al., 2024.

Professional Pathways

Lack of visible advancement ladders contributes to turnover in the ECE field. Research shows that the early childhood workforce is characterized by a “flattened” career structure, with limited advancement opportunities and limited wage growth across roles. Educators often take on greater responsibility without meaningful increases in compensation or must leave the field to advance, contributing to turnover and workforce instability (Whitebook et al., 2018; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; McLean et al., 2020).

Well-designed pathways are a core recruitment strategy, but they are even more strongly linked to retention, advancement, and workforce stability when they are funded, compensated, and supported. Educators with clear, supported pathways for career progression are more likely to remain in the field. Structured career ladders linking community college certificates, associate and bachelor's degrees, and credentials like PK-3 are associated with greater educator retention and child outcomes. (Tout et al., 2017). Pathways help recruitment when they signal career legitimacy and progression, not just job availability.

Research consistently finds that structured pathways help recruitment when they:

- Offer early entry points (e.g., apprenticeships, high school pathways, Child Development Associate (CDA) programs)
- Provide paid training or earn-and-learn models
- Make ECE feel like a professionalized career, rather than a “dead-end job” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015)

Supports that reduce barriers to continuing education—such as tuition assistance, release time, advising, and mentoring—are a core component of effective early childhood professional development systems.

These supports increase access to and completion of credentials and degrees, which are associated with improved workforce stability and retention (National Association for the Education of Young Children & National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2011; Whitebook et al., 2018).



With sound investment, career pathways in ECE are designed to (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015):

- Create stackable, portable credentials (from entry level to associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees)
- Provide multiple entry and exit points
- Align training with job roles and competencies
- Support advancement within the field rather than out of it

Studies of school-based pathways and apprenticeship models show they can attract new entrants earlier and increase interest in early childhood education as a viable, long-term career with advancement opportunities. The National Early Care and Education Workforce Center (2025) notes that registered apprenticeships across industries are associated with improved skills, recruitment, and retention; emerging evidence in ECE points to similar gains in educator knowledge, competencies, and intent to remain in the field.

Registered apprenticeships are a relatively new but rapidly expanding strategy in ECE (National Early Care and Education Workforce Center, 2025). They reduce barriers to advancement by combining financial support, paid on-the-job training, and structured wage increases tied to credential milestones (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021; U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). Registered apprenticeships also strengthen both recruitment and advancement by opening entry points for new educators while supporting incumbent staff who face barriers to increasing their qualifications (Whitebook et al., 2018). Because apprenticeships require wage progression, they may also help address chronic under-compensation in the ECE workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

Retention gains from career pathways are strongest when paired with compensation, financial supports (including tuition reimbursement or debt-free education), and improved working conditions; pathways alone do not reliably increase retention (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; Whitebook et al., 2018; Spaulding et al., 2019; Lipscomb et al., 2017).

Other Strategies Needed to Support a Strong Workforce

Strong leadership and positive workplace environments are among the strongest non-compensation predictors of retention in early childhood education. Supportive supervision, professional respect, and collaborative environments significantly reduce turnover, even in a low-wage context (Whitebook et al., 2014; Bassok et al., 2020; Grogan et al., 2018). Research from the McCormick Center shows that workplace climate—shaped by program leadership—is a key predictor of early educator retention, influencing job satisfaction, collaboration, and staff stability (Bloom, Weiland, & Talan, 2015; Talan & Bloom, 2018).

Work conditions—such as workload, autonomy, planning time, and access to classroom resources—play a critical role in educator retention, independent of compensation. Research consistently shows that supportive work environments reduce stress and burnout, increase job satisfaction, and strengthen educators' commitment to remain in the field (Whitebook et al., 2018; National Institute for Early Education Research, 2017). Paid professional development time decreases stress and turnover (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2020).

Data systems— particularly workforce registries and linked administrative data— are essential infrastructure for effective early childhood workforce policy. They enable states and localities to track workforce supply, qualifications, compensation, and turnover, supporting more targeted investments, better program design, and continuous improvement (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015). Given changes in California's workforce data infrastructure, local data capacity will become increasingly important for Contra Costa County. With the elimination of the statewide Workforce Registry, there is state level exploration to address the data issues counties continue to struggle with.

Equity is central to effective early childhood workforce policy. Targeted supports that address wage gaps, advancement barriers, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices improve retention for educators of color and dual language learners, who make up a large share of the workforce but face disproportionate structural barriers (Whitebook et al., 2018; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; Spaulding et al., 2019; McLean et al., 2020).



The strongest evidence-based approach to improving early childhood workforce recruitment and retention combines structured career pathways, aligned compensation, professional supports, and system coherence. Research consistently finds that these elements must operate together to produce meaningful improvements in workforce stability, advancement, and entry into the field.⁷

⁷National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015; McLean et al., 2020; Spaulding et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Opportunities for Contra Costa County

The landscape analysis of Contra Costa County points to three priority areas for further county investment. These three priority opportunities are:

- **improving compensation and benefits,**
- **expanding on-the-job supports that strengthen retention, and**
- **building accessible, credit-bearing advancement pathways.**

Each of these areas of opportunity responds directly to documented workforce challenges in Contra Costa County and reflects the broader research base on what improves ECE recruitment, retention, and workforce stability. Ideally, these strategies would be implemented together and guided by equity, data, and practitioner voice.



Improve Compensation and Benefits Across the ECE Workforce

Contra Costa's ECE workforce is highly skilled and experienced, yet compensation remains too low to support long-term workforce stability. Many educators work full time while experiencing food insecurity, housing stress, reliance on public benefits, and limited access to health insurance, retirement, or paid leave. Compensation gaps are especially acute for family child care providers and educators in programs that are not funded by Head Start and Title 5 funding streams. Many members of the ECE workforce report they are likely to leave the field, with compensation as a driving factor (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2025). Transitional Kindergarten, Head Start, California State Preschool, and other publicly funded preschool programs also increase competition for credentialed educators by offering higher wages, benefits, and more stable employment.

Compensation is the strongest foundational driver of workforce recruitment and retention, but long-term stability of the workforce also depends on benefits, working conditions, leadership, and professional supports. Enhancing investment in wage supplements and stipend programs, benefit expansions including health insurance and retirement plans, and improvements to working conditions is essential to addressing chronic turnover, stabilizing programs, and strengthening recruitment. A "compensation-first" strategy is critical to workforce stabilization in Contra Costa County. The state rate reform efforts could help boost educator wages, particularly for child care settings that accept alternative payment vouchers.

Opportunities for enhanced investment include pursuing sustainable public county funding, such as Measure X or General Fund dollars, in addition to exploring how county departments and other public agencies utilize state and federal dollars, and the role that private philanthropy and the business sector could play in supporting such efforts. In addition, local ECE stakeholders should continue to advocate for state and federal resources that can be used to support the ECE workforce across all settings. Newly identified resources should be prioritized for the ECE workforce in programs that do not have Head Start or Title 5 (state preschool, etc) contracts where many of the existing supports focus. Instead, newly identified funding should prioritize less-resourced aspects of the local ECE workforce such as family child care providers, where compensation gaps are greatest and job stability remains most fragile across the mixed-delivery system.



Prioritize On-the-Job Supports that Strengthen Retention

On-the-job professional supports, especially coaching, mentoring, and leadership development, are among the strongest non-compensation predictors of educator retention in the early care and education field (Cavadel et al., 2022; Grogan et al., 2018; Bloom et al., 2015). Coaching provides individualized guidance, reflective supervision, classroom problem-solving support, and professional growth opportunities that reduce isolation and burnout (Harding et al., 2019; Downey et al., 2024).

A strong body of research indicates that sustained, job-embedded coaching and mentoring improve educator

practice, confidence, job satisfaction, and workplace stability—factors that are strongly associated with increased retention (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2017; Cavadel et al., 2022; Glazerman et al., 2010). These supports are particularly critical for early-career educators and those working with infants, toddlers, and three-year-olds, where higher instructional demands and elevated stress levels significantly increase turnover risk.

Given the existing landscape, Contra Costa County could benefit from enhanced investment in the following on-the-job supports:

- Expand practice-based coaching across settings, prioritizing programs without a coaching infrastructure.
- Expand mentoring and peer coaching approaches.
- Provide more opportunities and supports for leaders in the field, including site directors and Family Child Care network leaders, from leadership development to reflective supervision.



Expand Credentials and Credit-Bearing Advancement Pathways

Strengthening credential and credit—bearing options embedded within existing on-the-job workforce initiatives is essential to improving recruitment, retention, and long-term workforce stability (Abenavoli, 2025; Cheng et al., 2018; Spaulding et al., 2019). Priority should be placed on retaining and advancing the current workforce, supporting degree and permit progression, and creating accessible entry pathways for new educators—particularly through apprenticeships and related earn-and-learn models. Credential pathways are most effective when they are accessible, paid, and connected to real career and wage advancement (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021; Whitebook et al., 2018).

Many educators are interested in pursuing additional credentials, degrees, or permits, but face barriers such as cost, time, unclear requirements, language access, and limited wage returns. At the same time, the county needs stronger entry pathways for new educators as TK expansion, retirements, and program vacancies intensify workforce shortages.

While there are strong models of such efforts in Contra Costa County, the existing efforts do not have the reach needed for the number of ECE workers in the county. Future investment in such efforts should focus on inducting and recruiting new employees as well as retaining and advancing the current workforce.

Opportunities to explore include:

- Expand credit-bearing pathways embedded in employment by partnering with local colleges to offer cohort-based degrees/pathways, credit for prior learning, and stackable certificates
- Create accessible pathways for new educators entering the field, including expansion of apprenticeships and related training programs
- Fund tuition, fees and wraparound supports, prioritizing low-income educators, multilingual educators and family child care providers
- Align credentials with wage progression
- Strengthen permit and degree navigation supports
- Expand bilingual and culturally responsive pathways

Together, these three opportunities form an integrated workforce strategy:

- compensation stabilizes the workforce,
- on-the-job supports help educators stay and thrive, and
- credit-bearing pathways build the pipeline for recruitment and long-term growth.

Guiding Principles for Implementation

Data-Driven Planning

Continue utilizing localized workforce data—including UC Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment data, publicly available datasets, and administrative data from the county resource and referral agency (CocoKids) and the other publicly funded ECE workforce efforts (such as Quality Matters and Measure X workforce investments)—to inform targeted strategies and measure impact over time. Funding and program decisions should be grounded in evidence-based practices and continuous evaluation.

Equitable Access

Advance policies that expand equitable access to high-quality early care and education, particularly in underserved communities. Workforce stability should be explicitly linked to improved outcomes for children and families.

Consult ECE Experts

Design and implement new initiatives in partnership with early educators, program leaders, and workforce stakeholders. Practitioner voice is essential to developing realistic, effective, and sustainable solutions.

Next Steps

Contra Costa County has a strong foundation of early childhood education (ECE) programs, partnerships, and workforce initiatives that can be leveraged to address ongoing recruitment, retention, and workforce stability challenges. The following next steps are intended to build on existing efforts, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and align future investments with the county's identified workforce priorities. Together, these actions can help create a more coordinated, sustainable, and responsive ECE workforce system across Contra Costa County's mixed-delivery system.

1 Leverage Existing Early Childhood Education Systems and Partnerships to Develop an Action Plan

Build on the strengths of existing Contra Costa County early childhood education (ECE) entities, initiatives, and partnerships to advance each identified opportunity area. This includes aligning efforts across First 5 Contra Costa, local school districts, community colleges, workforce agencies, Head Start programs, community-based organizations, apprenticeship programs, and family child care networks. Develop a coordinated countywide action plan that identifies shared goals, priority strategies, timelines, lead partners, and measurable outcomes to strengthen recruitment, retention, workforce advancement, and program stability across the ECE sector.

2 Expand Engagement with the Business and Economic Development Community

Share the findings of this landscape analysis with the broader business and economic development community, including employers, chambers of commerce, workforce development partners, and the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board. Position ECE workforce stability as both a child and family issue and a critical economic infrastructure issue that directly impacts workforce participation, business productivity, and regional economic growth. Strengthening cross-sector understanding and collaboration can help elevate ECE within workforce and economic development planning efforts and expand access to new partnerships and funding opportunities.

3 Align Emerging Funding Opportunities with County Workforce Priorities

As new local, state, federal, and philanthropic funding opportunities emerge, proactively align proposals and investments with the priority opportunity areas identified in this report. Seek opportunities to braid and coordinate funding streams to support compensation initiatives, coaching and mentoring systems, career pathway development, apprenticeships, leadership supports, and workforce data infrastructure. Position Contra Costa County to respond strategically and collaboratively to future funding opportunities that can accelerate long-term ECE workforce stabilization and systems improvement.

Conclusion

A strong and consistent body of research shows that stabilizing the early childhood education (ECE) workforce requires a comprehensive, aligned approach.

While compensation is the primary driver of recruitment and retention, the literature also shows that retention depends on a broader set of conditions—including professional supports, working environments, leadership quality, and clear career pathways. As the research consistently demonstrates: compensation attracts educators, and a combination of compensation, professional supports, and working conditions keep them.

In Contra Costa County, the ECE workforce is essential to children's development and families' economic participation, yet faces persistent challenges, including low wages, limited benefits, high stress, and constrained advancement opportunities. Workforce instability is not driven by a lack of commitment, but by systemic issues—particularly compensation gaps, uneven access to supports, and a lack of clearly structured, well-compensated career pathways.

Evidence points to a clear solution: the most effective workforce systems integrate these key elements—competitive compensation, strong professional supports (especially coaching and mentoring), and accessible and aligned career pathways. When these elements are implemented together, they lead to improved recruitment, stronger retention, increased credential attainment, and greater overall workforce stability.

Contra Costa County has begun investing in these strategies, but current efforts are not yet at the scale needed to meet demand. Expanding and aligning investments—particularly in compensation, coaching infrastructure, apprenticeships, and credit-bearing advancement pathways—will be critical to building a stable, qualified, and diverse workforce.

Ultimately, sustained and coordinated investment in the ECE workforce is not only a workforce strategy—it is a strategy for strengthening families, supporting economic growth, and ensuring all children have access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

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Learn more about how First 5 Contra Costa is strengthening early care and education:

First 5 Contra Costa partners with providers, educators, and communities to ensure young children enter school healthy, supported, and ready to thrive. To explore partnerships and opportunities, contact Stephanie Shieh, Early Childhood Program Officer, at sshieh@first5coco.org.



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California State University, East Bay (CSUEB)

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization(s):

California State University, East Bay: Teacher Education, Liberal Studies, Human Development Departments

Funding Source(s):

Multiple funding sources to support students, including California State University (CSU) system funding, State of California higher education appropriations, student tuition and fees, Federal and state financial aid programs, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) educator pathway grants and incentives, Golden State Teacher Grant Program, Federal Pell Grants and Cal Grants, workforce and teacher preparation grants.

Start Date/Duration:

Undergraduate: Ongoing
Credential: Summer
Masters: Fall

Geographic Focus:

SF Bay Area/East Bay

Target Population:

Current and aspiring early childhood educators, TK and early elementary teachers, Head Start and community-based program staff, family child care providers, paraprofessionals, and community college transfer students

Enrollment:

310 Credential Students, 140 Master's Students, data for students who are Contra Costa County residents was not available at the time of the request

Program Contact(s)/Title:

Valerie Helgren-Lempesis, Coordinator, Master of Science in Early Childhood Education Program, Professor, Department of Teacher Education

valerie.helgren-lempesis@csueastbay.edu

Shadi Roshandel, Chair

Department of Teacher Education

shadi.roshandel@csueastbay.edu

Website(s):

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/ls/early-childhood-education.html>

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/ted/programs-admissions/masters/early-childhood-ed.html>

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/hdws/new-program-description.html>

Purpose & Goals

California State University, East Bay serves as a regional higher education partner supporting the early childhood education workforce through degree, credential, and graduate programs aligned with California's evolving PK-3 and mixed-delivery ECE systems. Programs emphasize accessibility for working educators, cohort-based learning, permit and credential advancement, and partnerships with local agencies and Head Start programs.

Key Goals:

- Expand accessible ECE degree and credential pathways.
- Support workforce advancement and permit attainment.
- Prepare educators for California's PK-3 and mixed-delivery systems.
- Increase retention through flexible, practitioner-centered programs.
- Strengthen regional workforce pipelines and leadership capacity.

Program Description

Undergraduate:**Human Development: Early Childhood Development Concentration**

The Human Development program, with an Early Childhood Development concentration, is an interdisciplinary program that integrates theory and methodology in educational, community, and family support settings. Coursework integrates child development, learning theory, family engagement, cultural responsiveness, and early learning practice. The program is designed for both traditional students and working professionals seeking careers in early childhood education, child advocacy, and related human services fields. Flexible online and hybrid formats support accessibility for incumbent educators and community college transfer students.

Liberal Studies: PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential Pathway

The Liberal Studies program offers a liberal arts educational experience through selected courses from a wide range of academic disciplines, while allowing students to select Early Childhood Education as their in-depth study of interest. The major consists of a common core and a concentration of 16 units of upper-division Early Childhood Education classes designed to prepare students for entering a credential program (Multiple Subject or PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential) as well as advancing on the California Permit Matrix. The ECE concentration includes methods courses in all academic areas as well as courses to help work with birth-to-5-year-

California State University, East Bay (CSUEB)

continued

old children, families, and communities. Flexible online and hybrid formats support accessibility for educators and transfer students.

Minor in Early Childhood Education

The Minor in Early Childhood Education is a 16-unit upper-division program designed to prepare students to work with children and their families from birth to age 5 in a variety of educational settings. Focusing on best practices, students are provided with pedagogy to serve all students. Critical analysis and self-reflection are key components of the program, which focuses on all areas of the curriculum. A practicum completes the three-semester program. Flexible online and hybrid formats support accessibility for educators and transfer students.

Credential (Begins Summer 2027):

PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential

The PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential is designed to prepare educators for teaching and leadership roles serving children from preschool through third grade. The cohort-based program aligns with California Commission on Teacher Credentialing standards and supports California's Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) implementation efforts. Coursework integrates instructional methods, child development, inclusive practices, and early learning pedagogy.

Graduate:

Master of Science in Early Childhood Education

The Master of Science in Early Childhood Education prepares working practitioners to teach and lead in programs serving children from infancy through age eight. The cohort-based program emphasizes curriculum and pedagogy, leadership development, evidence-based instruction, culturally and developmentally appropriate practice, family collaboration, and whole-child development. Students include educators from preschool, Head Start, Transitional Kindergarten, and elementary school settings. The program is specifically designed for working professionals through evening, weekend, online, and hybrid scheduling formats.

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

Open to current and aspiring early childhood educators, transfer students, and working professionals seeking degree, permit, credential, or graduate-level preparation in ECE. Credential and graduate programs require additional admission criteria, including a bachelor's degree and program-specific prerequisites.

Undergraduate/Human Development & ECE Programs:

High school diploma or equivalent; admission to CSUEB; community college transfer eligibility for transfer students; interest in careers working with young children, families, or education systems

PK-3/Credential Pathways:

Bachelor's degree (for credential programs); basic skills and subject matter competency requirements as required by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing; completion of prerequisite coursework and field experience requirements; admission to the Teacher Education Department

Master of Science in Early Childhood Education:

Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; graduate school admission eligibility; interest or experience in early childhood education, preschool, TK, child development, or related fields; typically designed for working educators and practitioners, and a completely online program.

Additional Features:

Programs are designed to support: working adults, incumbent ECE workforce participants, community college transfer students, Head Start and community-based educators, culturally and linguistically diverse students. Courses are offered in a variety of modes and times, including late afternoon and early evenings, Saturday, online, and hybrid scheduling formats.

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants (2026):

- Credential Students: 310
- Master's Students: 140

Outcomes & Evaluation

Programs support workforce qualifications, permit and credential attainment, leadership development, and regional ECE workforce pipeline expansion. Evaluation occurs through CSU accountability systems, accreditation review, candidate completion data, and California Commission on Teacher Credentialing program approval and continuous improvement requirements.

Sustainability & Scalability

Cost per participant:

Estimated annual tuition and fees range from approximately \$7,500–\$9,100 for California residents depending on program level and enrollment status, with additional costs for books, credentialing requirements, and related program expenses. Financial aid, grants, scholarships, and educator workforce incentives may offset costs for eligible students. Some limited department scholarships may be available.

Child Care Boost Initiative: Wage Enhancement Pilot

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization:

CocoKids

Partner Organizations:

Evaluation partners include First 5 Contra Costa, the UC Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, and Clarity Social Research Group

Funding Source(s):

Contra Costa County Measure X (local sales tax revenue)

Total Project Funding:

\$3.68 million per fiscal year

Start Date/Duration:

Contract 2024-2027, pilot began 2025; includes two 18-month cohorts .

Geographic Focus:

Countywide, with priority for high-need zip codes and infant-toddler child care deserts

Target Population:

Staff working in selected licensed centers and family child care homes in good standing, without a contract for public funding (e.g., CSPP or Head Start)

Enrollment:

120 participants per cohort

Program Contact:

Erin Freschi

Director Resource & Referral and Learning Institute,
CocoKids

erin.freschi@cocokids.org

Website:

<https://www.cocokids.org>; <https://www.first5coco.org/early-childhood-education/early-learning-workforce/>

Purpose & Goals

To stabilize and retain the early childhood workforce in Contra Costa County by providing direct wage supplements to educators working in licensed early learning settings.

Key Goals:

- Improve workforce retention and economic stability
- Reduce turnover in high-need communities
- Strengthen continuity of care for young children and families

Program Description

- Monthly stipends provided directly to eligible early childhood educators in selected programs
- Outreach and engagement to providers in priority communities
- Data collection to assess impact on workforce retention

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

- Early childhood educators working in selected licensed child care centers or FCC homes in designated zip codes in Contra Costa County
- Individuals providing direct care and education to young children in selected programs
- Participating programs selected by lottery

Minimum Requirements:

- Employed in a selected licensed ECE program in Contra Costa County
- Working a minimum number of hours per week (generally 20 hours)
- Program in good standing with Community Care Licensing

Child Care Boost Initiative: Wage Enhancement Pilot

continued

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants (annual):

Pilot cohort (number determined by available funding), 120 participants per cohort, 2 cohorts will be participating in this pilot

Languages Supported:

English and Spanish (materials and outreach), with the capacity to provide support in additional languages as needed.

Outcomes & Evaluation

- Increased workforce retention
- Improved financial stability for educators
- Reduced program closures and staffing shortages

A formal evaluation is being conducted by the UC Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment in collaboration with First 5 Contra Costa

Sustainability & Scalability

Current Funding Status:

Pilot (time-limited contract with Measure X funding)

Sustainability Plan:

- Use pilot data to inform long-term county workforce compensation strategies
- Explore braided funding and policy advocacy for ongoing wage supports

Scalability Considerations:

- Could be supported through the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors' ongoing Measure X allocation to support the ECE workforce
- Administrative infrastructure for stipend management
- Alignment with broader state compensation reform efforts

Notes

- High demand underscores the need for systemic compensation reform beyond pilots
- Local funding can act as a catalyst for broader policy change
- Current cohort selected by lottery, and applicants not selected were invited to participate in the evaluation effort as a version of a control group
- Next cohort will begin in early Fall 2026
- Additional evaluation to be coordinated by Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board

CocoKids Workforce Initiatives: Training and Technical Assistance (TA)

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization:

CocoKids

Funding Source(s):

Varies; California Department of Social Services, District 2, District 4, Measure X, CDBG, and private foundations

Funding Amount(s):

Varies, see below

- Workforce Related Project Funding: Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN): \$150,000
- Foster Bridge: \$120,000
- Inclusion: \$200,000
- California Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP): \$78,000
- District 2: \$10,000
- District 4: \$75,000
- Nutrition site visits and training, multiple sources
- Resource & Referral (R&R) training and support, multiple sources (workforce related funding is only a portion of overall program funds)

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Geographic Focus:

Countywide (some programs focus on specific communities)

Target Population:

All ECE professionals, both licensed and license-exempt

Provider Enrollment:

- Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN): 11
- Foster Bridge: 326 (duplicated count)
- TTA R&R and Learning Institute trainings: 1,800 (duplicated count)

Program Contact/Title:

Erin Freschi, Director, Learning Institute and Resource & Referral

CocoKids

erin.freschi@cocokids.org

Website:

www.cocokids.org

Purpose & Goals

Professional development, technical assistance and support for child care providers and the families they serve.

Key Goals:

- Assist new and prospective providers in completing the state licensing process.
- Improve the safety and quality of early learning programs.
- Ensure children in the foster care system are cared for in quality child care programs implementing trauma-informed care practices.
- Support educator knowledge of state requirements and state and local subsidy funding available to support enrollment in their program.

Program Description

CocoKids offers numerous programs to support the child care community in Contra Costa County. Key workforce programs include:

Training and technical assistance (Learning Institute and Resource and Referral):

Professional development for existing providers (e.g., center, Family Child Care Home (FCCH), Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN)), including health and safety, nutrition, child development, dual language learning, inclusion, business practices and marketing. Also offers technical assistance and support for new and prospective child care providers, including information on licensing requirements/process.

Nutrition program:

This state and locally funded program provides regular site visits and training to providers while also providing them with food program payments. State funding for this program is not sufficient to cover costs, so CocoKids covers some of the costs with general operating funds and local grants.

Inclusion Warm Line and Navigation:

Provides training and technical assistance to providers regarding inclusive child care. Operates Warm Line for providers and families to provide support and resources as well as enhanced child care referrals. Families also receive assistance in navigating intervention and assessment programs and services. Measure X currently covers costs of one inclusion specialist, training of Parent Mentors, and training and related materials.

CocoKids Workforce Initiatives: Training and Technical Assistance (TA)

continued

Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN):

Provides support to participating FCCs in the use of various quality tools (such as the Desired Results Developmental Profile, conducts rating assessments on each program and provides program materials based on results, provides consultation and technical assistance, and facilitates a parent advisory group.

Foster Bridge:

Provides trauma-informed care professional development, parent and provider cafes for providers participating in the state-funded emergency child care voucher program for foster children.

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

- All child care providers, living or working in Contra Costa County, including Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) and exempt providers.
- Eligibility may vary depending on the funding source.

Scale & Reach

Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN):

Serves 60 children in 11 FCCs.

Foster Bridge:

326 providers (duplicated count) attending multiple training sessions, including trauma-informed care, serving both centers and Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs).

Training and technical assistance:

R&R and Nutrition have held 76 trainings (as of May Fiscal Year 25-26), serving approximately 1800 providers (duplicated count).

Languages Supported:

English, Spanish, Farsi, Arabic, Pashto, and Dari, with capacity for other languages as needed.

Outcomes & Evaluation

Increase provider skills through education, training, support and coaching to improve their ability to serve all children and their families.

Sustainability & Scalability

Current Funding Status:

Most programs are state-funded with renewable contracts; some smaller scale professional development efforts are supported through private funds and local public dollars.

Scalability Considerations:

- Braiding funds when possible, streamlining services, maximizing efficiencies, and applying for private and one-time funding opportunities as available
- Funding, staffing and infrastructure are required to support sustainability and scalable services based on ever-changing community needs.

Notes

- Due to its core state-funded functions as both the county's sole Resource & Referral agency and an administrator for state child care vouchers, CocoKids has broad reach to most licensed providers in the county.
- The Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN) is a new program that has been well received and provides on-the-job support to FCCs while also helping FCCs enroll children with child care subsidies, which also supports families' access to care.
- Board of Supervisors District 2 and District 4 are both currently funding new efforts to meet the unmet needs of providers of families in their respective districts.

Contra Costa Community College District

Initiative Overview

Funding Source(s):

California Community College Chancellor's Office (Prop 98) and targeted grant funding

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Target Population:

Center-based educators, family child care (FCC) providers, assistants, directors, and individuals interested in entering the ECE field (including parents and youth)

Purpose & Goals

The Contra Costa Community College District (Diablo Valley College, Contra Costa College, and Los Medanos College) prepares the early childhood workforce by providing accessible education, career pathways, and workforce supports.

Key Goals:

- Provide credentials aligned with California Child Development Permits and ECE workforce roles
- Prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions and career advancement
- Offer supervised practicum and lab school experiences
- Connect students to financial supports and workforce resources
- Deliver academic advising and student support services

Program Description

Applicable to all three colleges

Early Childhood Education Program:

Offers an Associate of Science for Transfer (AS-T) and certificates aligned with workforce roles (teacher, assistant, and director). Includes coursework, practicum experiences, and strong faculty and peer support.

California Mentor Teacher Program:

Connects students with experienced Mentor Teachers in licensed child care centers and family child care homes, expanding access to supervised practicum experiences. Mentor Teachers hold (or qualify for) a Master Teacher Permit and receive stipends and professional development.

ECE Student Resources and Academic Support:

Provides advising, financial support navigation, and workforce-aligned guidance. Each college offers a broad range of student supports, including: Basic Needs services, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), CalWORKs, tutoring, success coaching, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS), and technology assistance.

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

California community colleges are open-access institutions. Eligible participants include:

- California residents with a high school diploma or equivalent
- Adults (18+) able to benefit from instruction
- Nonresidents meeting admission criteria
- High school students enrolled as dual enrollment or special-admit students (see CCCOE Grow Your Own Profile).

Outcomes & Evaluation

Programs are evaluated through:

- Program review and accreditation processes
- Student learning outcomes assessment
- Workforce and student success data
- Continuous improvement planning aligned with funding and institutional goals

Sustainability & Scalability

Core programs are supported through ongoing public funding; however, expanded services and partnerships depend on time-limited grant funding.

Notes

- Multiple degree and certificate pathways are available to meet diverse workforce entry, advancement, and educational goals.
- High School Dual Enrollment: ECE courses are offered at local high schools and online, expanding early access to the field.

Contra Costa Community College District

continued

Lead Agency: Contra Costa College

Initiative Overview

Geographic Focus:

West Contra Costa County

Enrollment (2025-2026):

1,378

Program Contact/Title:

Michell Naidoo

Chair, Early Childhood

mnaidoo@contracosta.edu

Website:

<https://www.contracosta.edu/academics/departments/early-childhood-education>

Program Description

Grow Your Own (CCOE Partnership):

Provides paid pre-apprenticeship opportunities to high school students over the summer at YMCA of the East Bay, paired with dual enrollment classes during the school year at Richmond High School. Students can earn up to 12 ECE units and obtain an Associate Teacher permit, qualifying them for future employment.

Early Educator Apprenticeship:

Provides an opportunity for adults interested in entering or advancing in the field to earn ECE units from Contra Costa College (CCC) while completing an apprenticeship placement at YMCA of the East Bay sites in West County. Tuition is covered, and apprenticeship hours are paid through either a stipend or the participant's employer.

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants:

- 103 (completed 2024)
- 1,378 (Summer, Fall, Spring totals, 2025-2026)
- 25 high school students through dual enrollment

Lead Agency: Diablo Valley College (DVC)

Initiative Overview

Geographic Focus:

East Contra Costa County

Enrollment 2025-2026:

2,820

Program Contact(s)/Title:

Martina Ebesugawa, Ed.D.,

Chair, Early Childhood Education Department

mebesugawa@dvc.edu

Mariana Rios

Student Resources Center, Project ACCESS

mrrios@dvc.edu

Website:

<https://www.dvc.edu/academics/explore-our-programs/early-childhood-education>

Program Description

CSB/Head Start Teacher Assistant Training Partnership:

Through Community Services Bureau funding, DVC supports the Teacher Assistant Training (TAT) Program by providing coursework, enrollment and advising support, ESL services, textbook and technology loans, and free tuition with milestone stipends. Participants complete ECE Practitioner and Teacher Certificates aligned with Associate Teacher and Teacher permits.

Project Access and Project Prep:

Provides additional supports to ESL students by either enrolling them in ECE courses with linked ESL courses or offering a weekly study group depending on demonstrated English language proficiency.

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants:

- 213 (177 certificates, 36 AA degrees completed 2025-2026)
- 2,880 (Summer, Fall, Spring totals, 2025-2026)
- 33 high school students through dual enrollment

Contra Costa Community College District

continued

Lead Agency: Los Medanos College

Initiative Overview

Geographic Focus:

East Contra Costa County

Enrollment 2025-2026:

Approximately 300 unduplicated

Program Contact/Title:

Randi Osburn

Chair, Early Childhood Education Faculty and Department

rosburn@losmedanos.edu

Website:

<https://www.losmedanos.edu/ece/>

Program Description

Grow Your Own (CCOE Partnership):

Provides paid pre-apprenticeship opportunities to high school students over the summer at YMCA of the East Bay, paired with dual enrollment classes during the school year at Pittsburg High School. Students can earn up to 12 ECE units and obtain an Associate Teacher permit, qualifying them for future employment

Early Educator Apprenticeship:

Provides an opportunity for adults interested in entering or advancing in the field to earn ECE units from Los Medanos College (LMC) while completing an apprenticeship placement at YMCA of the East Bay sites in East County. Tuition is covered, and apprenticeship hours are paid through either a stipend or employer.

Early Educator Apprenticeship (Spanish):

Spanish-speaking cohort offered through LMC for up to 24 ECE units; includes job placement with YMCA of the East Bay.

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants:

- 127 (completed ECE in 2024)
- Approximately 300 unduplicated students in 2025-26, of which about 36 were apprenticeship students and about 32 pre-apprenticeship students

Contra Costa County Grow Your Own Early Educator Pre-Apprentice Program (CCC GYO EEAP)

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization:

Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE)

Partner Organization(s):

Contra Costa Regional Occupational Program (ROP), Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS as apprenticeship sponsor), Contra Costa College, Los Medanos College, YMCA of the East Bay, West Contra Costa and Pittsburg Unified School Districts

Funding Source(s):

ROP funds from the CA Department of Education, Measure X funds administered by the Contra Costa Workforce Development Board, Chancellor's Office California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI) grants, and other funding sources as available

Funding Amount:

Varies

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Geographic Focus:

East and West Contra Costa County

Target Population:

High school students eligible for dual enrollment

Enrollment:

40-50 students annually in pre-apprenticeship; over 800 students enrolled in ROP classes across 19 high schools throughout the county.

Program Contact/Title:

Leslie Marley, Coordinator
College and Career Readiness
lmalley@cccoe.k12.ca.us

Website:

<https://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us/Departments--Schools/Departments/Student-Programs/College-and-Career-Readiness/CCC-GYO-Early-Childhood-Education/>

Purpose & Goals

Create a career pathway in early childhood education (ECE) for high school students that provides college coursework, professional certification and job training experience. Offer high school students the opportunity to take college-level ECE coursework.

ECE Pre-Apprenticeship Pathway Program:

Supports students taking ECE classes at their local high school—currently operating only at Richmond High School and Pittsburg High School. Paid summer job placement is a required part of the program to complete 50 hours for Associate Teacher permit eligibility upon graduation.

High School ROP Programs:

High School students at participating districts may enroll in dual enrollment courses at their school. They earn community college credits while simultaneously completing high school graduation requirements. There are currently 19 high schools in the county that offer some form of ECE/education dual enrollment coursework.

High School students who are not enrolled in the CCC GYO EEAP program may participate in CCC ROP's Planting the Seeds Pre-Apprenticeship program, an online ECE course option.

Program Description

There are several pathways for high school students to participate in college level ECE classes and begin an ECE career pathway:

ECE Pre-Apprenticeship Pathway Development for 11th and 12th graders (2-year program):

- 6-9 units of college credits taught at the high school by college instructors each year
- 50-100 paid hours of on-the-job training over the summer at a YMCA of the East Bay Child Care Center each summer
- Emergency Medical Services Authority-approved Preventative Health and Safety Certification (completed during the 11th or 12th grade)
- Upon completion, students are eligible to apply for the Associate Teacher permit

ROP and Online Courses:

- 19 high schools in the county offer Education/ECE coursework to high school students through ROP programs
- CCCOE is currently contracting with Los Medanos College to provide an online ECE class for all other schools that don't have the dual enrollment on-site classes (using ROP funds)

Contra Costa County Grow Your Own Early Educator Pre-Apprentice Program (CCC GYO EEAP)

continued

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

- To qualify for dual enrollment in California, high school students must generally be at least 14 years old, have completed 8th grade, obtain parent/principal consent, and demonstrate readiness for college-level work. Students earn both high school and college credits.
- Student interest in taking ROP classes offered on their high school campus, online, or at a local community college.
- Full 11th and 12th grade ECE Pathway Pre-apprentice program offered at Richmond High School (WCCUSD) and Pittsburg High School (PUSD)

Notes

- Articulating all coursework with SFSU to feed into the PK-3 credential
- The program is now in its 3rd year and continues to grow, including more male participants.

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants (annual):

40-50 students in pre-apprenticeship program, over 800 students enrolled in ROP classes

Languages Supported:

English (with some bilingual support at Richmond High School)

Outcomes & Evaluation

Increase the number of high school students completing ECE classes and continuing to work in the ECE field post-high school.

Sustainability & Scalability

For ECE Pathway Pre-apprentice program, CCCOE acts as the employer for summer placements. Students earn approximately \$20/hour and work approx 50-100 hours per summer. This program is funded through the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board using Measure X funds.

EDvance College

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization:

EDvance

Funding Source(s):

Amount varies, multiple funding sources to support students

Start Date/Duration:

Cohorts begin biannually

Geographic Focus:

San Francisco Bay Area, Contra Costa County Cohort

Target Population:

Center-based educators, family child care (FCC) providers, assistants, directors, home-visitors, etc.

Enrollment:

16 currently enrolled from Contra Costa College (CCC), 6 graduates

Program Contact/Title:

Alicia Osborne

Vice President of Workforce Development and Admissions

alicia.o@edvance.edu

Website:

<https://www.edvance.edu>

Purpose & Goals

To prepare educators to become skilled practitioners who lead in classrooms, communities, and the field, prioritizing those with the least access to higher education by opening doors to affordable degrees.

Key Goals:

- Create supportive learning communities where every educator feels seen, valued, and respected.
- Listen, learn, and adapt to meet the changing needs of educators, children, and the communities we serve.
- Push the field forward through bold ideas and practical innovation that ensure excellence for students.

Program Description

EDvance College provides rigorous, flexible programs that equip early educators with essential skills to support young learners. In Fall 2022, EDvance College became an independent, non-profit, accredited institution. EDvance's Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Early Childhood Studies is designed for full-time early childhood education professionals. General Education (GE) courses are also offered for early childhood professionals who work in an ECE setting and are looking to complete lower-division GE requirements and work toward earning EDvance's BA in Early Childhood Studies.

EDvance's Teacher Permit Certificate program is for full-time early childhood educators looking to elevate their ECE permit levels. Upon completion, students will earn their Teacher Permit Certificate and meet EDvance's upper-division admission requirements if they choose to continue toward a BA.

- All courses are held online via synchronous class times, in a cohort model.
- Permit advising, academic coaching, writing coaching, technology support, and other supports are offered to students to engage and ensure success.
- Content is organized into 15-week semester courses.
- The Spanish BA pathway is offered to students
- A competency-based curriculum is provided that is grounded in practice and aligned with state requirements.

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

- Lower Division: Applicants must have a high school diploma, GED/equivalent, or approved homeschool completion and qualify for a California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit or hold a CDA Credential
- Upper Division: Minimum of 60 semester units or 72 quarter transferable units meeting EDvance upper division transfer requirements
- All Applicants Must: Be employed at least 15 hours/week for 15 consecutive semester weeks in a licensed ECE setting serving children ages 0-5, and have basic computer skills and computer/internet access, or agree to a technology support plan

Language Proficiency Requirements:
English BA Pathway:

U.S. high school diploma; OR College-level English reading and composition course with a grade of C or higher from an accredited U.S. college; OR Approved English proficiency assessment score:

- Immersion TrueNorth (CEFR B1)
- TOEFL iBT 61
- Duolingo English Test 80
- IELTS 6.0

Spanish BA Pathway:

Secondary school diploma from a Spanish-speaking country; OR College-level Spanish reading and composition course with a grade of C or higher; OR Immersion TrueNorth Grammar/Writing Test with minimum CEFR B1 and minimum score of 5.0.

EDvance College

continued

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants (annual):

300+ participants; 16 currently enrolled from CCC, 9 graduates

Languages Supported:

English, Spanish, and other multilingual support available

Outcomes & Evaluation

- EDvance has developed outcome metrics that align with both degree programs and student learning outcomes to ensure students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the ECE field.
- EDvance has a 95% retention rate and a 91% graduation rate (for junior transfers)
- 90% of supervisors reported improvements in teacher quality as a result of participation.

Sustainability & Scalability

Cost per participant:

\$12,000 per year (\$6,000/semester for full-time enrollment).

100% of EDvance College students have qualified for financial support covering their tuition. EDvance is currently awaiting Title IV approval and hopes to begin awarding financial aid, including Pell and Cal Grants, to eligible students for the 26-27 academic year. To date, EDvance has secured private and public funding to support students in graduating debt-free. In Contra Costa, EDvance is working with the Workforce Development Board and ECEPTS to support tuition and supportive services.

Family Child Care: Local and State Associations

Family Child Care Provider Training and Networks

Local Organization: Bay Area Professional Family Child Care Network

Overview

The Bay Area Professional Family Child Care Network is dedicated to supporting family child care providers to reach higher standards consistent with current research in the early care and education field by providing resources, information, and training to enhance a safe and healthy home environment for children and families. The organization is also a vehicle for developing a sense of community among family child care providers by promoting peer support and camaraderie through various programs and activities.

BAPFCCN offers:

Annual Forum and Seminars:

Annual Forums consist of speakers on various topics. Seminars are in depth training on child development, licensing regulations or business-related topics.

Home Tours:

Five or six times a year, different individual members open their homes on a Saturday morning for providers to connect and visit other family child care environments; they also have opportunities to talk about issues and share resources and support.

Tuesday "TALKS":

Meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month from 7:00-9:00 pm. Announcements regarding whether meetings will be held in-person or via Zoom can be found on our website. Presenters discuss specific topics of interest to providers. Upon completion of the presentation, the talk is open to providers only for discussion of the current issues providers are facing. This safe environment supports the true need to break down the isolation found in family child care.

Celebratory and Community Engagement Events:

Includes an annual Provider Appreciation Event, a holiday dinner, and city events such as the Independence Day Parade.

Advocacy:

Includes advocacy efforts such as the annual Day Without Child Care event held in May.

Membership and Funding:

Membership dues are currently \$75/year. BAPFCCN charges small event fees for specific events to offset costs of speakers and space/food. They have received a Practitioner Voices of California (PVCA) Grant from the Heising-Simons Foundation for 2024-2027. There are 80 members. Most are from Contra Costa County; however membership includes

providers from seven of the nine Bay Area counties. The current membership represents twenty-seven languages spoken. Several members belong to the union.

Program Contact/Title:

Benu Chhabra

President

benuchhabra2018@gmail.com

Website:

<https://bayareapfccnetwork.com/>

Local Organization: NCAL Family Child Care Alliance (NCALFCCA)

Overview

Incorporated in 2023, the NCALFCCA brings together family child care providers to support providers, families, and the community by encouraging collective action and strengthening relationships among providers and the communities they serve. As ECE educators, this group focuses on excelling, innovating and providing educational opportunities so providers can have a stronger collective voice.

The alliance offers:

One-on-one Support:

Support is available for providers related to the administration and business of family child care, including payroll and accounting

Referrals:

Referrals to CPR/First Aid Classes and business insurance agents; referrals for open spots in providers' businesses

Information and Materials:

Available for operating the business of family child care, such as informational webinars and workshops, newsletter and licensing updates

Home Tours:

Providers open their homes 4-6 times/year to other providers to connect and see environments, share ideas with one another and will sometimes invite guest speakers

Monthly Cafécitos:

Held on the first Monday of each month and provide opportunities for providers to connect, discuss different challenges they are experiencing, and provide support and share resources with one another

Celebratory Events:

Birthday café was launched this year to celebrate providers

Membership and Funding:

Membership dues are \$60/year. The alliance has received

Family Child Care: Local and State Associations

continued

one-time grant funding from First 5 Contra Costa to support advocacy work and has applied for other grants (award status pending). There are 50 members mostly from Contra Costa County who are 80-90% Spanish speaking. Most providers belong to the union.

Program Contact/Title:

Elianna Campos

President

ncalfcca@gmail.com

Website:

<https://ncalfcca.org/>

Statewide Organization: Child Care Providers United (CCPU)

Overview

Formed in 2019 and established its first contract in 2021 with the State of California. Child Care Providers United (CCPU) is a union representing home-based child care providers (licensed and license-exempt) in CA who provide care to children receiving subsidies.

The union offers specific benefits including:

Retirement Fund:

This program offers state contributions to a Retirement Plan, a benefit that is tied to participation in the child care subsidy program. Individual contributions are not allowed. For example, to be eligible for retirement benefits in 2024, a provider must be a licensed family child care provider and have been paid for work with a subsidized child for at least 6 months in 2023-these months do not need to be consecutive. License-exempt providers are not eligible; however, if they become licensed during the year, their work in that year may count for eligibility.

Training:

This fund is dedicated to delivering provider-led training programs on business and child development, a peer coaching network, and essential tools for accessing online workshops. Eligibility varies by offering, though generally all opportunities are available to licensed and license-exempt providers, and some require providers to have cared for at least one subsidized child in the past 12 months.

- **Peer Mentorship:**

"Let's Grow Together" Peer Mentorship Program connects mentors to fellow child care educators who they support in small cohorts in key areas connected to their professional and business development needs.

- **Tuition Assistance:**

Providers can receive up to \$5,000/year toward tuition for accredited courses.

- **Trainings:**

Online or in-person workshops cover essential topics such as child development and business.

- **Technology Benefit:**

Provides eligible providers with laptops and printers to enhance their professional capabilities. Availability is limited by future funding.

- **Educator-led Communities of Care:**

Provider-led, virtual training and mentorship program designed to equip providers with the resources they need to build a sustainable career. In cohorts, providers participate in training and communities of practice, as well as benefit from peer mentor support, to enhance their knowledge of business and child development.

- **The Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Pathways Program:**

Offers free training and mentorship to license-exempt FFN child care providers, supporting their growth and the well-being of the children they care for.

Health Care Fund:

A benefit program that helps licensed and license-exempt providers who have cared for a subsidized child for at least three months during the annual required period to access essential health care resources. It works with the health insurance plans that providers have and reimburses providers' existing health insurance plans and reimburses eligible them for out-of-pocket medical expenses, including monthly premiums, up to \$9,800/year. It also provides access to other core benefits, such as dental, vision, life insurance, and provider support services.

Advocacy and Member Engagement:

In addition, Child Care Providers United (CCPU) offers advocacy, provider appreciation days, and union meetings.

Contra Costa County Contact/Title:

Rachel Bymun

Recording Secretary, District 8 North

district8nsecretary@udw.org

Website:

<https://childcareprovidersunited.org/about/>

Head Start Early Educator Training Programs

Initiative Overview

Head Start programs are unique within the early care and education system because federal funding for operating Head Start programs includes a required dedicated allocation for Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA). Each Head Start program must develop an annual T&TA plan as part of its federal grant application process. Programs are required to provide comprehensive professional development that includes training, coaching, mentoring, and ongoing staff development. Head Start teaching staff must also meet minimum qualifications that generally exceed those required under community care licensing and California Title 5 child development standards.

In Contra Costa County, there are multiple Head Start grantees, and each approaches their early educator training requirements differently, as described in the program descriptions below.

Purpose & Goals

To train and prepare staff working or seeking employment in Head Start programs with the tools they need to be successful in the ECE field

Key Goals:

- Recruit staff to work in Head Start programs.
- Support the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals new to or currently working in Head Start programs.
- Foster workforce retention within Head Start programs.

*Lead Agency: Community Services Bureau (CSB)
Employment & Human Services Department
Teacher Assistant Trainee Program (TAT)*

Overview

Partner Organizations:

Diablo Valley College

Funding Source(s):

Head Start, California Department of Education, California Department of Social Services

Funding Amount:

\$470,000 for this program

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Geographic Focus:

Contra Costa County

Target Population:

CSB temporary employees and community members wishing to pursue early education (primarily program parents)

Current Enrollment:

49

Program Contact/Title:

Shelley Taylor, Admin. Services Analyst
Community Services Bureau/Head Start
staylor1@ehsd.cccounty.us

Website:

<https://www.csbconnect.org/head-start-state-preschool>

Community Services Bureau (CSB) has 12 directly operated licensed child care centers and 19 community partners throughout Contra Costa County; all offering a variety of part-day and full-day early learning and child care options for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. CSB offers a home visiting option for Early Head Start families through a contract with Aspiranet.

Program Description

Aimed at strengthening retention, staff qualifications and long-term workforce sustainability, the Teacher Assistant Trainee (TAT) Program currently supports 49 trainees who are employed as temporary/substitute staff. CSB partners with Diablo Valley College to help TATs complete required coursework toward the Associate Teacher permit. This includes the cost of tuition, books, student fees and completion incentives.

In addition, CSB offers stipends for employees to complete classes in infant/toddler development and/or achieve the DVC practitioner certificate (18 units of ECE) or teacher permit.

Head Start Early Educator Training Programs

continued

Lead Agency: *YMCA of the East Bay, Early Educator Apprentice Program (EEAP)*

Overview

Partner Organizations (Contra Costa County):

Los Medanos and Contra Costa Colleges; Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS) (apprenticeship sponsor/intermediary), California State University East Bay, EDvance

Funding Source(s):

Head Start, California Department of Education, California Department of Social Services, Foundations

Funding Amount:

\$2.5 M (This includes Alameda and Contra Costa County workforce funding)

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Geographic Focus:

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Target Population:

YMCA employees and community members seeking careers in education or employment with the YMCA; partnerships for youth apprenticeships

Current Enrollment:

104 active apprentices in Contra Costa County

Program Contact/Title:

Jessica Zlotnicki

Director of Workforce Development

jzlotnicki@ymcaeastbay.org

Website:

<https://teachymca.org/>

The YMCA Head Start, Early Head Start, and State Funded Child Development programs provide early education for eligible families. Serving approximately 1,500 predominantly low income children from birth to 5 years old in four counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, Yolo and Sacramento). The YMCA provides comprehensive care for their families, ensuring that children are prepared for kindergarten and a lifetime of learning.

Program Description

The YMCA EEAP provides quality jobs with upward mobility, income security, including benefits and retirement. Apprentices in the program receive a support-based career track with education, coaching, mentoring and on-the-job training from entry-level to site supervisor. EEAP has three pathways, offering entry level, AA and BA options. YMCA

uses an array of workforce funding, and a combination of public and private sources.

The youth apprenticeship (see CCCOE Grow Your Own profile) serves approximately 25 students with Pittsburg Unified School District and 25 with West Contra Costa Unified School District. The YMCA provides summer placement opportunities, opportunity to transfer to the adult apprenticeship and may also offer permanent jobs upon completion of the program.

The YMCA apprenticeship is sponsored by ECEPTS, a nonprofit organization that is a national leader in developing Registered Apprenticeships tailored to the unique needs of the early care and education workforce. As an apprenticeship sponsor, industry intermediary, and field builder, ECEPTS provides training, technical assistance, and strategic guidance to help develop and sustain high-quality apprenticeships for early educators and care providers. ECEPTS leverages State of California apprenticeship and workforce development funding and philanthropic sources to support the YMCA's program.

For more information, contact Sandra Moore, Chief Program Officer, ECEPTS, at smoore@ecepts.org or visit <https://ecepts.org/>.

Lead Agency: *Unity Council*

Overview

Partner Organizations:

Merritt College

Funding Source(s):

Head Start, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Grant

Funding Amount:

Varies

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Geographic Focus:

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Target Population:

Unity Council employees and those seeking employment

Current Enrollment:

20-25, 6 currently enrolled from Contra Costa County

Program Contact/Title:

Iris Bradford, Associate Director of ECE Workforce Development,

Children and Family Services

ibradford@unitycouncil.org

Website:

<https://unitycouncil.org/about-us/>

Head Start Early Educator Training Programs

continued

The Unity Council serves a total of 911 children throughout Oakland and Contra Costa County. This includes a 2024 expansion serving 220 additional children (88 Head Start and 132 Early Head Start slots) in Pittsburg, Richmond, Oakley and Antioch, in addition to those already served in Concord.

Program Description

To recruit, train and retain ECE staff, ensuring that all staff meet the highest qualifications for their positions, Unity Council provides ongoing staff development and training, support for staff to complete education and degrees, and training to increase the pool of interested and qualified applicants. Unity Council is partnering with Merritt College in Oakland, CA to help individuals achieve employment upon completion of at least 12 units of ECE.

This program targets community members and parents of children in the program who qualify for federal funding (based on FAFSA) and must verify legal residency in the U.S. Other funding sources have been identified to support students who do not meet the FAFSA requirements. Courses and support are offered in English and Spanish. Unity Council is working with the California Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) to register as an apprenticeship.

Lead Agency: Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF)

Overview

Partner Organizations:

YMCA of the East Bay, Contra Costa College, Child Start, Inc.

Funding Source(s):

Head Start, California Department of Education, California Department of Social Services

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing; just starting up services at this time.

Geographic Focus:

MAOF/partner sites throughout the county, including the YMCA of the East Bay, Contra Costa College and Child Start Inc.

Target Population:

MAOF/partner staff

Current Enrollment:

NA

Program Contact(s)/Title:

Sonia Guerrero

VP Child Care and Early Ed Programs

sguerrero@maof.org

Maria Garcia

PFCE/Gov/ERSEA Coordinator

Maria.Garcia@maof.org

Website:

<https://maof.org>

Notes

MAOF is not operating direct services in Contra Costa County at this time. Instead it subcontracts with agencies to provide early education, including YMCA of the East Bay and Contra Costa College, and one delegate (Child Start operating an FCCH in West Contra Costa). Overall, MAOF is funded to serve 213 children in Contra Costa County. MAOF's headquarters operations in Los Angeles, and now serves families across nine California counties.

Inclusion in Early Learning Project

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization:

First 5 Contra Costa

Partner Organizations:

Early Childhood Mental Health Program; Karla Chinen, Empathy for Autism California Inc.; Lisa Kaplan Shaanan, Early Education Equity, LLC; Vivian Alipio Ratkewicz, Early Care and Education Consultant; Discount School Supply

Funding Source:

Measure X

Total Project Funding:

\$1,000,000 over 2 years

Start Date/Duration:

FY25-27

Geographic Focus:

Countywide

Target Population:

Early learning programs (not individual educators)

Current Enrollment:

See Scale and Reach section below

Lead Agency Contact/Title:

Stephanie Shieh

Early Childhood Program Officer, First 5 Contra Costa

sshie@first5coco.org

Website(s):

<https://www.first5coco.org/early-childhood-education/supporting-inclusive-early-care-education-environments/>
<https://www.first5coco.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/MeasureX-Wrap-Up-2025.pdf>

Purpose & Goals

To enhance the capacity of child care programs and early childhood educators to meet the diverse learning and behavioral needs of children ages zero to five.

Key Goals:

- Increase educators' ability to engage and support children with disabilities, delays and other developmental concerns
- Support early identification and intervention through developmental screening
- Provide educators with materials necessary to create flexible, inclusive learning environments

Program Description

- Professional development and capacity building trainings, including a cohort-based community of practice
- Site-based mental health consultations
- Individualized technical assistance to implement developmental screenings
- Inclusion materials and resources

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes

Minimum Requirements:

- Program operates in Contra Costa County
- For some offerings, program cannot be simultaneously enrolled in Quality Matters
- Willingness to engage in quality improvement activities

Other:

- Focus on programs serving subsidized families in "high need" priority zip code areas
- Focus on programs not currently enrolled in Quality Matters
- Supports for inclusive classrooms

Scale & Reach

Programs Served (annual, for Fiscal Year 24-25):

- 267 programs and 380 staff received professional development and additional inclusion materials and resources
- 11 programs and 113 staff, serving 793 children, received mental health consultation supports
- 1,550 child care providers and 1,106 families were reached through multilingual tools and videos promoting developmental screening

Languages Supported:

English and limited Spanish (for specific opportunities)

Inclusion in Early Learning Project

continued

Outcomes & Evaluation

- Increase in number of staff who report increased knowledge of inclusion strategies
- Increase in number of staff who plan to adjust their teaching practices based on training and support received
- Increase in number of staff who report enhanced ability to apply materials and resources in their work

Sustainability & Scalability

Current Funding Status:

Two-year contract from EHSD to First 5 Contra Costa, however the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors has allocated ongoing Measure X funding to support inclusion efforts

Scalability Considerations:

- Funding levels are dependent on local sales tax revenue and agency contracted to administer services
- Alignment with other workforce capacity-building programs to support retention

Notes

- Successful in enhancing overall program capacity to serve children with diverse learning needs, though more investment is needed to address ongoing needs
- Need to expand Spanish language (and other language) offerings

Professional Development Program (PDP)

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization:

Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE)

Partner Organizations:

First 5 Contra Costa, community colleges and training organizations

Funding Source(s):

State Quality Counts California / Workforce Pathways Grant

Total Project Funding:

Fiscal year 25-26 allocation is \$404,100, Fiscal year 26-27 allocation is \$293,083

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing (annual funding cycles)

Geographic Focus:

Countywide (Contra Costa County)

Target Population:

Early childhood educators including center-based teachers, assistants, family child care providers, directors, and site supervisors

Enrollment:

259 currently enrolled; only those who complete receive stipend

Program Contact/Title:

Monica Joseph
Contra Costa County Office of Education

Website(s):

<https://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us>

<https://www.first5coco.org/early-childhood-education/professional-development-program>

Purpose & Goals

To support early childhood educators' professional growth and career advancement by providing financial incentives for coursework and professional development.

Key Goals:

- Increase educator education levels and permit attainment
- Strengthen workforce quality and stability
- Support career pathways and long-term retention

Program Description

Core Activities:

- Stipends for completion of approved college coursework
- Stipends for completion of approved professional development hours
- Staff assist with completion of permits/Temporary County Certificates, access to state permit stipend program

Participants must complete one of the following:

OPTION 1: College Coursework Stipend

- Complete a minimum of 6 semester units (8 quarter units) with a grade of "C" or better between July 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026.
- Coursework must count toward a college degree in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, or a related field, or toward obtaining, renewing, or upgrading a California Child Development Permit.
- General education and ESL/Basic Skills courses that are required for degree attainment will be accepted.
- Courses must be taken through a regionally accredited college or university.
- Additional stipends may be awarded for those who complete more than 6 semester units (8 quarter units) as funding is available.
- Stipend amount \$1,500.
- Degree Bonuses of \$1,000 will be awarded for those who graduate in the 2025-2026 program year with an Associate's Degree or higher in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, or related field.

OPTION 2: Professional Development Training Stipend

- Complete a minimum of 21 hours of approved professional development training between July 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026.
- Stipend amount \$500.

Professional Development Program (PDP)

continued

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

Individual educators serving children birth to age five in licensed or eligible license-exempt settings working in Contra Costa County. Unlike several other workforce initiatives, individuals may apply directly without their employer participating in the program.

Minimum Requirements:

- Employed at least ~15–20 hours per week in an eligible ECE role
- Completion of approved coursework or training during the program year

Scale & Reach

Number of Participants (annual):

- Varies by funding year
- Fiscal year 24-25: 144 participants; 62 completed coursework; 82 completed professional development activities, and 6 earned degrees
- Fiscal year 25-26: 259 applicants; requirements to be completed by May 2026.

Languages Supported:

English and Spanish (program materials and support)

Outcomes & Evaluation

- Increased educational attainment
- Improved workforce quality
- Stronger career pathways and retention

Sustainability & Scalability

Current Funding Status: Ongoing, dependent on state allocations

Sustainability Considerations:

- Continued state investment
- Alignment with compensation initiatives to retain educated educators
- As a result of funding cuts for Fiscal year 26-27, the stipend will be reduced and funding for supports at local colleges will be eliminated to ensure the program can continue

Notes

- PDP is foundational to professionalizing the workforce, but education gains must be paired with wage increases to prevent attrition
- Family Child Care (FCC) providers benefit significantly from strong outreach and technical assistance
- Participation increased when the program advertised to educators the minimum stipend amounts they would receive by completing coursework or trainings

Quality Matters (QM): Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Initiative Overview

Lead Agency/Organization(s):

Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE), First 5 Contra Costa

Partner Organization(s):

CocoKids

Funding Source(s):

California Department of Education (CDE), California Department of Social Services (CDSS), First 5 California contracts including: State Quality Counts California, Impact and HUB funding

Total Project Funding:

\$2,752,574

Start Date/Duration:

Ongoing

Geographic Focus:

Contra Costa County

Target Population:

Early learning programs

Current Enrollment:

166 sites (Fiscal Year 25-26), including 123 Non-CSPP (FCC, Centers) and 43 CSPP (CA State Preschool)

Contact Person(s)/Title:

Monica Joseph, Early Care & Education Manager
Contra Costa County Office of Education
mjoseph@cccoe.k12.ca.us

Stephanie Shieh, Early Childhood Program Officer
First 5 Contra Costa
sshieh@first5coco.org

Website(s):

<https://www.first5coco.org/quality-matters/>

<https://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us>

Purpose & Goals

To improve the quality of early learning environments through coaching, training, assessment, and continuous quality improvement.

Key Goals:

- Improve teaching practices and learning environments to increase children's access to high-quality early learning programs
- Support educator skill development and enhance their working conditions
- Enhance workforce retention

Program Description

The Quality Matters program supports and incentivizes early care and education programs to offer the best learning experiences possible to the children they serve. The goal is to improve and expand the quality of early care and education in Contra Costa County to ensure that all children have access to high-quality programs.

Quality Counts California (QCC) Workforce Pathway:

Professional Development Program (PDP) "individual" stipends for coursework or professional development completion (see PDP Profile for additional information)

QCC California State Preschool Program (CSPP):

CSPP stipends and site support. Any training with CSPP funds is open to FCC, Center, CSPP, etc.

QCC Quality Improvement (QI):

FCC, Center, "program" stipends, coaching, training opportunities, specializations

Core Activities:

- On-site or virtual training and technical assistance
- Quality assessments and ratings (CSPP only)
- Professional development opportunities
- Quality improvement planning and incentives

Eligibility & Participation Requirements

Eligible Participants:

- Licensed child care centers, including CSPP and Head Start sites
- Licensed family child care homes
- License exempt centers

Minimum Requirements:

- Program operates in Contra Costa County
- Willingness to engage in quality improvement activities

Quality Matters (QM): Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

continued

Scale & Reach

Two hundred licensed sites received differentiated levels of support based on their assessed needs, level of engagement, and program needs. For example, 94 sites received intensive coaching services, while the remaining sites received targeted training and technical assistance to support continuous quality improvement.

- 1,759 educators (~874 unduplicated) participated in 55 no-cost professional development opportunities

Languages Supported:

English and Spanish

Outcomes & Evaluation

Outcomes:

- Stronger teaching practices
- Improved child outcomes
- More cohesive and inclusive classroom environments
- Stronger relationships among staff, families, and children

Evaluation Methods:

- Site ratings (CSPP only)
- Observations
- Survey data showing progress toward quality improvement plans

Each program must develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Progress of the QIPs are reviewed and discussed throughout the year with either a coach or technical assistance TA support.

Sustainability & Scalability

Current Funding Status:

Ongoing dependent upon state allocations

Scalability Considerations:

- Workforce compensation remains critical to sustaining quality improvements
- State funding for non-CSPP sites is declining more rapidly than other funding streams
- Several of the funding streams are expected to sunset between 2026-2028

Notes

- Positive impact on FCC providers through increased education and training
- TK is impacting the fiscal sustainability of FCCs and centers due to declining enrollment of 4-year-olds
- Need to strengthen the bridge between ECE programs and elementary schools
- Coaching relationships support accountability for workforce skill development, program goal attainment, and fosters workforce retention

Appendix B:

Summary Table of Existing ECE Workforce Efforts in Contra Costa County

Recruitment: Educational opportunities for individuals not necessarily currently working in the ECE field

HIGH SCHOOL (YOUTH)

Contra Costa County Grow Your Own Pre-Apprenticeship ECE Pathway
Diablo Valley College Dual Enrollment
Regional Occupation Program (ROP) Classes

POST HIGH SCHOOL (ADULT)

California State University, East Bay
Contra Costa College
Diablo Valley College
Head Start, Unity Council
Head Start, YMCA
Los Medanos College

On-the-Job Training: A variety of professional development or support services for individuals currently working in the ECE field and/or staff in ECE programs

CocoKids: Intensive Training/TA
CocoKids: One-Time Training/TA
EDvance College
Family Child Care: Local and State Associations
Inclusion In Early Learning
Professional Development Program, Training Pathway
Quality Matters: Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

RETENTION-Compensation to individuals currently working in the ECE field and/or engaging in credit-bearing training which aims to help them maintain or enhance current employment

Child Care Boost Initiative: Wage Enhancement Pilot
Head Start, Community Service Bureau TAT program
Head Start, YMCA Apprenticeship AA or BA pathway
Professional Development Program, College Credit Pathway

Appendix C:

Annual Participants in ECE Workforce Supports in Contra Costa County

Nationally the research indicates many challenges with analyzing data on the early childhood education field, largely due to a dearth of standardized data systems. These challenges were also faced during the development of this landscape analysis. The data below was collected in the spring of 2026 from contacts affiliated with each of the ECE workforce supports listed. The time period for which data was available varies, which are indicated in the table. Unduplicated data was not available for many of the supports listed.

	# Duplicated Counts Participants Per Yr	# of Unduplicated (if available)	Intensity		Notes	Source (Date)	Profile Page
			One Time	On- going			
Recruitment: Educational opportunities for individuals not necessarily currently working in the ECE field							
HIGH SCHOOL (YOUTH)							
Contra Costa County Grow Your Own Pre-Apprenticeship ECE Pathway		50		X	Pittsburg and Richmond High Schools dual enrollment for college credit with Los Medanos and Contra Costa College during the school year, and summer internship with the YMCA.	CCCOE (2025-26)	36
Diablo Valley College, Dual Enrollment		33	X		The community college offers a summer course for college credit to students from all high schools in the county.	DVC (2025-26)	34
Regional Occupation Program (ROP) Classes		814		X	High school classes at 17 schools taught by high school staff for high school credit. Most ECE classes are offered in a series and typically include a work- based learning component that includes volunteering at a local elementary school's early learning program.	CCCOE (2025-26)	36
Subtotal		897					
POST HIGH SCHOOL (ADULT)							
California State University, East Bay	N/A	N/A		X	Undergraduate program is about 100-200 students and master's program is about 30-60 students	DVC (2026)	27
Contra Costa College	1,373	390		X	Duplicate count of enrollees per ECE class for 2025-26 likely including dual enrollment and other contracted classes; Unduplicated is the number of individuals enrolled in ECE classes in 2025-26	CCC (2026)	34
Diablo Valley College	2,820	818		X	Duplicate count of enrollees per ECE class for 2025-26 likely including dual enrollment and other contracted classes; Unduplicated is the number of individuals enrolled in ECE classes in 2025-26	DVC (2026)	34
Head Start, Unity Council	5	5		X	Interns who are not yet working but enrolled in classes at Merritt College. Program reported a total of 25 enrolled across counties.	Unity Council (2025-26)	43
Head Start, YMCA of the East Bay, EEAP	54	54		X	Enrolled in entry-way pathways and not yet working; pre-apprentices	ECEPTS (2025-26)	43
Los Medanos College	N/A	~232		X	Duplicate count of enrollees per ECE class for 2025-26 likely including dual enrollment and other contracted classes; Unduplicated is the number of individuals enrolled in ECE classes in 2025-26	2024	35
Subtotal	4,252	1,445	The unduplicated count across recruitment supports is the sum of the unduplicated counts at the community colleges and Unity Council Head Start enrollees. YMCA Head Start enrollees are excluded because they are already included in the community college counts.				

Appendix C: Annual Participants in ECE Workforce Supports in Contra Costa County

	# Duplicated Counts Participants Per Yr	# of Unduplicated (if available)	Intensity		Notes	Source (Date)	Profile Page
			One Time	On- going			
On-the-Job Training: A variety of professional development or support services for individuals currently working in the ECE field and/or staff in ECE programs							
CocoKids: Intensive Training/TA	11	11		X	FCCHEN	CocoKids (2025-2026)	31
CocoKids: One-Time Training/TA	2,126	N/A	X		A duplicate count of 326 providers were served by Foster Bridge offerings, and a duplicate count of 1,800 providers accessed other technical assistance and/or Learning Institute trainings.	CocoKids (2025-2026)	31
EDvance College	16	16		X	College courses and required work experience. Enrollment in 2025-26 included 8 participants in YMCA apprenticeship, 3 individuals who work in FCCs, and 5 others.	EDvance (2025-26)	38
Family Child Care: Local and State Associations	130	130	X		Local association members/trainings	2026	40
Inclusion In Early Learning	380	380	X	X	First 5 Contra Costa offers individual providers trainings, site-based mental health consultation for approximately 3-9 months, an inclusion series, and site-based technical assistance.	First 5 Contra Costa (2025-2026)	45
Professional Development Program: Training Pathway	78	78	X		County Office of Education offers stipend for individual providers who complete a minimum of 21 hours of non-credit bearing training during the program year. Providers can participate for multiple years.	CCCOE (2025-26)	47
Quality Matters: Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)	737	737		X	First 5 Contra Costa & County Office of Education offer site-based quality improvement coaching, training and supports for a year; many providers participate for multiple years. Only one training series is college credit bearing.	DVC (2025-26)	49
Subtotal	3,478	861	The unduplicated count across on the job supports was calculated by analyzing individual-level data for Quality Matters, Inclusion in Early Learning and Professional Development Program—Training and de-duplicating to identify unique individuals. Individual-level data was not available for the other supports in this table.				

Appendix C: Annual Participants in ECE Workforce Supports in Contra Costa County

	# Duplicated Counts Participants Per Yr	# of Unduplicated (if available)	Intensity		Notes	Source (Date)	Profile Page
			One Time	On- going			
RETENTION-Compensation to individuals currently working in the ECE field and/or engaging in credit-bearing training which aims to help them maintain or enhance current employment							
Child Care Boost Initiative: Wage Enhancement Pilot	120	120		X	CocoKids offers a direct-to-educator wage supplement pilot to address the chronic gap between the essential work of early care and education professionals and their compensation.	CocoKids (2025-26)	29
Head Start, Community Service Bureau, Teacher Assistant Trainee Program	49	49		X	While originally designed to recruit new staff, the focus has evolved to retention of current employees. Through a partnership with Diablo Valley College, staff can engage in work-study to obtain their teacher permit at no cost.	CSB (2025-26)	42
Head Start, YMCA of the East Bay, EEAP (AA or BA pathway)	104	104		X	Designed to retain staff through either an AA or BA pathway in the Early Educator Apprenticeship in partnership with Los Medanos College or Contra Costa College.	ECEPTS (2025-26)	43
Professional Development Program: College Credit Pathway	62	62		X	County Office of Education offers stipend for individual providers who complete a minimum of 6 semester units of credit-bearing coursework during the program year. Providers can participate for multiple years.	CCCOE (2025-26)	47
Subtotal	335	153	The unduplicated count across recruitment supports is the sum of the unduplicated counts for the Head Start -CSB TAT program and Head Start YMCA Apprenticeship. The other recruitment supports are not included as there could potentially be duplication and individual-level data was not available for analysis.				