

Contra Costa County Preschool Makes a Difference
Strategic Plan

May 1, 2007

Prepared for

First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission
Contra Costa County Office of Education
Contra Costa Child Care Council
Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department

Funded by

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May 1, 2007

We are extremely pleased to present the following plan for Preschool Makes a Difference (PMD). After nearly two years of planning and dozens of community-based meetings, Contra Costa stands poised to join the growing trend toward universal preschool. This process involved more than 80 representatives from the early childhood education and K-12 communities, working collaboratively to come up with the best plan for Contra Costa children and families.

This plan sets the stage for Contra Costa's participation in a universal preschool program. The plan spells out program participation requirements; emphasizes the importance of developmentally appropriate, quality programs; promotes a trained and well-educated workforce; emphasizes starting with those most in need; and outlines a wide variety of program, teacher and parent supports, all in the name of providing the best preschool experience for young children.

PMD is a critical component of an early care and education system that begins at birth. Although funding is not currently available for PMD, our hope is that this plan will not only build on the existing early care and education system over time but also establish a basis for seeking new resources at the local and state levels.

PMD—and the tremendous effort expended for its development—is a testament to our respective agencies' commitment to promote quality early learning experiences for all children in Contra Costa County. As research shows, preschool does make a difference!

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The PMD planning process involved many people throughout Contra Costa County. Child care center staff, family child care providers, teachers and administrators from the K-12 system, community college and university staff, elected and appointed policy makers, advocates, early care support service staff, parent support organization staff, and parents were represented. While all feedback was seriously considered, differences had to be resolved by the work groups and Planning Team as they continued their decision-making process focused on the goal of providing high-quality preschool programs for Contra Costa children. We thank all who have shared their time and expertise to develop this plan. We would particularly like to thank the members of the Refinement Committee, who spent many hours continuing to research and debate unanswered questions in order to complete the plan. The members of the Planning Team are indicated with *. Members of the Refinement Committee are indicated with **. Individuals who served on both are marked with [∞].

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PRESCHOOL ADVOCATES

We would like to thank Los Angeles Universal Preschool, First 5 San Francisco, First 5 San Mateo, Elk Grove Unified School District, Sacramento County Office of Education, and the California Children and Families Commission for sharing invaluable information and experience with us. In our effort to develop this plan, we did not want to “reinvent the wheel.” These plans developed by other jurisdictions, along with the requirements of the California Children and Families Commission for its pilot universal preschool programs, served to some extent as blueprints for the various elements of our plan, and we drew on a number of their ideas as well as some of their language. We are grateful for the good work done by these organizations. We would also like to thank Brenda Blasingame, former executive director of First 5 Contra Costa for her vision in spearheading this planning process and her dedicated work on behalf of children and families in Contra Costa County.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Universal preschool, also called “preschool for all,” is part of a growing trend, with several states having adopted such programs and others in the process of doing so. In California, statewide universal preschool has been the subject of state legislation as well as a failed June 2006 statewide ballot measure that would have established the Preschool for All Act. A number of California counties have already implemented local programs.

Benefits of universal preschool include improved reading and math scores, reduced need for special education, fewer grade retentions, and increased high school graduation rates. Other studies have found economic benefits for participants as well as society.

Planning for Contra Costa County’s Preschool Makes a Difference (PMD) program began in March 2004. The First 5 Commission, the Contra Costa Child Care Council and the Contra Costa County Office of Education formed a collaborative (“the Collaborative”) to create a strategic plan for universal preschool in Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department joined the Collaborative in 2006.

Led by a 30-member planning team and four work groups with representatives from the early childhood education (ECE) and K-12 communities, a draft plan was developed with participation from parents, public and private child care center staff, family child care providers, teachers and administrators from the K-12 system, community college and university staff, elected and appointed policy makers, advocates, early care support service staff, and parent support organization staff. The plan was fine-tuned by the PMD Refinement Committee. The goal was to develop the universal preschool plan that best serves the children and families of Contra Costa County, regardless of requirements imposed by potential funding sources. If such sources should exist in the future, the plan will be reviewed and adjustments will be made to ensure compliance.

For the purposes of this plan, “early childhood education” is synonymous with early care and education, preschool, and child care (both center-based and family child care).

To guide plan development, the PMD Planning Team constructed a vision statement and mission statement to reinforce the broad goal of the plan:

Vision: All kindergartners in Contra Costa County are prepared to learn and have improved potential for success.

Mission: Preschool Makes a Difference in Contra Costa County will provide access for all preschool age children to comprehensive, high-quality, developmentally appropriate early learning programs that meet the diverse needs of children and families.

- The Planning Team also developed guiding principles with input from the four work groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESCHOOL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- Preschool Makes a Difference, or PMD, will provide supports for quality preschool for 3- to 5-year-olds throughout Contra Costa County for a minimum of three consecutive hours a day.
- PMD will be administered by a collaborative of First 5 Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa Child Care Council, the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and the Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department.
- An Advisory Committee composed of providers, parents, representatives or staff from K-12 schools and higher education, and early learning professionals will provide oversight for PMD.
- All preschool programs (schools, public and private centers, and family child care) will be eligible to become PMD providers if they meet the criteria outlined in the plan. Faith-based programs may participate if religious instruction is not taught during the PMD program.
- PMD will draw on existing resources in the community to develop a preschool program that is integrated with all early childhood education and K-12 education systems.

PMD's initial priority is to serve families with the greatest need: those residing in local public school districts with scores in deciles 1 through 3 of the Academic Performance Index; insufficient capacity in existing preschool programs; families eligible for subsidies but unable to obtain them due to lack of funding; high percentage of single-parent families; and high percentage of families living below the self-sufficiency standard for Contra Costa County. PMD will begin with a pilot program in several school areas, and expand as funding becomes available, serving low-income and working poor communities first. Ultimately all children will be served by PMD.

GOVERNANCE

PMD will be run by the Collaborative with oversight from an advisory committee and will be part of the larger system of early childhood education, not duplicating services and programs that are already available in Contra Costa County. Preschool funding will support and expand existing elements of the infrastructure (quality programs, referrals, regulation, professional development, informed families and public, financing, governance, and standards, assessment, and accountability) that meet a threshold of quality and scope.

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

The developmental, cognitive, and social-emotional needs of preschoolers and their differences from kindergartners and beyond will be taken into account in the development of PMD.

PMD programs will reflect research-based, high-quality standards but ultimately will focus on each child's needs and the essential nature of play for cognitive development. Programs will be culturally appropriate in every sense, teaching concepts in ways that are consistent with children's family practices and—whenever possible—in their home language and by teachers with a similar cultural background. PMD programs may select their own curriculum as long as it meets these requirements.

Criteria including institutional stability, program quality, responsiveness/meeting needs, and family-provider relationships will help guide the selection of PMD providers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Requirements for teachers will be consistent with the Child Development Permit Matrix and be phased in over time. Initial requirements for teachers will be a Teacher Permit and five years of experience in early childhood education (ECE); the eventual goal is for all PMD teachers to have a bachelor's degree and a Master Teacher Permit. Initially, assistant teachers will be required to have an Assistant Teacher Permit and 3 years of ECE experience; ultimately, they will be required to have a Teacher Permit and associate of arts degree. Experienced teachers will be grandfathered in for the first two years by meeting alternative requirements. A broad range of opportunities and supports will be made available to assist current and future teachers in meeting the requirements of PMD.

PMD ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY

Preschool provided by PMD will be available and accessible to any child in Contra Costa County in the two years before entering kindergarten (with occasional exceptions). A variety of programs will be spread across all geographic areas, giving parents the opportunity to choose the best preschool for their child and family. Some priority will be given for those programs that are in close proximity to main public transit routes or that already provide transportation. PMD also will be incorporated into or coordinated with full-day child care programs to serve the needs of working parents.

Participating programs will be those that value full and proactive inclusion of all children, including children with special needs, and ensure continuity of integrated services. PMD will provide assessment and support, including financial support for modest facility improvements and a variety of referrals, specialist services, and training.

FAMILY OUTREACH, INVOLVEMENT, AND SUPPORT

PMD will conduct comprehensive outreach to ensure families are aware of the program and eligibility. The choice of a preschool should be an informed one, and the PMD program will make every effort to assist parents in making the right one for their families.

PMD also will support and honor the needs, involvement, and input of parents, and will strive to be simple, understandable, and user-friendly.

FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Quality and availability are the dual issues for facilities. New facilities will need to be identified or built over time in order to address the demand created by a universal preschool program. In addition, all facilities must be clean, safe, accessible, inclusive, licensed, and well equipped, and must meet regulatory quality standards.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach, including to potential funders and community supporters, such as businesses, foundations and influential donors, will be a key to success and long-term support.

EVALUATION

Desired Results will measure program progress and quality as well as each individual child's progress. A Kindergarten Entry Child Profile will be used to gauge overall program effectiveness.

PRESCHOOL MAKES A DIFFERENCE STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

“There is a broad consensus that all children should enjoy high quality, early learning environments. For many children and families, these environments are in out-of-home care. Parents in the community understand the relationship between the quality of caregivers and the quality of childcare, and consequently advocate for action that will improve the educational level, compensation, and respect for childcare workers. The need for access to childcare that accommodates the needs of families and that is affordable is heard consistently throughout the county.”

—*First 5 Contra Costa Strategic Plan, 2000*

When First 5 Contra Costa developed its strategic plan in 2000, the top finding of an extensive civic engagement effort was the importance of universal access to high quality early learning environments.

Fortunately, many efforts are already underway in Contra Costa County to improve the quality of early childhood education and to make it available to everyone who needs it. Contra Costa County’s Professional Development Program (PDP) and Early Learning Alliance focus specifically on improving the quality of teachers in early childhood education (ECE) settings, while the Early Learning Demonstration Project works to enhance the quality of early child care centers and family child care homes by helping them become accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and National Association of Family Child Care. The School Readiness Initiative engages families, community members, and educators in the important work of preparing children to enter school ready to learn. And the Inclusion Project and Child Care Solutions provide support for children with mental health issues and special needs at home and in early childhood education settings. (See Appendix A: Existing Quality Improvement Programs for more information about each of these programs.)

For the purposes of this plan, “early childhood education” is synonymous with early care and education, preschool, and child care (both center-based and family child care).

It is into this environment that First 5 Contra Costa (the Contra Costa Children and Families Commission), the Contra Costa Child Care Council, and the Contra Costa County Office of Education came together as partners to address the need for universal preschool in Contra Costa County. The goal of the three agencies was not to create a new system for early childhood education that would be separate from other activities in the county. Rather, their intent was to build on the many existing activities taking place to improve the quality of early childhood education for Contra Costa County’s children today. The three agencies, working as a collaborative (“the Collaborative”), embarked on an ambitious joint effort to develop a universal preschool strategic plan that would best meet the needs of Contra Costa’s children and families. The three initial agencies were later joined by the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department.

Universal preschool, also called preschool for all, is part of a growing trend, begun in 1995 with Georgia's adoption of a statewide program offering voluntary, free preschool to all families, regardless of income.¹ Now three states provide free preschool for virtually all children, and another 20 are in various stages of advocating for or implementing universal preschool.²

Numerous California counties, individual school districts, and other local child development programs have also begun implementing voluntary universal preschool programs.

The seeds of the Contra Costa County universal preschool program were sown in March 2004, when representatives from Los Angeles, San Mateo, San Francisco, and Alameda counties came to the First 5 Contra Costa Commission to talk about their plans for developing universal preschool. Proposals in the legislature and the potential for a funding initiative on the statewide ballot also created the sense that universal preschool will eventually happen on a statewide basis.

Impressed by this burgeoning movement and the vast array of research documenting the importance of universal preschool, the Commission decided to take a proactive, strategic approach and to fund and staff an effort to develop a plan for universal preschool in Contra Costa County. A 30-member planning team, consisting of representatives from the early childhood education and K-12 communities, was convened to provide oversight for the project. With staffing from First 5 Contra Costa, the effort involved hundreds of people to define the goals and strategies for Preschool Makes a Difference (PMD), the Contra Costa County universal preschool program. See Appendix B: Community Planning Process for a more detailed description of the methodology used to ensure community input into the PMD plan.

THE VALUE OF UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL

The rationale for universal preschool has been documented in numerous studies. Preschool California summed up some of the primary benefits to school-aged children in its *Kids Can't Wait to Learn* report, issued in 2004:

- improved reading and math scores
- reduced need for special education
- fewer grade retentions
- higher high school graduation rates

According to the report, "A 2002 survey of K-3 public school teachers from 16 states across the country—including California—revealed that 84% of elementary school teachers believed that children who participate in preschool have an advantage over other children."

But the benefits may extend beyond the immediate educational advantages gained by participants. A 2005 Rand Corporation study that analyzed educational and other benefits—including reduced abuse and neglect of participants, reduced victimization of crimes committed by participants,

¹ "Preschool: The Most Important Grade." *Educational Leadership*, April 2003, Vol. 60, No. 7.

² Pre-K Now, www.preknow.org/resource/profiles/index.cfm.

increased wage and salary compensation of participants and increased taxes realized by government, and reduced need for child care for participants—concluded that:

“A one-year, universal, high-quality preschool program in California would, for a \$4,300 per-child cost beyond current public preschool spending in the state, generate

- \$11,400 in benefits per child for California society, for a net benefit of over \$7,000 per child, or \$2.62 for every dollar expended, under the baseline assumptions of the research.
- between \$2 and \$4 in benefits for every dollar expended, under a range of different assumptions.
- other potential benefits for the California labor force, the competitiveness of the state’s economy, and economic and social equality.”³

A more detailed analysis of the benefits in the Bay Area supported earlier findings, finding that if a high-quality, universal preschool program for 4-year-olds were implemented in Contra Costa County, each year’s cohort (set of preschool participants) would realize the following benefits over the course of their childhood and adolescent years:

- a reduced use of special education
- fewer total years of special-education use
- a reduction in the high school dropout rate
- a reduction of the number of juvenile petitions (documented crimes committed by juveniles)

These improvements are compared to the projected baseline of what would occur without universal preschool, and they do not address benefits beyond adolescence.⁴

³ “The Costs and Benefits of Universal Preschool in California” Rand Labor and Population Research Brief, Rand Corporation, 2005.

⁴ “The Effects of a Universal Preschool Program in California: Estimates for the Bay Area Region,” Rand Labor and Population Research Brief, Rand Corporation, 2005.

VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To guide the development of the plan, the PMD Planning Team began by constructing a vision and a mission statement that summarized the broad goal of the plan:

Vision: All kindergartners in Contra Costa County are prepared to learn and have improved potential for success.

Mission: Preschool Makes a Difference in Contra Costa County will provide access for all preschool age children to comprehensive, high-quality, developmentally appropriate early learning programs that meet the diverse needs of children and families.

The Planning Team developed the following guiding principles with input from the four work groups. PMD will

- be developed within the context and goals of early childhood education for all children, including infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children.
- enhance, not negate or reduce, existing funding and program structures for all children 0 through 8.
- build on the strengths of the existing early childhood education systems, but not to the exclusion of new programs.
- be clear, comprehensive, and available; include community input; and be accountable to the public as well as administering agencies.
- be implemented through a seamless education system that promotes a continuum between home, pre-kindergarten, and school.
- provide access for all children, regardless of ethnicity and socio-economic background, to high-quality preschool programs that provide developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate nurturing of the child's social, emotional, cognitive, and motor development.
- value full and proactive inclusion of all children, including children with special needs, and ensure continuity of integrated services.
- promote the importance of parents as their child's primary teacher and that parents play an integral role in their children's early learning experiences.
- have developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment and meet established research-based standards for quality.
- build upon a diverse array of existing preschool providers and programs and will integrate all programs into a coherent, seamless system.
- ensure that early childhood education is recognized as a separate body of knowledge that provides the skills and theoretical grounding needed for professional work with children from birth to age five.
- work with multiple institutions and partners to establish a system of high-quality, accessible, and affordable ongoing training and education.

A DATA SNAPSHOT OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

In order to prepare the best preschool plan for Contra Costa County, it was important to assess the capacity of the preschool programs in the county and forecast future demand. A data committee, with representatives from the four co-sponsoring agencies, formed to review data needs and developed a proposal to solicit a firm to perform the necessary data collection.

The information below includes a summary of Contra Costa population, significant findings, and a profile of preschool supply and demand compiled by the firm of Brion and Associates. The report also contains information on children and their families at the county and city levels, child-care supply and demand, GIS maps of child care data, data on the education of the child care workforce, kindergarten readiness and school data. Wherever possible, the report includes current data and projections for 2010 and 2015. The report is available at www.firstfivecc.org/projects_006.html.

Contra Costa County Demographics

In 2006, the county had just over a million residents, 7.7 percent of them children 0 to 5. The number of children 0 to 5 years old is expected to increase by 1.6 percent from 2006 to 2015; the school-age population is expected to decrease by 9.2%.

The majority (65 percent) of residents are Caucasian, but significant numbers of other ethnic groups make up the county, and 18 percent are Hispanic. The county is expected to see an increase in the ethnic diversity of its residents, which will likely impact child-care demand. Children 0 to 12 years old will increase from 33 percent Hispanic in 2006 to 43 percent in 2015; Caucasian children will decrease from 41 percent to 28 percent between 2006 and 2015.

Under-served Children

Although they live in the third wealthiest county in the state, 10 percent of Contra Costa residents (and 11 percent of the county's children aged 0 to 18⁵) live in poverty. A significant number of families live in poverty or with relatively low incomes compared to the countywide average of \$90,000. Of the 344,422 households in Contra Costa in 2000, 42,449, or 12.3 percent, had incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. The 2007 federal poverty line for a family of four currently is \$20,650—and less for smaller families.⁶ Another 86,169, or 25 percent, had incomes between \$20,000 and \$50,000 a year in 2000. As a contrast, unsubsidized full-time licensed care for a preschooler in a child-care center costs well over \$8,000 a year.

In addition, as of January 2007, nearly 1,000 3- to 5-year-olds who were eligible for subsidies for preschool were on the Centralized Eligibility List waiting for a preschool spot because there was not enough state subsidy funding.

About 64 elementary schools, of a total of 150 countywide, are ranked in Academic Performance Index (API) deciles 1 to 5 (out of 10) based on test scores and are considered low-performing schools. At the 64 low-performing schools, the percentage of kindergartners who are English

⁵ The 2005 California Child Care Portfolio, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

⁶ *Federal Register*, Vol. 72, No. 15, January 24, 2006, pp. 3147–3148.

Language Learners ranges from 2 percent to 31 percent, comprising 2,436 children. Of these, 88 percent speak Spanish.

Child Care Supply and Projected Demand⁷

Contra Costa County currently has 1,647 facilities that provide 37,811 spaces child care spaces for children 0 to 12. Of these, 21,211 are specifically for preschool-aged children, defined as 2- to 5-year-olds.

Child Care Facilities	Spaces
889 small family child care homes	7,112 spaces (19%)
384 large family child care homes	5,376 spaces (14%)
284 child care centers	18,520 spaces (49%)
90 school age centers/programs	6,803 spaces (18%)
1,647 total facilities	37,811 spaces (21,211 for preschool)

Most cities in the county currently have a shortage of child-care spaces; several cities have shortages that exceed 1,000 child-care spaces (see Map 1, next page). The demand for preschool spaces for 3- to 5-year-olds exceeds the existing supply of preschool spaces in all but six cities. The cities with the highest incomes also have the lowest rates of children as a percent of population and have either very small gaps in child care or have surpluses of child care spaces relative to demand.

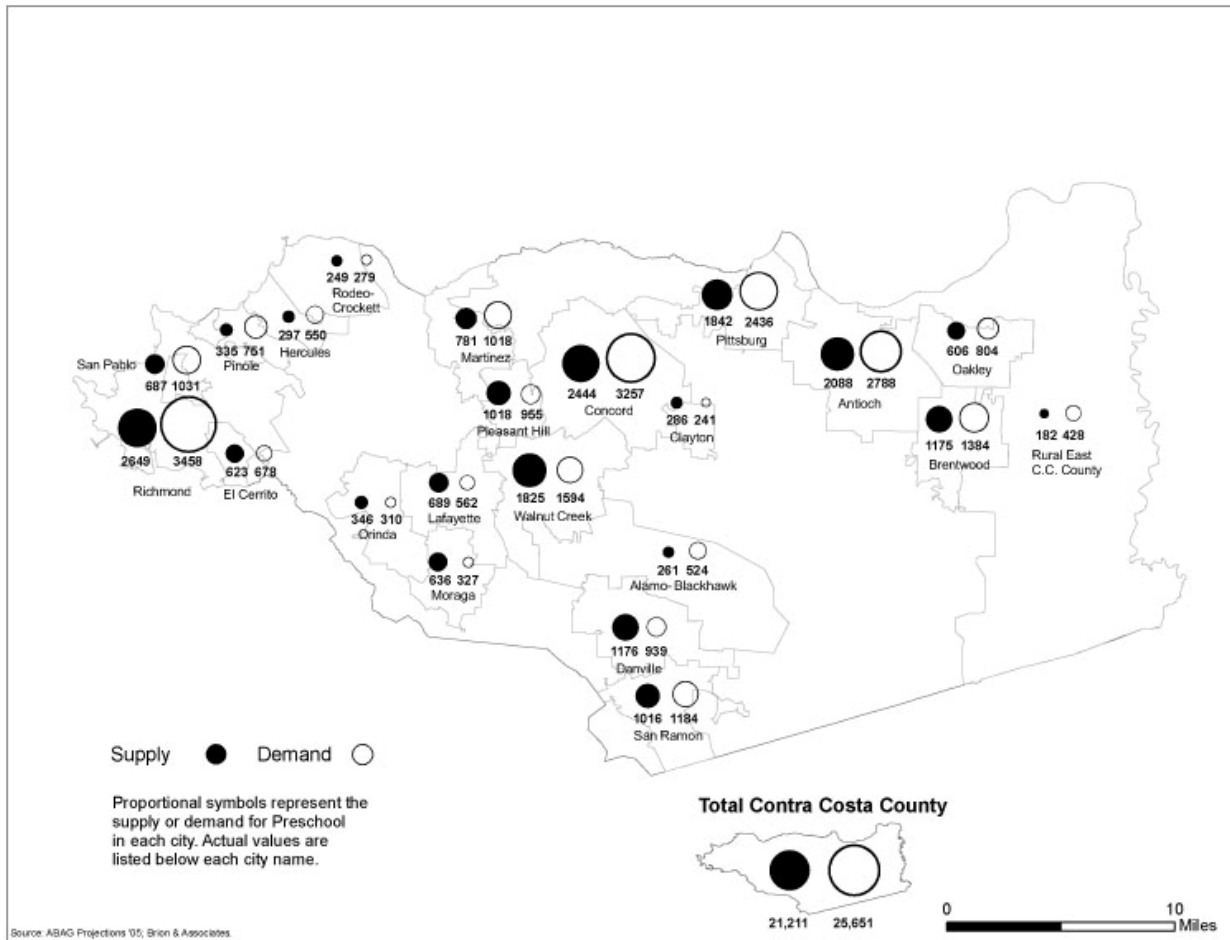
Children 3 to 5 years old needing licensed care*			
Age	2006	2010	2015
3-year-olds	7,711	7,597	7,806
4-year-olds	10,075	10,129	10,408
5-year-olds	7,864	7,245	6,902
Total	25,650	24,971	25,116

*Demand is estimated as 60% of all 3- to 5-year-olds since not all parents will choose to place their children in preschool and some 5-year-olds will be in kindergarten.

Given the size of the county and the diversity of incomes and ethnicity, providing adequate child-care services for all children who need care will present considerable challenges. Today, 21,211 spaces exist for 25,650 3- to 5-year-olds, and a portion of these spaces will go to 2-year-olds. That translates to a minimum projected gap of 4,400 spaces.

⁷ Because of the way data are collected, some data in the report represent preschoolers as ages 2 to 5. Where possible, the data here are presented solely for 3- to 5-year-olds, since PMD recommends universal preschool for all 3- to 5-year-olds. However, when 3- to 5-year-old data is unavailable, the data is reported for 2- to 5-year-olds.

Map 1: Child Care Supply and Demand for 3- to 5-Year-Olds, 2006



Note: Demand is estimated as 60% of all 3- to 5-year-olds since not all parents will choose to place their children in preschool and some 5-year-olds will be in kindergarten. Figures are rounded to whole numbers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESCHOOL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Preschool Makes a Difference, or PMD, will provide supports for high-quality preschool education programs for children in the two years leading up to kindergarten throughout Contra Costa County for a minimum of three consecutive hours a day. Programs serving 3-year-olds may operate three to five days a week and programs serving 4- and 5-year-olds may operate four to five days a week. PMD will be entirely voluntary, and one “slot” will be allocated for each eligible child.

All preschool programs (schools, public and private centers, and family child care) are eligible to become PMD providers if they meet the criteria outlined in the plan. PMD will incorporate a diverse complement of preschool programming in each area to meet the needs and desires of parents. Faith-based programs will be eligible to become PMD providers as long as religious instruction is not taught during the three-hour PMD program. Preschool programs must either be licensed or operated by a school district (which may be unable to get a license), carry appropriate insurance, and offer a minimum of a 3-hour-a-day program.

GOVERNANCE

Program Administration

To develop a seamless, coordinated public education system, to build on existing services, and to recognize the educational value of preschool, the collaborative (“the Collaborative”), consisting of the three original members—First 5 Contra Costa, the Contra Costa Child Care Council, and the County Office of Education— joined by the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department, will implement PMD. The Collaborative will draw on existing resources in the community to develop a preschool program that is integrated with all early childhood education and K-12 education systems.

As funding sources for PMD become available, the Collaborative will determine which member agency is most appropriate to take the lead for administrative and programmatic purposes, or whether to delegate to other organizations as appropriate. Funding will be distributed directly to the PMD provider based on a per-child rate. Funding sources might pay for implementation of single or multiple components of the PMD plan.

Pilot Program

The initial implementation of PMD in Contra Costa County may be limited to a pilot program. The pilot will

- focus on areas of the county that are different from one another demographically.
- involve a range of programs including family child care, private and public centers and schools.
- include programs that serve families with the greatest need: those who live in neighborhoods where local public school scores are in deciles 1 through 3 of the Academic Performance Index (API), where there is insufficient capacity in existing preschool programs, where eligible families are not served due to lack of subsidy funding, where there is a high percentage of

single-parent families, working poor and families living below the self-sufficiency standard for Contra Costa County.

For comparison purposes, the pilot also will include a public school scoring in deciles 6-7 of the API.

Funding

The purpose of the PMD Plan is to develop a broad-scale roadmap for implementing a comprehensive universal preschool program in Contra Costa County, with particular emphasis on improving quality in early childhood education settings. As mentioned in the introduction to this plan, the Collaborative members are already working, individually and collectively, on quality-improvement programs that will support universal preschool as it is implemented—including the Professional Development Program, the Early Learning Alliance, the Early Learning Demonstration Project and the School Readiness Initiative—and they will continue to do so as funding becomes available. This plan recognizes that only certain portions of the plan (as opposed to the entire plan) may be implemented depending on the type and availability of funding, and elements of the plan may need to be adjusted to meet requirements of funding sources.

PMD programs will have latitude in how they decide to use the funds provided to them by PMD *as long as they meet the requirements in the plan*, including those for teacher qualifications and program quality. As such, it is anticipated that a significant portion of funds received by programs may go toward improvements in salaries, benefits, preparation time, and staff development where needed. Provider payments will be in addition to any funds a program currently receives, either from families or from subsidy programs.

There currently is no specific funding source to implement the PMD Plan, but the Collaborative will work together and with other resources in the community to proactively identify and cultivate potential sources of funding. The long-term goal is to fully fund PMD. Included in full funding is payment for PMD providers at a rate that is sufficient to allow them to run a high-quality preschool program with all the needed supports. In addition, adequate funding will serve as an adequate incentive to entice high-quality providers to want to participate in PMD.

After the pilot program is complete and in anticipation of gradual increases in funding before full implementation is achieved, PMD will continue to target families with the greatest demonstrated need first: local public school scores in deciles 1 through 3 of the Academic Performance Index (API), insufficient capacity in existing preschool programs, families eligible but unable to obtain subsidies because of lack of funding, high percentage of single-parent families, the working poor, and high percentage of families living below the self-sufficiency standard for Contra Costa County. The eventual goal will be to secure funding in order to implement a universal preschool program to serve all children in Contra Costa County.

Because of the wide variance in income levels among Contra Costa families and different supports, such as subsidies, for those at the lower levels, the administrator of the overall PMD program is encouraged to explore ways to ensure that a PMD spot is available and affordable to all children, regardless of income. Options for ensuring equity could include identifying a target income range for underserved children and requiring a minimum percentage of slots to be dedicated to them, charging

tuition on a sliding scale to supplement PMD compensation, or providing overall higher compensation rates for children who do not receive subsidies or whose families cannot afford to pay market-rate tuition.

Advisory Structure

Initial Implementation of PMD

The PMD Refinement Committee will serve as a transitional advisory body to the Collaborative with the selection of an ongoing voluntary Advisory Committee while the pilot program is being developed, implemented, and evaluated. The Refinement Committee will provide initial training and support to members of the ongoing Advisory Committee.

Following the start-up of the pilot program, the PMD Refinement Committee and the Advisory Committee (see below) will work together to determine an appropriate roll-out process and timeframe, but the expectation is that full implementation may take several years.

Establishment of an Ongoing Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee will be established and composed of 34 members with diverse representation from providers, parents, schools, higher education, and early learning professionals. Following is the recommended composition:

- 4 parents
There will be one parent representative from each region of the county, and one who has special-needs experience. The parents will not wear multiple hats, but will serve purely as parent representatives.
- 4 preschool administrators (public and private)
- 2 K-6 or school district administrators (liaisons with Curriculum and Academic Councils)
- 8 teachers
Four teachers will be from kindergarten, and four will be from preschools. They will represent contracted and non-contracted PMD programs.
- 2 early learning professionals (e.g., retired community college instructors, parent educators, etc.)
- 2 business leaders (e.g., Contra Costa Council, Chamber of Commerce representative, leaders, etc.)
- 4 early childhood services representatives (e.g., Local Planning Council, CAEYC, Child Care Council, PACE, First 5)
- 2 family child care providers
One will be from the central or south part of the county, and one will be from the east or west part of the county.
- 1 special education/special needs representative
- 1 English Language Learner representative
- 1 county Board of Education member
- 3 higher education representatives
Two will be from the community college system; one will be from a university.

The Advisory Committee will meet quarterly and serve to advise the Collaborative about long-term implementation of PMD, including governance and administrative structures, workforce development, quality programming, and parent and provider participation.

Members of the PMD Refinement Committee will assist the Collaborative with the selection of Advisory Committee members. Members of the original four work groups as well as members of the refinement committee are encouraged to apply to become members of the Advisory Committee. An application will be developed that addresses education, experience, and special knowledge that will support an individual's application to serve on the Advisory Committee.

Terms for Advisory Committee members are three years. Members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Terms will be staggered, although some members may be appointed to partial terms initially. For example, of the two preschool directors, one will be appointed to a three-year term, while the other will be appointed to an 18-month term, with the possibility for re-appointment for a full three-year term. Child care and substitute reimbursement will be provided at each Advisory Committee meeting as needed.

The Collaborative may establish sub-committees of the Advisory Group to advise about specific implementation areas, and may bring in other experts as needed.

Staff will be assigned to provide project oversight and administrative support to the Advisory Committee.

Advisory Committee meetings will be open to the public. In addition, a process will be established to allow families to provide feedback to the Advisory Committee about PMD programs.

Accountability Systems/Financial and Program

The development and maintenance of financial and program accountability systems is an important component of the plan. Are funds being used appropriately, and is the program achieving the intended goals? Following are recommendations for accountability systems.

The PMD program will compile an annual report that will be presented to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will conduct at least three public hearings in different regions of the county to present the annual reports and obtain feedback from the public. Comments generated will be attached to the report.

An audit will be conducted annually and be subject to public inspection as well.

Staff will develop a reporting system for programs to provide required information on a regular basis, but will strive to make this system the least cumbersome as possible. Programs will be monitored annually in a comprehensive fashion, with more frequent monitoring in the first year of each contract. This will help ensure immediate compliance with all standards and requirements of PMD, and will also present an opportunity to provide support and assistance where needed.

Systems Integration

Any PMD program will be part of the larger system of early childhood education including support

services such as mental health, food programs, quality programming, referrals, regulation, professional development, informed families and public, financing, governance, and standards, assessment, and accountability. PMD will not duplicate services and programs that are already available in Contra Costa County. Preschool funding will support and expand existing elements of the infrastructure that meet a threshold of quality and scope.

Current infrastructure programs and services include the Child Care Council's referral system, Child Care Centralized Eligibility List, and quality improvement projects including the Early Learning Demonstration Project; community colleges training and professional development programs; Cal State East Bay's bachelor's level program; and Contra Costa County's Professional Development Program (including the Early Learning Alliance) and regional school readiness network.

Following are some of the goals established to ensure integration of PMD into the broader system:

- All children will be able to move seamlessly from preschool to kindergarten.
- Formal links will be established between preschool programs and the K-12 system.
- Parent involvement will extend from preschool through K-12.
- PMD will address the needs of children, families, and early childhood education professionals.
- A comprehensive and easy-to-use list of resources will be available to help guide families to other elements of the early childhood education system, including programs for children with special needs; health, nutrition and mental health services; resource centers; home visiting programs; and financial and housing support.

Preschools and their neighboring elementary schools are encouraged to establish relationships, specifically among the teachers. This will help children make the transition to kindergarten and elementary school a seamless one. Some suggested activities—some of which are already in operation through the School Readiness Program—include but are not limited to

- site visits in which both preschool and kindergarten teachers visit each others' schools to observe, note particular approaches to education, and identify areas for collaboration
- regular meetings of preschool and elementary school teachers to discuss how the two school systems' curricula overlaps, coordinates, etc.
- kindergarten orientations for families and students that include a linkage between preschools and elementary schools
- development and distribution of a list of resources and contacts for parents
- adult education classes for parents and children modeling a kindergarten experience.

Equally important, kindergarten teachers need support to understand and acknowledge the developmental needs of young children. This could occur naturally through the relationships mentioned above as well as through training specifically for kindergarten teachers.

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

“There is an emerging consensus about a number of key indicators of a quality program. These include: skilled and effective teachers; low teacher-child ratios and appropriate group

sizes; developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports all aspects of children’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development; engaged parents; well-designed facilities; and comprehensive support services.”⁸

The developmental needs of preschool-aged children—cognitive, social-emotional, communication and language, and physical—and the ways these needs are distinguished from children in kindergarten and beyond must be taken into account in the development of a quality program for PMD. The planning process looked closely at issues of program standards, curriculum development and quality—accreditation, rating systems, licensing, group size, family-provider relationships, etc.—and how they will be assessed.

Equally important to the future health and development of the child is ensuring that preschool is part of an integrated infrastructure spanning from birth through school-age programs. Coordination and alignment between PMD and the local K-12 system, including the ways local school districts implement statewide standards, is critical.

Diversity is another critical element of the PMD program. All children in PMD will be given opportunities to develop emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually in a safe environment by caring, qualified staff. PMD programs will refrain from any and all religious instruction or worship and will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children are served.

Working with Families

The PMD program will honor all families and will make every effort to understand the cultures of all participants, including accommodating students who speak a language other than English at home. Cultural values and traditions will be respected and, whenever appropriate, incorporated into children’s preschool experience. In addition, professional and highly trained staff will have a strong understanding of how a child’s home environment contributes to his or her learning and behavior; they also can use PMD resources to better support the families they serve.

In addition, providers will be able to communicate with parents and ensure that they work together as partners in children’s early education. Program standards and learning goals will be accessible to all parents—for example, standards will be translated into multiple languages representing the diversity of families in the program and a deliberate and intentional effort will be made to solicit parent’s goals and incorporate them into the program. PMD also will explore the use of translation services (internet, telephone, onsite) to assist children and families and will work with cultural and ethnic organizations to communicate with parents as needed.

A wide variety of resources exist and will be made available to support the development of culturally appropriate practices in early childhood education settings; programs are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these resources, including the Bay Area Network for Diversity Trainers.

⁸ Chang, Hedy, with Deborah Stipek and Nicolle Garza. *Deepening the Dialogue: Key Considerations for Expanding Access to High Quality Preschool in California*. Stanford University School of Education, Palo Alto, California. 2006.

Ensuring Quality

PMD must not only determine whether programs meet the desired level of quality, but also must convey the relative quality of participating programs to parents. As such, PMD will explore the development of a locally designed rating system using the program selection criteria outlined below as benchmarks. Such a rating system would help parents be aware of a program's quality as well as the fact that the program promotes school readiness. As part of the rating system, programs will complete an Early Childhood Environmental Scale (ECERS) or Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) evaluation on an annual basis.

In addition, the following requirements are established to ensure the participation of high-quality programs in PMD:

- Group size: The maximum group size is 24.
- Teacher-child ratios:
Each classroom will have two PMD-qualified adults, with a 1:8 ratio for all class sizes.⁹ Staffing will be as follows:
Classes of 1-16 children will have one PMD-qualified teacher and one PMD-qualified assistant teacher.
Classes of 17-24 children will have one PMD-qualified teacher and two PMD-qualified assistant teachers.
- Mixed-age groups: Since PMD will serve children in the two years before they enter kindergarten, mixed-age groups are accepted.
- Minimum number of children in PMD class: A PMD program must have at least four PMD-eligible children to participate. This includes family child care programs.

To guide program development and ensure excellence at every step, the following recommendations were made for program content, selection and recruitment, and support.

Program Content

Standards

The PMD curriculum will reflect research-based, high-quality standards but ultimately will focus on each child's needs and the essential nature of play. The intention of the PMD plan is for curriculum design and learning activities to be congruent with the California Department of Education early learning foundations currently in development.

These early learning foundations will serve as a baseline and will help guide discussions regarding reasonable expectations for young children. They can also be used to help early educators in planning curriculum for preschool children and in assessing their progress towards achieving their

⁹ Exceptions may be made in certain cases, including smaller class size, serving fewer than 8 children in family child care, etc.

learning goals. The standards will help educators figure out ways to implement activities in ways that are developmentally appropriate and good for children. They will not be used for testing children, or making teachers and or children feel like failures. Rather than adding new pressures to teachers, early learning standards will help reinforce the incredible potential for learning during the early years.

Curriculum

Programs will take place in a developmentally appropriate setting that incorporates daily opportunities for interactive strategies, such as

- experimentation, inquiry, observation, and exploration suited to the individual levels of each child to support the growth of his or her cognitive, language, early literacy, and numeracy skills.
- creative self-expression including art and music.
- sensory motor development as part of overall health, nutrition, and fitness.
- social and emotional competency, including peer-to-peer social skills and relationship building.

In addition, the curriculum will

- involve children in initiating, planning and implementing activities and reflecting.
- establish appropriate blocks of time in day to allow child-initiated experiences, individual child-teacher interaction, teacher-group facilitation, leisurely exploration of activities, and alternating periods of active/quiet activities.
- provide resources and support to children and families for transition to kindergarten, especially those families with children with special needs and English Language Learners.
- honor and incorporate elements of participating children's cultural heritage.
- use positive guidance to help children gain self-control and take responsibility for their own behavior.
- promote positive relationships between teachers and children, and give teachers the opportunity to boost emotional wellness.

PMD will not impose a single scripted curriculum, but because many excellent curricula exist, PMD will review and recommend a variety of curricula that are deemed to be appropriate and of high quality. Providers will be free to use recommended curricula in whole or in part as well as to develop their own curriculum. PMD may provide funds to purchase high-quality curriculum; developmentally appropriate classroom materials, including play equipment; and for modest classroom redesign. PMD will also provide technical assistance to help providers interpret and implement standards.

Program Selection and Recruitment

Essential to the health of PMD will be a diverse complement of high-quality program providers. Family child care, public and private centers, and school-based programs will all be considered for participation in PMD.

PMD is an inclusive program, but participation in PMD may be challenging for some providers, beginning with the application process. For example, some providers may not meet the criteria the first time they apply but could receive support to improve their ECERS/FDCRS scores and better meet other criteria for future applications, in addition to meeting other quality improvement goals.

To help providers understand the specific requirements to participate in PMD and to guide them through the application process, the PMD plan defines the criteria and recruitment process as follows.

SELECTION CRITERIA

PMD will consider the following criteria for selecting PMD providers. The first set is composed of Required Criteria—measures of quality that are deemed essential for participation in the PMD program. The second set is composed of Additional Criteria—factors that will be given consideration in the selection process. Scales will be developed to help the selection committee determine how well applicants meet the additional criteria.

Required Criteria

Institutional Stability

- **Financial** – Programs will either: a) have operated without a deficit for at least two years, b) have three months of operating reserves, and/or c) be part of a larger stable organization (e.g., a school). Measurement will include a positive audit or review for public programs and a comparable measurement for private programs.

Program Excellence

- **Licensing** – Programs must be licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing. Exemptions may be considered.
- **Quality/Rating** – Programs must have a minimum overall score of 4.5 out of 7 (1 is inadequate, 7 is excellent) and at least a 4 on *each* category of either the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) or the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) as determined by a PMD-recommended qualified outside assessor. Scores will be made public for parents, but should not be viewed as the sole indicator of a program's quality. Programs must demonstrate continued annual improvement, and if a program scores below a 4, assistance to improve the scores will be provided. Beginning in year six, programs must choose from a menu of quality improvement measures.

Additional Criteria

Institutional Stability

- **Years in business** – The number of years a program has been in business will be taken into account as one measure of their experience in the early childhood education field.

- **Record serving community** – The program selection process will consider providers’ knowledge of and connection to the community, including whether their administrative organization is located in Contra Costa County.

Program Excellence

- **Accreditation/Rating** –Programs must be accredited by or meet the standards of NAEYC, NAFCC, Montessori, Head Start, Title V, or another accreditation/oversight organization that meets the requirements of the plan for program quality.
- **Professional development** – Programs will have a demonstrated plan for the professional development of staff members. For example, the director could monitor staff’s attendance at workshops, cover training costs, etc.
- **Parent needs** – Programs will be consistently responsive to the needs of the parents it serves. Examples are providing full-day access for parents that need it, having a process for providing referrals, having a record of or plan for parent input, etc.
- **Cultural and linguistic responsiveness** – Programs will have a demonstrated commitment to being responsive to families with diverse cultural and linguistic needs whenever possible. An example could be hiring staff members who speak the language(s) spoken by the children, or having a current process or plan to meet this criterion.
- **Special needs** – Programs will be responsive to a wide range of special needs among their students. This could mean having a special needs teacher on staff, working with resource providers, providing staff training on working with children with special needs, etc.

Responsiveness/Meeting Community Need

- Programs that serve families and/or neighborhoods where the elementary schools score in the 1st through 3rd deciles on the California API will initially receive higher priority.
- In addition, programs who demonstrate a willingness to serve children in neighborhoods with low access to resources (insufficient capacity in existing preschool programs, high percentage of single-parent families, high percentage of families living below the self-sufficiency standard for Contra Costa County, working poor, and lack of family support services) also will receive higher priority.
- Programs that have a relationship with a school to promote a smooth transition for children entering kindergarten will receive higher priority

Family-Provider Relationships

- Programs must have a demonstrated track record of working with parents as detailed in the NAEYC Accreditation Criteria for Relationships (e.g., teachers work in partnership with families, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing, two-way communication).

Faith-based programs can participate in PMD as long as they meet all requirements of the plan and do not teach religious instruction during the PMD-funded portion of the day.

Program Support

PMD providers must continue to improve the quality of their programs over time. Those who have attained the highest quality will need to demonstrate their ability to maintain the quality of their programs. Additionally, directors will have to develop pay scales and other human resource tools to employ PMD-qualified teachers, and they may need help interpreting the requirements of the plan.

Once providers are selected to participate in PMD, an ongoing technical assistance program will offer them overall implementation assistance including helping them get started through mentoring and workshops, referring them to recommended curricula and other resources, and providing other assistance as needed.

Program Recruitment

Essential to the county's ability to offer preschool to every eligible child is its ability to recruit enough school sites, public and private centers, and family child care providers to participate. At its most basic level, PMD must make sense financially and professionally for existing providers. It is critical that the significant incentives of being a PMD provider be conveyed during the recruitment process. The recruitment process will also emphasize the flexibility of the program, which might include floating teachers, combining part- and full-time programs, and other innovative approaches.

Recommendations for provider recruitment include

- conducting major outreach to potential providers via letters, phone calls, mailings to provider lists (Contra Costa PDP list, credentialing database, association meetings), and distribution of recruitment materials at workshops and trainings.
- informing providers about incentives to participate: PMD will help with program improvement, capacity building, professional development, and providers will net higher revenues with PMD reimbursements.
- publicizing via community access channels and other media.
- providing information about PMD on the various sponsors' websites.

To help providers navigate the application process, PMD will offer a wide range of assistance services that include

- trained evaluators to assess program quality as providers prepare to apply to PMD.
- trainers to counsel providers about how to improve quality and to better meet other selection criteria.
- business planning assistance to help providers develop budgets, staffing plans, etc.
- application workshops and one-on-one counseling to complete the application form.
- help obtaining insurance and other business needs.
- permit application and renewal tracking assistance.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

“Several previous research reviews address the relationship of teacher background and quality and have all come to the conclusion that the presence of BA-level teachers with specialized training in early childhood education leads to better outcomes for young children.”¹⁰

Education of Staff

Research has shown that quality in a preschool program can be directly correlated with the education level and training of the teachers in that program. The eventual goal is that all PMD teachers will have a bachelor’s degree and 24 early childhood education (ECE) units.

The field currently is not ready to meet the final requirements, but some college education in the area of ECE and a commitment to completion of a degree is required as a minimum for participation in PMD regardless of the number of years of experience an individual may have. PMD has outlined a series of steps for assistant teachers, teachers, and directors that are correlated with the Child Development Permit Matrix. The Permit Matrix provides two to three options for attaining each of the steps on the matrix. The recommendation establishes a clear minimum education requirement for each of the three positions and provides ample time for individuals to move from one level to the next.

Below are the recommended steps for PMD staff, including the alternative requirements for grandfathered teachers. These steps may be reviewed and revised by the implementing agency based on the funding source.

In order to take advantage of the wealth of experience among current preschool staff, PMD will allow teachers to be “grandfathered” into the highest level for each position if they meet alternative requirements based on experience and education. Individuals who become PMD teachers through these alternative requirements may stay in that position without having to pursue additional educational degrees, although they will be required to participate in continuing education annually. These alternative requirements will be accepted for two years after PMD has completed a pilot program and launched a broader preschool program. Teachers who apply for grandfathered status anytime during that two-year period, regardless of whether their current employer is or plans to become a PMD program, will keep that status permanently.

Assistant PMD Teacher

Level One: *Assistant Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS 3 years experience in ECE (maximum 1 year at this stage).

Level Two: *Associate Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS 3 years experience in ECE (maximum 7 years at this stage).

Level Three: *Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix (maximum 5 years at this stage).

Level Four (Goal): *Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS an AA/AS degree.

¹⁰ Whitebook, Marcy. *Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualifications for Better Learning Environments, A Review of the Literature*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute of Industrial Relations, UC Berkeley, 2003.

Alternative Requirements: *Teacher Level* via Option 1 on the Permit Matrix PLUS 5 years of experience PLUS earning an additional 3 academic units per year.

PMD Teacher

Level One: *Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS 5 years experience in ECE (maximum 5 years at this stage).

Level Two: *Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS AA or AS (maximum 5 years at this stage).

Level Three (Goal): *Master Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS BA.

Alternative Requirements: *Master Level* via Option 1 on the Permit Matrix PLUS 10 years of experience PLUS earning an additional 3 academic units per year.

PMD Director

Level One: *Master Teacher Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS 5 years experience in ECE (maximum 5 years at this stage).

Level Two: *Site Supervisor Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix (maximum 5 years at this stage).

Level Three (Goal): *Site Supervisor Level* or higher on the Permit Matrix PLUS BA degree .

Alternative Requirements: *Program Director* via Option 1 on the Permit Matrix PLUS 10 years of experience PLUS earning an additional 3 academic units per year.

On the following page is a chart showing the steps for PMD assistant teachers, teachers, and directors and how exactly they correspond to the Permit Matrix. Also included is a copy of the Child Development Permit Matrix.

Figure 1: Workforce Requirements

Contra Costa's Preschool Makes a Difference Requirements	Child Development (CD) Levels on the Permit Matrix
<p>PMD Assistant Teacher LEVEL 1: Assistant Level Permit or higher PLUS 3 years experience in ECE (maximum 1 year at this stage)</p>	<p>CD Assistant Permit 6 ECE/CD units OR HERO OR ROP</p>
<p>PMD Assistant Teacher LEVEL 2: Associate Teacher Level Permit or higher PLUS 3 years experience in ECE (maximum 7 years at this stage)</p>	<p>CD Associate Teacher Permit 12 ECE/CD units OR Child Development Associate Credential in California</p>
<p>PMD Assistant Teacher LEVEL 3: Teacher Level Permit or higher (maximum 5 years at this stage)</p>	<p>CD Teacher Permit 24 ECE/CD + 16 GE units OR AA in ECE/CD +3 units supervised field experience</p>
<p>*PMD Assistant Teacher LEVEL 4 (goal): Teacher Level Permit or higher plus AA/AS degree</p>	
<p>PMD Director LEVEL 1: Master Teacher Level Permit or higher PLUS 5 years experience in ECE (maximum 5 years at this stage)</p>	<p>CD Master Teacher Permit 24 ECE/CD + 16 GE units + 6 specialization units + 2 adult supervision units OR BA with 12 ECE/CD units + 3 units supervised field experience</p>
<p>*PMD Teacher LEVEL 3 (goal): Master Teacher Level Permit or higher PLUS BA</p>	
<p>PMD Director LEVEL 2: Site Supervisor Level Permit or higher (maximum 5 years at this stage)</p>	<p>CD Site Supervisor Permit AA + 24 ECE/CD + 16 GE units + 6 admin. units + 2 adult supervision units Various other options</p>
<p>*PMD Director LEVEL 3 (goal): Site Supervisor Level Permit or higher PLUS BA degree</p>	
<p>CD Program Director Permit BA + 24 ECE/CD units including 6 admin. units + 2 adult supervision units Various other options</p> <p>*PMD will allow highly experienced teachers to be "grandfathered" into the highest level for each position if they meet alternative requirements based on experience and education. Individuals who become PMD teachers through these alternative requirements may stay in that position without having to pursue additional educational degrees. The alternative requirements are:</p> <p>Assistant PMD Teacher: Teacher Level via Option 1 on the Permit Matrix PLUS 5 years of experience PLUS earning an additional 3 academic units per year. PMD Teacher: Master Level via Option 1 on the Permit Matrix PLUS 10 years of experience PLUS earning an additional 3 academic units per year. PMD Director: Program Director Level via Option 1 on the Permit Matrix PLUS 10 years of experience PLUS earning an additional 3 academic units per year.</p>	

Figure 2: Child Development Permit Matrix

Child Development Permit Matrix
with Alternative Qualification Options Indicated

Permit Title	Education Requirement (Option 1 for all permits)	Experience Requirement (Applies to Option 1 only)	Alternative Qualifications (with option numbers indicated)	Authorization	Five Year Renewal
Assistant (Optional)	Option 1: 6 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD)	None	Option 2: Accredited HERO program (including ROP); or Option 3: CCTC approved training	Assist in the instruction of children under supervision of Associate Teacher or above.	105 hours of professional growth****
Associate Teacher	Option 1: 12 units ECE/CD including core courses**	50 days of 3+ hours per day within 2 years	Option 2: Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. CDA Credential must be earned in California; or Option 3: CCTC approved training.	May provide instruction and supervise a Child Development Assistant Permit holder and an Aide.	Must complete 15 additional units toward a Teacher Permit. Must meet teacher requirements within 10 years.
Teacher	Option 1: 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** Plus 16 General Education (GE) units*	175 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 years	Option 2: AA or higher in ECE or related field with 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; or Option 3: CCTC approved training	May provide instruction and supervise all above (including Aide)	105 hours of professional growth****
Master Teacher	Option 1: 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus 16 GE units* plus 6 specialization units plus 2 adult supervision units	350 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 years	Option 2: BA or higher with 12 units of ECE, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; or Option 3: CCTC approved training	May provide instruction and supervise all above (including Aide). May also serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth****
Site Supervisor	Option 1: AA (or 60 units) with 24 ECE/CD units including: • Core courses** • 16 GE units* • 6 administration units • 2 adult supervision units	350 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 years including at least 100 days of supervising adults	Option 2: BA or higher with 12 units of ECE, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; or Option 3: Admin. Credential *** with 12 units of ECE, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; or Option 4: Teaching credential with 12 units of ECE, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; or Option 5: CCTC approved training	May supervise single site program, provide instruction, and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth****
Program Director	Option 1: BA with 24 ECE/CD units including: • core courses** • 6 administration units • 2 adult supervision units	Site Supervisor status and one program year of Site Supervisor experience	Option 2: Admin. Credential*** with 12 units of ECE, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; or Option 3: Teaching credential with 12 units of ECE, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE setting; plus 6 units administration; or Option 4: Master's Degree in ECE or Child/Human Development; or Option 5: CCTC approved training.	May supervise multiple-site program, provide instruction, and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth****

NOTE: All unit requirements listed above are semester units. All course work must be completed with a grade of C or better.

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

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

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

****Professional growth hours must be completed under the guidance of a Professional Growth Advisor. Call (209) 341-1662 for assistance in locating an advisor.

This matrix was prepared by the Child Development Training Consortium, www.childdevelopment.org
Call (209) 572-6080 for a permit application.

PMD recognizes that some providers will choose not to return to school for a degree. For the sake of consistency in quality, other qualifications cannot be substituted for the educational requirements outlined above.

In instances where a family child care provider opts not to pursue the required degree and credential, he or she may want to consider hiring a PMD-qualified teacher to provide the three-hour PMD portion of the day. This will enable an existing provider to participate and maintain continuity for the families currently in their care.

In instances where the staff of a center-based program does not meet the required degree requirements, the center may consider hiring a part-time PMD-qualified teacher to provide the three-hour PMD portion of the day.

Educational Access

A broad range of opportunities will be made available to assist current and future teachers in taking coursework. Classes will be offered at various times of the day, including evening, naptime, and weekends. PMD will fund “contract” education classes in partnership with the community colleges in the county—Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, and Los Medanos College. These classes may take place off-site from the colleges, but will adhere to the standard requirements of community college coursework. In addition to funding the instructors and facility rental, PMD also may fund a staff person to coordinate the contract education courses among the three schools.

Distance learning, independent study, and online classes may be offered through hybrid programs that combine convenience with the value of classroom learning. Cohort degree programs and financial aid (including for part-time students) are additional options. Unit-bearing classes may also take place at the Child Care Council’s offices or other local community sites.

PMD will continue and expand existing partnerships between community and 4-year colleges, including developing formal blended programs and coursework for early learning education and having teachers at 4-year colleges teach coursework at community colleges to enable students to get their bachelor’s degrees at a community college near their home. In addition, PMD will leverage partnerships with existing programs (such as the Child Care Council, CARES, and Contra Costa’s Professional Development Program).

PMD may also provide supports for teachers, including

- developing educational plans at the onset of a teacher’s experience.
- advising teachers to work towards transfer (vs. terminal) associate degrees.
- allowing for a limited number of hours of paid PMD-qualified substitutes (either PMD teachers or teachers in training) and release time, possibly paid with stipends. (Family child care providers may attend classes as long as they are not gone more than 20 percent of the time.) Substitutes may be part of a pool; PMD also will consider funding floater teachers who could be assigned to specific sites.
- providing mentors, buddy system, and tutors who are sensitive to the population, available, and able to do hands-on work with students who have difficulty learning.
- providing traveling consultants/coaches for supplemental instruction.

- allowing for supplemental educational advising.
- providing financial assistance to help teachers accomplish their milestones and advance on the career ladder (CARES/PDP/Consortium).
- supporting professional development organizations (i.e., Early Learning Alliance).
- supporting quality improvement programs (i.e., Early Learning Demonstration Project).
- providing personal supports that will make it easier for students to complete their education, including mental health assistance.
- providing child care for school and study time, especially on evenings and Saturdays, to provide a practical support as well as to give extended lab experience.

PMD will support English language learners by developing an ESL component that could include

- courses taught in the home language as well as English, similar to the partnership between ESL and ECE teachers to increase students' knowledge and learning currently offered at Contra Costa College.
- cohorts for English language learners.

A comprehensive but simple to understand program of financial aid will include

- scholarships as an incentive to get desired populations (e.g., bilingual or foreign students).
- aid for books, transportation, child care, and transcript evaluation costs using Education Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S) as a model, with money provided up front, not as a reimbursement.

Colleges and universities are encouraged to

- recruit faculty that reflects the diversity of the student population.
- develop courses to support English Language Learners.
- advocate for the development of Spanish and other-language textbooks for core courses.
- offer course work that covers how to work with children with special needs as well as how to work with parents and with cultural diversity issues.

Training, Professional Development and Other Supports

Beyond the academic requirements to earn specific degrees or credentials, all PMD teachers will have access to a wide variety of training and other professional development opportunities. Training institutions will be expected to provide accessible, accelerated learning and other alternatives (including online) to the traditional training models.

Ongoing training opportunities will be offered by PMD on a variety of topics including developmentally and culturally appropriate practices, working with English Language Learners, working with children with special needs, working with parents, early literacy, sensory integration, auditory processing, working with technology, and mental health issues such as family distress. Potential specific training needs in the future may include training on how to administer Desired Results and how to meet the new early learning program standards from the California Department of Education. PMD also will look at the needs of all staff to build English-language skills.

PMD's goal is to build on existing investments in programs that provide quality, training, scholarships, and other supports. As such, PMD will continue to build partnerships with existing training institutions and other funded quality improvement efforts, and when possible to expand on the services they offer.

The following additional recommendations address specific needs:

- For diversity training, PMD may use resources such as BANDTEC (Bay Area Network of Diversity Trainers in Early Childhood) and PITC (Parent Infant Toddler Consortium) as models. Interpreters and language classes will also be available to aid in communication between providers and families.
- PMD may use Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) and PITC as models for train-the-trainer programs.

And finally, the Contra Costa County Office of Education and the Child Care Council will further develop the early childhood education resources in their libraries, as well as develop a guide to resources for teachers in the community and beyond.

Teacher Recruitment

In order to provide universal preschool, enough qualified teachers must be available. Recruiting individuals to attain the required qualifications will mean convincing existing preschool teachers at child care centers and family child care providers to return to school for degrees as well as enticing high school and entering college students to consider preschool teaching as a viable career option.

For both groups, the message must come across loud and clear that the ranks of preschool teachers are becoming more “professionalized” in terms of educational expectations and resulting comparable salaries and benefits. At the same time, individuals who decide to pursue PMD qualifications can expect more support to meet the new, more stringent requirements as outlined in the Workforce Development section, above.

For the existing teachers, PMD will conduct outreach similar to that for recruiting providers: mail, phone, and email communications with existing family child care sites, school sites, and public and private centers and distribution of materials at provider meetings and other events. Outreach will include information about how to apply for grandfathered status.

To recruit new teachers to the field, PMD will encourage high school and entering college students to consider preschool teaching as a beneficial career choice. Outreach will be conducted in a variety of ways, including:

- through multilingual media.
- participation in high school and college career fairs.
- through high school and academic counselors.

PMD will actively seek out culturally appropriate teachers. Every effort will be made to recruit and develop a preschool workforce that is culturally and linguistically diverse and that respects the

communities served by the PMD system. Professional and highly trained staff will have a strong educational background in early childhood and appropriate credentials which will reflect the diversity of cultures and languages of the families they serve. PMD will make classes available for providers to learn additional languages. The percentage of PMD providers with bilingual capacity will be based on the needs of the county.

ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY

Voluntary preschool provided by PMD will be available and accessible to any age-eligible child in Contra Costa County. The intent of the plan is to provide preschool for the two years preceding a child's entry into kindergarten. In some exceptions, a child may remain in a PMD program for a third year if a PMD teacher, in their assessment of the child's progress, deems that the child is not cognitively or socially ready to enter kindergarten.

A variety of programs will be spread across all geographic areas, with parents having the opportunity to choose the preschool setting appropriate for their child and family. In addition, efforts will be made to ensure that PMD will be incorporated into or coordinated with full-day child care programs to serve the needs of working parents. Programs also will continually strive to improve their services to children with special needs.

Special Needs/Inclusion Services

Participating programs will be those that value full and proactive inclusion of all children, including children with special needs, and ensure continuity of integrated services. PMD teachers will be trained to work with children with special needs, including children who already have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A minimum of 25 percent of all PMD programs countywide will be fully accessible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) based on the needs of the community.

All providers must have basic knowledge about Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the ADA, and ongoing training will be made available to ensure providers meet this requirement. Providers will not be penalized if they are not fully ADA-accessible, but PMD will provide support, including financial support for modest facility improvements, to assist with ADA compliance.

PMD may consider using the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childcare (DEC) Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education to assess and improve the quality of services provided to young children with disabilities and to their families.

PMD will support providers by maintaining and making available a list of referral agencies to address the wide range of children's needs. In addition, inclusion and mental health specialists and other health specialists as needed (e.g., Child Care Council, Care Parent Network, Child Care Solutions) will be available for all PMD programs to respond to providers' requests for assistance.

Training will be given to providers on how to do initial screening and when to refer a student for additional screening. Developmental screening will be provided as follows: (1) provider will conduct informal developmental observation; (2) if a concern is identified, the provider will refer, with parental authorization, to inclusion and mental health agencies for further screening and

observation; and (3) if further review is needed, the provider will refer, with parental authorization, to school district (Child Find) for assessment.

Quarterly on-site observations will be made by specialists to assess additional training needs.

Coordination with Full-Day Child Care

A major goal of PMD is to meet the needs of families and support parent choice. Coordination with full-day child care programs is of paramount importance to PMD. To some extent, this is a provider recruitment issue, and all efforts will be made to recruit providers that have the capacity to provide full-day care—either through offering full-day programs or connection with wraparound services. PMD will strive to ensure that there are enough programs throughout the county that provide extensive full day care, including off-hour care, 12-hour care, etc.

PMD will also conduct outreach to family child care providers to involve them in the program because they may be best able to meet a family’s need for full-day care; outreach materials for providers will be designed to be easily understandable and clearly convey the benefits of participating. PMD also will provide the necessary supports for providers to participate (e.g., money for fingerprinting, obtaining a license, etc.).

PMD will explore the use of existing networks and services (e.g., the state-funded family child care early education home network, Early Learning Demonstration Project) to involve and provide and expand support for family child care providers.

Transportation

Transportation is an important element of making preschool available to all children. In order to take advantage of PMD, a parent must be able to transport their child to an appropriate program. Several options for transportation exist: public transportation, child transport services, supervised walking, and carpooling are a few. Transportation needs to be strongly considered when selecting PMD providers, including giving some priority for those programs that are in close proximity to main public transit routes or that already provide transportation. PMD will work to ensure that information about transportation options is made available to parents.

Transportation also is a challenge for parents whose children attend a part-day PMD program but need child care for the remainder of the day. PMD will encourage participating providers to make on-site child care available or to form partnerships with other child care providers who are nearby. For example, a PMD provider could work with a full day care provider in the same neighborhood to coordinate getting a group of children from one site to the other.

FAMILY OUTREACH, INVOLVEMENT, AND SUPPORT

Family Outreach

For families to have access to PMD, they have to know that it exists and that their children are eligible for it. Parents also must to be able to choose the setting that is most appropriate for their

children's and family's needs, including determining the desired proximity to transportation, employment sites, relatives, and other factors. The choice of a preschool should be an informed one, and the PMD program will make every effort to assist parents in making the right one for their families.

PMD will conduct an outreach effort to parents to let them know when their child is eligible for the program. This will include ads on buses and in utility bills, a PMD website, notices in association newsletters, flyers in retail stores and other public places, and mailers from other public and private agencies, particularly faith-based groups, as appropriate. City and county agencies (local government offices, health organizations, youth commissions, chambers, etc.) will be notified about PMD. Free media coverage will be generated by news releases and proactive follow-up with newspapers, TV, and radio.

Marketing materials will be produced in multiple languages—English, Spanish, Farsi, Lao, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Mandarin—and advertisements will run on non-English media. PMD will also work with ethnic and community organizations to get the word out about the program.

The Child Care Council's referral phone line will provide information about the types of availability of PMD programs in Contra Costa County as well as coordinate state income-based requirements for child care with PMD's selection requirements. The Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) will offer a standard application form to be used by families to apply for acceptance to a PMD program. PMD programs may use their own application forms as long as they contain the same information as required on the standard PMD form. Families will have the opportunity to apply to as many PMD programs as they wish.

Family Involvement and Support

Once parents become part of the PMD community, their importance only grows. One of the guiding principles of this plan is that PMD will promote the significance of parents as their child's primary teacher and recognize that parents play an integral role in their children's early learning experiences. But beyond simply valuing the role of parents in children's lives, PMD will support and honor the needs, involvement, and input of parents and will strive to be simple, understandable, and user-friendly. One support PMD will provide is a comprehensive, easy to use list of resources available to help parents meet the physical, mental, economic, and other needs of their families.

PMD providers will be required to

- have a process for orienting children and families and allow families' unlimited access to their children.
- hold two parent-teacher conferences per year and provide ongoing documentation of each child's development.
- make a deliberate and intentional effort to solicit and incorporate parents' goals for their children, and then engage the community and families as resources in curriculum development and enrichment.
- make every attempt to communicate effectively with families in their home language, including using written and verbal translation as provided by PMD.
- give families many opportunities to interact, network and support one another.

PMD also will support and promote the home-school connection, and parents and providers will work as equal partners. Other recommended strategies to promote family involvement include

- creating input opportunities for parents that don't require attendance at events through such means as hotlines, e-groups, conference calls, and email.
- offering in-home parent support opportunities or resources.
- providing educational opportunities for parents to learn about child development, including developmental milestones, how to support their child's development with at-home activities, and other important concepts.
- providing literacy opportunities for parents, including inviting them, especially English Language Learners, to work in the classroom on a regular basis.
- creating opportunities for anonymous feedback to the Advisory Committee via postage-paid comment cards at PMD sites.

FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

When it comes to facilities, two issues must be addressed: quality and availability.

The Data Snapshot of Contra Costa County illustrates the dearth of sufficient providers, which would suggest a lack of physical plants set up to house preschool programs. Clearly, new facilities will need to be identified or built over time in order to address the demand created by a universal preschool program. As PMD is implemented, the Collaborative will explore options for designating existing buildings for preschool programs or constructing new ones.

Whether they are existing or new facilities, they must be clean, safe, accessible, inclusive, licensed, and well-equipped, and they must meet regulatory quality standards.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach, including to potential funders and community supporters such as business, foundations and influential donors, will be a key to success and long-term support. Several strategies were recommended.

- Encourage businesses to allow employees time to volunteer in early childhood education programs.
- Consider corporate sponsorship of events, facility enhancements, etc.
- Consider developing a PMD Foundation to raise funding.
- Conduct outreach to local foundations to inform and engage them about PMD.
- Educate members of the media (radio, television, and newspapers) about PMD and its importance in the lives of Contra Costa County's children, and keep them informed about PMD activities, events, key dates, and milestones.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is a key element of the PMD program. What curriculum will help meet the established standards? What are the real results of the program? And, ultimately, are our children more ready to enter elementary school? An effective evaluation effort rests on the county's ability to assess programs, make necessary changes to meet programs' and families' needs, and continue to monitor outcomes to measure results for Contra Costa County's children.

To help answer the questions about the effectiveness of PMD and identify areas for improvement, a two-pronged approach is recommended. Desired Results will measure program progress and quality as well as each individual child's progress.

I. Desired Results

- PMD programs will be required to use the full spectrum of Desired Results: parent survey, ECERS/FDCRS, Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), Program Action Plan, and Personnel Report.
- Using the DRDP also will give the PMD program an opportunity to compare qualitative variables among PMD sites to determine their relative importance (e.g., ratios).
- Because many aspects of the Desired Results evaluation are self-administered, the contract administrator will conduct period independent evaluation.

II. Kindergarten Entry Child Profile

- All kindergarten teachers will be encouraged to use the Modified Desired Results Developmental Profile (MDRDP) upon a child's entry into kindergarten. The MDRDP measures readiness and can be broken down to compare PMD students with students from other types of preschool or no preschool experience. It can also break out income levels and other variables.
- The MDRDP is being used in 35 schools as part of the School Readiness Initiative. A unique identifier is assigned to each child, which would aid measurement over time.
- PMD will acknowledge the importance of early childhood education and training for kindergarten teachers.
- PMD will compensate schools for participating in this element of the evaluation program.
- PMD will consider ways to encourage school districts to participate in entry evaluations of **all** children in order to ensure that data are available to compare the results for children who participated in PMD programs versus those who didn't.

Longitudinal studies of the effectiveness of PMD would be extremely valuable, but costly and difficult to administer. However, the contract administrator is encouraged to look more closely at the viability of such a prospect as the PMD program is nearing implementation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXISTING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

- First 5 Contra Costa's **School Readiness Initiative**, funded by the California Children and Families Commission, has created new preschool, parent education, and outreach programs in 35 communities with low-performing elementary schools to help children enter school healthy and learning.
- The Contra Costa **Professional Development Program** (PDP) is designed to improve the quality of care for children age 0 to 5 years by supporting the educational advancement of the early childhood education providers in Contra Costa County. The PDP is implemented through a partnership with Contra Costa Child Care Council, Contra Costa County Office of Education, Contra Costa Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development, First 5 Contra Costa, Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, Los Medanos College, and California State University East Bay.
- The **Early Learning Alliance** (ELA) is part of the Professional Development Program created for professionals in the early care and education field. Participants automatically become ELA members when they continue with the PDP requirements and document their professional growth activities through the PDP. ELA members are part of a special group of early childhood educators in Contra Costa who have chosen to advance in their field and pursue higher educational goals. ELA members receive the latest information on trainings, scholarships and support services, opportunities to network with other early education professionals, special and recognition events, and discount coupons to vendors who offer early learning educational materials.
- The **Early Learning Demonstration Project** works to enhance the quality of early child care centers and family child care homes by supporting early child care programs to work towards advancement on the Environmental Rating Scales by Harms, Clifford or Cryer or accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children or the National Association for Family Child Care. In addition to technical assistance, workshops, site visits, and other one-on-one or group support, the ELDP provides grants to help family child care homes and child care centers reach the goals of a site improvement plan.
- The **Inclusion Project** provides hands-on support for children with special needs at home and in early childhood education settings through the assistance of an inclusion specialist and inclusion facilitators, library resources, resource and referral counselors that specialize in special needs, workshops and trainings for child care providers and early childhood educators, and other forms of assistance and resources for parents.
- The **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project** operates Child Care Solutions, which assesses children with mental health, social, emotional, and developmental problems enrolled in licensed child care. The program aims to create continuity of care by providing training and support for child care providers.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

March 2005-April 2006

Community involvement was a critical component in the development of the PMD strategic plan. The process took nearly two years and involved hundreds of people with an interest in the future of a universal preschool program. Drawing on the community's strengths, the process attracted child care center staff, family child care providers, teachers and administrators from the K-12 system, community college and university staff, elected and appointed policy makers, advocates, early care support service staff, parent support organization staff, and parents.

On March 17, 2005, First 5 Contra Costa sponsored a forum to discuss the importance of universal preschool and of establishing a collaborative relationship between the child care and K-12 communities. This event, designed by a planning team, attracted more than 300 people and generated significant attention within the county, including coverage in the local media.

The planning team of 25 members oversaw the entire planning process. They met regularly and outlined how a community planning process would work; set a mission, vision, and guiding principles for the plan; reviewed the activities of the work groups; and provided overall input into the process.

The official kick-off session for the planning process took place on June 2, 2005, when more than 80 people attended and signed on to participate in one or more of the four work groups established to develop recommendations for specific areas of the plan:

- (1) The **Governance Work Group** addressed program oversight and responsibility and making the connection between early childhood education and the public K-12 education system.
- (2) The **Program Standards and Quality Work Group** developed recommendations to assure the standards and curriculum of PMD will address the social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical development of children.
- (3) The **Workforce Development Work Group** addressed teacher qualifications and salaries, professional development opportunities, articulation between educational and training institutions, and the capacity of the system to provide educational opportunities.
- (4) The **Access and Facilities Work Group** developed recommendations for settings, locations, hours, and participatory opportunities that meet families' needs; integrating part-time preschool with full-time care; cultural, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity of settings; and inclusion of children with special needs.

Each work group met numerous times over the next seven months, alternating meeting times between morning, afternoon, and evening to enable the widest possible attendance. Meeting notes were sent out to all work group participants after each meeting, and past decisions were reviewed at the beginning of each meeting to give participants who had not attended the previous meeting an opportunity to weigh in on them. Recommendations were tracked through a series of work plans

that outlined the tasks for each group. Continuous outreach efforts were made to recruit additional participants throughout the process.

A section of First 5 Contra Costa's website was devoted to the planning process to make information available to all interested people. Minutes, work plans, meeting notices, and other relevant documents were regularly posted on the site.

Input and ideas for the plan came from many sources—including the Preschool for All Act initiative, First 5 California grantee requirements, and the plans of the three counties that have already implemented a universal preschool plan, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Los Angeles. As such, there were occasionally conflicting opinions, and this plan is the best effort to combine these conflicting elements to meet the needs and wishes of all the stakeholders, particularly the children of Contra Costa County.

Feedback and Refinement Process

April 2006-April 2007

In February and March of 2006, a first draft of the plan was circulated among a variety of groups, with particular emphasis on reaching early childhood education providers, to get feedback and gauge interest in participation in the program.

Members of the four work groups and the Planning Team convened in March and April to review the plan and provide comments and suggestions. The County Office of Education solicited feedback from school district superintendents and school board members. The draft plan also was posted on the First 5 website, and everyone who had attended the initial forum was sent information about how to comment on it.

Over the next 11 months, from April 2006 through February 2007, a small group of representatives from the Planning Team, including representatives from the co-sponsoring agencies, continued to refine the plan, completing unfinished components as well as updating sections as more information on needs, funding, and other key issues became available. In addition, meetings of this "Refinement Committee" were also held with community college professors, family child care providers, center directors and staff, parents, and other counties implementing universal preschool plans to get their feedback and input.. Design for a pilot project was also begun.

In March 2007, a second draft was produced from comments from interested members of the Planning Team and the four work groups. Following input from the work groups and the Planning Team, this final plan was produced. The plan will continue to be a living document, as funding becomes available.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

Community College ECE Departments

Aug. 25, 2006

Present: 8 community college representatives (DVC, LMC, CCC)

Issues:

- Many are daunted by the BA requirement; consider an exemption for “those on track”
- Might need different solutions for existing workforce – new, young students might be more interested than those in field a long time
- Many students are challenged to pass any class
- Community college system barriers: funding cutbacks, can’t offer classes if too few students sign up, have a certain budget and difficult to offer additional courses, need more faculty and more classroom spaces
- Time, family obligations and not able to leave work – concern over time requirements to get degrees
- Concern over differential pay for PMD and non-PMD teachers
- Concern for requirements to have worked in the field before being eligible to receive PMD funding
- Has recruitment of males been addressed?
- Reluctance to come to campus classes at night because of safety concerns

Recommendations:

- Provide stipends for substitute teachers
- PMD pay for contract education (off campus) including administration costs (coordinator) including teaching at child care centers
- Keep class size small
- Provide tutors who are sensitive to the population, available, hands on, able to work with students with difficulty learning
- Provide mental health support for those in need to help cope with life issues
- ESL component – teach courses in home language, consider partnering ESL and ECE teachers to increase students’ knowledge and learning (i.e. done at Contra Costa College)
- “Fulbright scholarship” – provide a year scholarship so teacher could go to school full time (making scheduling easier for child care center rather than having to find staff for sporadic school hours)
- Provide child care for school and study time especially evenings and Saturdays to also give extended lab experience
- Consider distance learning, independent study, online classes but not exclusively; consider hybrid classes (i.e. in person and online); online classes ok but not for entire schooling experience; face-to-face contact essential for social and community building skills; classroom a place to build community with concerns re: language, economics, ethnicity, nationality and gender

- 1-8 ratio desirable with class size of 20 max
- Get everyone on permit matrix

Family Child Care Providers

September 30, 2006

Following is a summary of the issues discussed with family child care providers at the September 30 meeting.

- Suggestions or recommendations are bulleted.

Education

Providers' primary challenge is getting the units to meet the educational requirements, both from a time and an access standpoint

Class schedules difficult to meet with FCC routines/work hours

Hard to get to class, particularly on weeknights after working a very long day

If an FCC closes at 6 pm, with commute time it would be hard to be on time

Some classes ask more time commitment than possible – it is disrespectful not to recognize the time issue of the profession

Hard to find the time to study read/for the class due to family chores

Issue of what to do with own children during class

Difficult to meet general ed. requirements

- It would help to have the class at the Child Care Council
- Distance learning can be worked out to accommodate FCC schedules
- Open-entry type of classes can help

Substitutes

Licensing requires clearance

Generally like the idea

- Need to research

Ratios

Ratios should be lower

Not a field with centers – may need to have different ratios (1-6 / 1-12)

- Lower ratios

Language Barriers

Hispanic providers face language barrier to read/study in English

More than 50% of the preschool children will come from the Hispanic community

How sponsors of PMD communicate with this community

- Provide tutors
- Offer more classes in Spanish, e.g. the cohort in Brentwood offered by LMC

Facilities and Equipment/Materials

Homes may not meet facilities requirements

What kind of equipment or materials will be needed?

It is a challenge to keep it equipped

ELDP is a great help for upgrading the environment

Materials for Pre-K can cost a lot of money

- Promote ELDP
- Have someone to walk through and make recommendations
- Provide materials, e.g. Tigo through classes

Credit for experience

Some providers felt there should be a “grandfathering” policy, whereby providers can get “credit” for experience

- Count experience in place of some educational requirements

Compensation

Is compensation tied to the number of children? How will funds be distributed?

Need to factor in paperwork

- PMD must be cost-effective for providers as well as professionally satisfying

Mixed-Age Groups

Questions around a critical mass of PMD children

Preschool/infant environment appropriate for different age groups – both from a financial standpoint for the provider and the knowledge the provider brings

What happens to the younger children when teaching PMD

- Use assistants for infants/toddlers
- Include all children in some activities
- Use a traveling teacher

Communication with Family Child Care

How should PMD communicate with family child care providers?

- Visit family child care provider meetings/Contra Costa Family Child Care Association
- Provide information on Child Care Council website
- Mailing to providers

Other Issues

Health Ins. - need more information

How to retain providers who get a BA

Effect on non-PMD providers

- Provide incentives to draw all providers to join Association
- Build up professionalism
- Get parents to buy in
- Continuing Education/Extension classes to offer via colleges

Child Care Center Staff Focused Discussions

Four events focused on discussion universal preschool and the PMD plan with center staff. One was an evening event that attracted seven people; the other three were “coffees” sponsored by the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and they attracted a total of eight people.

Following is a breakdown of the directors represented in these discussions, based on optional information sheets completed by most participants:

- Eleven are directors, two are teachers and one is an assistant director.
- Centers represented ranged in size from 21 to 170.
- Four provide part-day programs, seven run full-day programs, and 3 run both part- and full-day programs.
- Four programs are in East County, four are in South County, three are in Central County, and two are in West County.
- Two have 11 to 15 years of experience, three have 16 to 20 years of experience, and eight have more than 20 years of experience.
- Three have an associate degree, four have a bachelor’s degree, one has studies at the graduate level, and five have a graduate degree.

1. What do you think about the concept of universal preschool?

- Some participants had difficulty separating generic universal preschool from ballot measure last June
- Most agreed it is needed, especially for low- and middle-income families who don’t get subsidies
- Negative opinions about education requirements for teachers—some felt experience more important
- Concern about faith-based programs
- Some were disappointed the initiative failed; some liked the concept, but not the way it was presented in the ballot proposition; some were surprised by lack of support within child care community
- Worried that curriculum would be all academic
- Liked concept of bridging ECE and K-12 systems
- Seemed to give parental choice
- Research shows good results
- Dislike more bureaucracy
- Don’t trust public schools
- Loss of skilled teachers

2. PMD Plan - Likes

- Includes 3- to 5-year-olds
- Most directors liked teacher requirements and how plan helps teachers meet them
- Some liked giving lump sum payment
- Participants at two sessions liked the idea of vouchers for parents

3. PMD Plan - Concerns

- Funding questions: source? how allocation would work?
- Concerned about teachers’ benefits, prep time

- Quality control/accountability—concerned about lump-sum payments to providers
- “Don’t fix what’s not broken.”
- “This job is a passion; we would lose everyone if we could only hire people who have graduated from college.”
- Will lose good teachers—also worried new teachers won’t have same passion or commitment

4. Other questions:

- “Are you trying to improve the system or help the children?”
- Who will provide the ECERS ratings? Will they be externally assessed?
- Could faith-based programs participate?
- Will PMD be used for existing programs?

Parent Focus Groups

7 groups conducted

62 parents participated representing a total of 83 children

The children represented were cared for by:

Parents - 59

Family Child Care - 4

Other Relative - 5

Child Care Center - 15

Of the parents who participated and completed an information form:

30 were White

1 was Black or African American

1 was a Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

8 were Asian

7 were two or more races

8 were other

7 did not respond

22 were Hispanic

39 were married

20 were single

3 did not respond

30 had a household income under \$30,000

16 had a household income of \$30,000-\$50,000

5 had a household income of \$50,000-\$80,000

11 had a household income of more than \$80,000

1 did not respond

8 had some high school education

13 had a high school diploma or GED

15 had some college

6 had an AA degree

14 had a BA/BS degree

4 had a graduate degree

2 had some trade school education

1 did not respond

Parents were asked to indicate the three most important aspects in choosing a preschool, and they responded as follows:

Affordable - 34

Developmentally appropriate education - 54

Near my work - 2

Respects my culture/language - 11
Consistent with my spiritual beliefs - 3
Near my home - 22
Near public transportation - 2
Safe environment - 51
Other - 4

Universal Preschool Discussion

1. What does your child need to be successful in kindergarten?

- How to interact with other children and play, social skills
- To know numbers/counting, letter recognition, colors, shapes, etc., but also music, art, languages
- Discipline: following rules, how to act in classroom
- Structure: circle time, story time, the “daily schedule”
- Good teachers; safety a big issue
- Self-esteem: knowing they are able to learn and can accomplish things
- Developmentally appropriate experience
- Desire to learn/motivation to go to school
- Cultural diversity

2. What do you think when you’re thinking of preschool?

- An important stage of children’s lives
- The place to learn academics plus social skills, how to behave/learning on all levels (social, academic, creative)
- A classroom environment
- Routines
- Should be a fun place to go
- Creative learning environment
- Confidence building

3. What makes a preschool good for children?

- Learning through play
- Interactions independence, learning school routine, socializing
- Staff, number of staff and quality of staff; teachers care and are committed
- Options/choices; freedom
- Parents and their involvement
- Respect for families’ needs/desires
- Outdoor environment
- Balance with structure
- Small groups
- Communication between parents/teachers

PMD Discussion

The majority of parents would be interested in PMD for their child (or would have been when their child was the appropriate age).

4. What do you like about the idea of PMD?

- Coordination with K and up
- Parent input/involvement, parent education
- Affordable (very popular answer); fees based on income
- Accessible for all children
- Improving the quality of preschools
- Emphasis on cultural diversity/sensitivity
- Play-based
- Class size and ratio
- Two teachers in room who will be hands-on
- All programs eligible
- Addresses all developmental spheres
- More pay for teachers
- Most liked better-qualified teachers

5. What do you dislike about the idea of PMD?

- Advisory Committee too large to be effective; needs to be continuous
- Quality control/accountability—concern about lump-sum payments
- Educational requirements are higher than necessary for aides; general concern about whether teachers can meet requirements in time
- Don't want different languages—prefer English
- Do not want language barriers, slowing down my child's learning
- Some parent / guardian involvement should be mandatory; others were afraid it would be too much
- Group size too large
- Fear about similar-culture teachers leading to segregation
- Should be for 2-year-olds also