



PACE

Child Development Projects

Advancing the Early Childhood Workforce:

Implementation
of Training and
Retention Initiatives
in the Bay Area

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Policy Brief 04-1

Research supported by:



POLICY BRIEF

JANUARY 2004

Nationwide, public attention has increasingly focused on the need for a variety of early care and education arrangements to meet the changing needs of families. The demand for early care and education has grown for families from all socioeconomic sectors, intensifying as participants in welfare-to-work programs enter the workforce, and as work requirements for these programs become more stringent. In addition, research affirming the importance of children's initial years for their later social and cognitive development has heightened public awareness of and concern for the quality of care provided in centers and family child-care homes. Political will in support of early care and education has expanded in an attempt to keep pace with public sentiment.

This growing public and political interest in early care and education reflects genuine needs on the part of families nationwide. The need is particularly acute among low-income sectors of the population, who can least afford quality care arrangements for their children. In California alone, it was estimated in 2000 that 232,000 children were in need of subsidized child-care beyond what could be provided under the state's budget proposal at the time.¹ Across all children aged 0-13 with working parents in California, there is one available slot in a licensed center or family child-care home per 4.6 children, indicating that the supply of early care and education

may not be in step with demand.² Another study documented that, from 1996 to 2000, the number of preschool slots per 100 children aged 0-5 years, rose only from 13 to 14 in California.³

However, while the demand for affordable, quality care for young children is on the rise, the realities of the early care and education (ECE) field present a different picture: understaffed centers, high rates of turnover among caregivers, and an educationally bifurcated workforce (with caregivers either on the low or high end of the educational spectrum).^{4,5}

Turnover is a persistent problem in the ECE profession. A Northern California study found that 76% of ECE staff members in centers surveyed in 1996 had left their jobs four years later, with approximately half having left the ECE field altogether.⁶ National annual turnover rates range from 20-40%; ECE staff turnover is high across all education levels.⁷

Not only does turnover affect staff morale and workplace performance,⁸ it also has important ramifications for child development. Research has shown that young children benefit from being with well-trained, consistent staff in ECE settings, with whom they can form stable relationships.^{9,10} Well-trained staff members tend to provide nurturing, responsive care to the children they serve, facilitating children's positive cognitive, social, and emotional development, and making for a higher quality ECE environment.^{11,12,13}

Recent research provides evidence supporting the link between improved compensation and retention.¹⁴ A study of staffing patterns at 75 ECE centers revealed that teachers identified low pay as the primary reason they were leaving the field.¹⁵

In light of research documenting the linkages among compensation, training, quality care, staff retention, and child development on the one hand, and public interest in the provision of ECE on the other, responses aimed at mitigating the staffing problem in the ECE field have focused strategies to improve retention among staff, and raise awareness regarding the role of compensation in enhancing quality. Programs launched in California provide examples of such an approach, where, over the last 3 years, 42 counties have initiated child-care retention incentive (CRI) programs, designed to reduce turnover and retain ECE professionals by providing monetary stipends to individuals who meet certain tenure and continuing education requirements.

The programs are funded largely by monies allocated through the State's Proposition 10, a voter initiative which taxes cigarettes and is administered by First 5 California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California), and AB 212, a state bill earmarking funds for child-care staff retention programs in centers subsidized by the State Department of Education. San Francisco also receives funding locally, through the Department of Children, Youth, & their Families (DCYF). Administered on a county

level, these CRI programs allow for the implementation of plans addressing the particular problems facing local ECE communities. While First 5 California establishes standards and criteria for some aspects of the CRI programs, each county maintains its own First 5 Commission, usually comprised of local policymakers, advocates, stakeholders, and practitioners, which is responsible for funding, and partial oversight of the program.

Two of the first programs of this kind in California were undertaken by Alameda and San Francisco counties. In Alameda this effort was called the Alameda Child Development Corps (Alameda CDC or Corps), while in San Francisco, the program was known as San Francisco CARES (SF CARES). First 5 California funded Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) to evaluate these counties' initiatives over a two-year period. The PACE evaluation consists of a quantitative component focusing on program effects measured in terms of retention and professional development, and a qualitative study that examines how the programs have been implemented; in addition, a cost analysis was conducted to investigate and determine the costs associated with increasing retention and training among staff in each of the counties.

This policy brief is based on the qualitative component of the evaluation, and is meant to report on and summarize the most salient findings regarding the implementation of the programs in Alameda and San Francisco counties in their second year of operation, as well as to offer a view across the counties and compare certain aspects of their programs.¹⁶ The purpose of this brief is to highlight themes particularly relevant to Year 2 of these CRI programs; it builds on the Year 1 report.¹⁷ Additionally, some demographic data are

included to provide the context in which implementation occurred.

A Shifting Context: ECE During the Recession

Initially these CRI programs were created within the climate of the San Francisco Bay Area's economic boom in the late 1990's, which contributed to tremendous staffing shortages in low-paying industries such as ECE. With the economic downturn in the technology industry, the area's employment situation changed considerably. While the slowdown in the technology sector may not have directly affected jobs in the ECE field, the repercussions of the area's economic problems were evidenced throughout the job market. This may have happened in a few ways. Shifts in employment patterns impact the demand for services such as ECE. For example, in 2001 two-thirds of California mothers were working, making quality ECE "the biggest money burden on California families second only to rent," according to a report in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.^{18,19} However, at the same time, layoffs may have attenuated some families' need for child care, as one parent may no longer be employed. In other situations, requirements for ECE actually may have increased in the wake of the area's economic slump, as parents who previously stayed at home entered the workforce to compensate for losses in household income. Retaining ECE staff in this economic environment similarly may have opposing tensions: staff members may be more willing to stay in their jobs for economic security in the wake of spousal/partner job loss, or on the other hand, they may be more willing to leave for better prospects

History of the California CARES Initiative

Several early care and education (ECE) groups have advocated for higher wages over the past two decades, both in California and nationwide. In 1996, the California Department of Education contracted with the American Institutes for Research and the Center for the Child Care Workforce to conduct a statewide study of a review of wages and benefits among ECE staff, revealing low pay for most, even among teaching staffs that displayed relatively high education levels.

Aiming to coordinate a response to these new data on wages, in 1997, ECE leaders from around the state were pulled together by the San Francisco Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI). This group of activists settled on a policy strategy that came to be known as CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability).^{*} Originally developed by the Center for the Childcare Workforce, CARES aims to reward and support both attained as well as continuing education and professional development among ECE staff by providing periodic financial reward in the form of stipends. The CARES model was an outgrowth of both the movements for “living wage” and economic justice, as well as that for professional development within early care and education. Financial reward of past and continuing professional development—as a mechanism to promote staff retention—was the cornerstone of the model.

Subsequently, a number of counties designed programs based on this model, using wage supplements to well-organized professional development activities that encouraged ECE staff to move up the state’s Child

Development Permit matrix. The ECE community in Alameda County developed a strategy with rigorous continuing education requirements tied to significant wage supplements, while San Francisco’s model provided similar stipend levels with fewer continuing eligibility requirements.

The first bill to support CARES retention incentives was introduced in 1998 by Dion Aroner, a state legislator from the Berkeley-Oakland area. While waiting for State funds, advocates in Alameda County and San Francisco convinced local political leaders to allocate funding for CARES incentives. In San Francisco, the city leaders designated one and a half million dollars from the county’s general fund to establish the first child-care retention-incentive (CRI) initiative in the State. The Alameda County program secured funding soon thereafter, aided by new tobacco tax revenues flowing to California counties under state Proposition 10 that provided over \$700 million annually for early childhood programs beginning in 1999.

Over the next two years, First 5 California (under Proposition 10) had agreed to fund efforts in over 42 California counties to experiment with retention incentives, variably coupled with continuing training requirements. After prolonged campaigning by Assemblywoman Aroner and ECE advocates, Governor Gray Davis eventually signed AB212 effective January 2001 earmarking funds for CRI programs in state-subsidized centers. First 5 California also is supporting evaluations of the original Alameda and San Francisco programs, and the new CRI initiatives underway throughout California.

^{*} Burton, Alice; Jessica Mihaly; Jennifer Kagiwada; and Marcy Whitebook. The CARES Initiative in California: Pursuing Public Policy to Build a Skilled and Stable Child Care Workforce, 1997-2000. Center for the Child Care Workforce, 2000.

under the same conditions. In these ways, changes in the economy may have a significant bearing on parents’ decisions about care and early education for their children, and on ECE staff’s job-related decisions.

Year 1: Successes and Challenges

Both San Francisco and Alameda counties generated some noteworthy accomplishments in their initial

program years. The successes were largely attributed to bringing people together to establish a structure to address issues facing the local ECE field. In the preliminary planning and organizing stages, advocates, planners, and policymakers came together to develop common goals for the field. Through these discussions, they drafted a local agenda for improving ECE staff retention by gathering input from a variety of stakeholders. Due in large

part to these initiatives, issues relevant to ECE professionals attained heightened visibility, particularly within the local policy arena. In San Francisco, the focus was on retention and compensation; Alameda County’s emphasis included a strong professional development component, which involved utilizing, and building on, extant elements within the region’s system of professional development for early childhood educators.

Unfortunately, in both counties the funds available for the program in Year 1 were not sufficient to address the local needs within the field. San Francisco and Alameda ECE staff developed divergent responses to this funding problem. Whereas in San Francisco, CARES program staff decided to prioritize recipients, rather than fund all eligible applicants, Alameda's CRI program staff opted to award stipends to everyone who met the eligibility requirements, albeit at a reduced rate. In Year 1, Alameda awarded stipends to 2,399 individuals, totaling \$4,093,917. In San Francisco CARES' first year, the program distributed stipends totaling \$822,500 to 436 ECE professionals.

These different tactics yielded a number of reactions. While in San Francisco many eligible applicants who did not receive stipends were disappointed, the overwhelming response from the ECE field to the CRI concept provided clear testimony of the need for such a program, as well as served as the impetus for program planners and administrators to advocate for increased funds.²⁰

Year 2 Program Planning and Structure

In Year 2, the basic structure and functioning of the programs remained fairly similar to that in the first year. Potential recipients submitted applications, which were reviewed and evaluated either by staff or consultants, who determined eligibility. Subsequently, stipends were awarded and distributed. Meanwhile, returning recipients (those who had received

stipends the first year) were enrolling in classes and attending meetings organized by program staff, to comply with continuing eligibility requirements. The process of program operation involved a great deal of planning in both counties. Throughout the year, staff members continued to secure funding, gather community input, and refine goals, policies, and procedures. Below are some of the more salient structural aspects of the program that staff continued to address in Year 2.

In both San Francisco and Alameda, state monies allocated in Year 2 enabled the programs to expand their stipend programs. The effect of the extra monies was particularly pronounced in San Francisco, where they were able to double the number and amount of stipends awarded to eligible applicants. In Year 2, over \$1.9 million was disbursed to 1,116 ECE professionals. In the second year Alameda awarded fewer stipends overall (in contrast to the reduced amounts provided in Year 1); full stipend awards totaling \$4.2 million were granted to 1,949 applicants.²¹ Tables 1a and 1b provide some demographic and employment details of stipend recipients in each county in Year 2 of their programs.

Advocacy and Professional Development

Along with the objectives of retaining and training ECE staff, program planners and staff believed it was important to build an advocacy agenda into their programs. Thus, although the stipends were aimed at providing financial incentives to ECE staff, other activities sought to address larger issues facing the field, as well as foster

advocacy and leadership skills among recipients and others in the local ECE arena. In Year 2, both programs continued to promote advocacy for issues related to ECE. In particular, they organized an activity—offered in both counties as part of the continuing eligibility requirements—devoted to the issue, where representatives from local advocacy organizations conducted presentations for recipients and urged attendees to contact state and local officials to voice their concerns regarding issues such as program funding and monies for ECE. In the words of an Alameda staff member, such an event was designed to “encourage people to take stances on legislation” affecting the field.

In both counties, program staff members also were involved with local organizations and coalitions committed to raising awareness and achieving change around issues related to ECE professionals, such as family child-care associations, parent groups, and non-profit organizations. Their involvement with these groups helped them stay abreast of relevant issues and legislation, as well as, in the words of one SF CARES staff member, “play into [staff members’] advocacy efforts.” In San Francisco, through these organizational connections, stipend recipients received mailings and post-cards about upcoming initiatives, meetings, and rallies, which fostered their awareness of, and often promoted their participation in, advocacy activities.

Another important component that facilitated the expansion of such leadership skills among stipend recipients was the emphasis in both programs on professional development

TABLE 1a. Alameda County CRI (Child Development Corps) Recipients in Year 2: Demographic, Employment & Stipend Information by Care Type (Center-Based & Family Child Care) *, **

	Center-Based (n=1,755)	FCC (n=124)	Total (n=1,882)***
Education			
Up to High School/GED	3%	0%	3%
Some College	31%	36%	31%
AA (2 year College)	22%	26%	22%
BA/BS (4 year College)	18%	19%	18%
BA +Some Graduate School	24%	16%	23%
Race/Ethnicity			
African American/Black	27%	39%	28%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	0%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	17%	7%	16%
Latino	16%	14%	16%
White	32%	30%	32%
Multi-Ethnic	5%	10%	5%
Other	2%	0%	2%
Number of years in job			
0 - 2 years	31%	23%	30%
3 - 8 years	36%	43%	36%
9 - 15 years	18%	18%	19%
16+ years	14%	13%	14%
Number of years in field			
0 - 2 years	9%	5%	9%
3 - 8 years	26%	26%	26%
9 - 15 years	23%	25%	23%
16+ years	36%	35%	36%
Annual Salary			
Below \$10,000	2%	8%	2%
\$10,000 - 20,000	30%	29%	29%
\$20,001 - \$30,000	39%	23%	37%
\$30,001 - \$40,000	17%	11%	16%
\$40,001 - \$50,000	7%	9%	7%
\$50,001 +	4%	4%	4%
Percent Speaking a Language other than English at work	31%	6%	30%
Stipend Awards			
Total number of stipends awarded	1,755	124	1,882
Total stipend amount distributed	\$3,835,875.00	\$243,575.00	\$4,087,850.00
Average amount distributed	\$2,185.68	\$1,964.31	\$2,172.08

* For comparisons with county workforce demographic data, see Year 1 Progress Report of the evaluation of CRI programs <http://pace.berkeley.edu/Pol.Br.03-2_Press.pdf>

** Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding and the presence of missing data in some columns.

*** Includes 3 participants of unknown care type; data from Matching Funds Evaluation County Administrative Data—represents data from all stipend recipients who consented to release their data for research, this number is fewer than all individuals who received a stipend in Year 2.

and the fostering of a sense of professional identity, pride, and commitment. Workshops and activities helped participants gain important knowledge related to the local ECE system, such as applying for a Child Development Permit and accessing professional development resources. Group activities in both counties served to unify participants, giving them a collective voice. Many recipients agreed that their participation in the program made them, and others, feel part of a professional community, as well as assisted in the development of interpersonal relationships among ECE staff.

San Francisco Teacher:

"I feel politically that there are people out there really advocating for us."

The promotion of an explicit advocacy agenda was more prominent in San Francisco, where individuals representing many groups, from planners to stipend recipients, emphasized the ability of the program to encourage advocacy skills among those working in the ECE field—on the “ground level,” among providers, teachers, and directors—as well as to develop an awareness of relevant issues, such as quality of care and staff wages, within the larger policy-making arena, among people at the helm. Statements made by recipients testified to the actualization of some of these broad-level advocacy goals. For example, one ECE staff member stated that she thought SF CARES had enabled the field “to come together, and advocate for one cause,” while another said that she felt political causes surrounding the ECE profession had received publicity due to increased awareness in the media about the program, praising the fact that many

TABLE 1b. San Francisco County CRI (SF CARES) Recipients in Year 2: Demographic, Employment, & Stipend Information * , **

Total (n=1,116)	
Education	
Up to High School/GED	6%
Some College	25%
AA (2 year College)	13%
BA/BS (4 year College)	15%
BA + Some Graduate School	11%
Race/Ethnicity	
African American/Black	15%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	41%
Latino (collapse)	13%
White	13%
Multi-Ethnic	2%
Other	1%
Number of years in field***	
1 - 2 years	3%
3 - 8 years	41%
9 - 15 years	25%
16+ years	30%
Annual Salary	
Below \$10,000	3%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	30%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	38%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	21%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	5%
\$50,000 +	3%
Percent speaking a language other than English at work †	74%
Stipend Awards	
Total number of stipends awarded	1,116
Total stipend amount distributed	\$1,901,625
Average amount distributed	\$1,703.96

* Data compiled from Administrative Data maintained by SF CARES. Break-down by type of care not available for San Francisco. Of the total 1,116 stipend recipients, 996 were center-based staff and 120 were family child-care providers.

** Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding and the presence of missing data in some columns.

*** Data on number of years in the job not available for San Francisco.

† This percentage may be over-represented since applicants were allowed to check more than one language on the form.

people “were really getting out there” to advocate for ECE issues in a public way.

Goals of the Programs

In the evaluation of the first year of the CRI programs, focus group participants in both counties identified a number of problems in the ECE field that they hoped the programs would address. Among these were high staff turnover rates, difficulty recruiting quality staff, and low salaries.²² They also pointed to the high cost of living in the Bay Area as compounding difficulties in retaining ECE staff.

In Year 2, evaluation participants continued to cite retention as an important program goal—and reported turnover as a persistent staffing problem—despite economic changes that might have alleviated these issues to some extent. One director in particular described the situation at his center as a “revolving door,” with staff leaving because of low pay, while another expressed frustration that her site was often a “training ground” for the school districts and programs that paid more than private centers.

San Francisco Director:

“The time [for SF CARES] had come, and it has always been a need.”

Although stated program goals in both counties focused on the issues of retention and quality, there were differences in emphasis between the two programs. While SF CARES stressed the promotion of retention, compensation, and the “stimulat[ion] [of] public awareness of the importance of quality early childhood education programs,” the Alameda Child Development Corps’ program included the strengthening of

a support system for ECE staff and the provision of incentives for them to continue their education and grow professionally. A member of the Alameda program staff articulated the original role of the program: “to get people invested in professional development and then to raise the awareness that they need better compensation and to provide incentives towards those two things.”

Funders of San Francisco’s CARES viewed the issue of retention as integrally linked to improving the quality of care, through recognizing and bettering the workforce, their bottom line involved retention of ECE staff. As one funder articulated: “If we are causing people to go back to school, to get their credential, to get better education, and they become kindergarten teachers, then I wouldn’t call the initiative a complete success.” While such a fear—of ECE staff leaving in great numbers for the school districts—has not been documented empirically in the research, the statement reflects a genuine concern of program planners and funders. Program administrators and funders also perceived CRI programs in a much larger context, as part of a larger system of strategies to improve various issues in ECE across the state.

In addition to retention and quality, stipend recipients discussed program goals relating to advocacy, professional recognition, and the building of professional networks.

ECE Community Input (Advisory Groups)

Both programs continued to make great efforts to elicit input from as many sectors of their local ECE

community as possible. In both counties, advisory committees were instituted to be, in the words of one SF CARES staff member, “representative of the field as a whole.” Staff in San Francisco and Alameda planned the groups so that they included individuals from a variety of constituencies within the ECE field, among them family child-care providers, community college personnel, center directors, and ECE teachers. In this way, the groups provided a vehicle for “stay[ing] in touch with recipients.” In both counties these committees advised program staff on policy issues and offered recommendations for improvements and changes to both program staff and county First 5 Commissions.

Quote: “[The advisory committee offers] a way to stay in touch with recipients.”

Other links to the ECE community were offered via each program’s support structure. In Alameda, insight into the viewpoints of recipients was provided by contracts with local Resource & Referral Agencies and the community college system, where staff people were responsible for supporting, assisting, and advising recipients during the application process and throughout their participation in the program. Program staff’s interaction and communication with the R&Rs and colleges allowed for heightened collaboration between implementers of the program and the local training system, so as to better meet the needs of stipend recipients. This system also provided a way to gain insight into barriers to professional education within the system and enabled a process for advocacy to address these barriers.

The Corps Enrollment Specialists who were trained to help applicants enroll in the Corps also played an important role as “key informants” on responses to the administrative and programmatic features. Their input helped make changes to the program.

In San Francisco, similar feedback was provided by Corps Consultants, who, through their role in conducting outreach and as purveyors of technical assistance to program applicants, were privy to a wealth of perspectives and opinions related to various program elements, most notably the application process. Consultants commented that SF CARES staff sometimes explicitly sought their reactions, as evidenced when they asked them to pilot the application to assess its “user-friendliness.”

Stipend Eligibility

In Year 2, eligibility requirements underwent only a few, minor changes, and remained similar to those utilized in each locale the first year. In both San Francisco and Alameda, stipend levels continued to be determined in accordance with the Child Development Permit Matrix, the state’s early care and education permit required for employment at some publicly-funded centers. In both counties, place and duration of employment was demonstrated through the submission of an employment verification form, completed by the applicant’s supervisor. Stipend levels were determined based on ECE and General Education units, which were verified through the evaluation of official transcripts from educational institutions. One change instituted in San Francisco involved lowering the amount of units required for family

child-care providers to be eligible for the program. The primary rationale for adjusting the units was to allow more members of this group to be eligible for stipends. In Year 1, many family child-care providers did not possess the minimum 6 units because of differences in licensing requirements and were thus ineligible for stipends; the change in Year 2 resulted in an increase in applications from this group.

Although levels were tied to the Child Development Permit Matrix, there were some significant differences between counties regarding program eligibility. In San Francisco individuals had to be employed at the same center for at least 1 year; in Alameda this time period was 9 months.²³ Whereas San Francisco would grant stipends only to ECE educators working in licensed centers or homes, those employed in license-exempt facilities in Alameda were eligible for the Corps program. The licensing issue was particularly problematic in San Francisco, where ECE staff-people working in after-school programs (many of which are license-exempt facilities) were automatically ineligible for the program. Although program administrators and staff were aware of concerns around the exclusion of this population, they firmly believed that licensing was an important indicator of program quality and were not willing to change this requirement.

Other major differences between counties involved the amount of ECE credits required to qualify for different stipend levels. In Year 2, San Francisco created new stipend levels so as to “more fairly match what people are doing” in their jobs, as well as to provide more incentives for ECE professionals

to advance on the Matrix. For example, whereas in Year 1, an individual with 24 ECE units was eligible for the same stipend as a person 16 General Education (GE) Units, under the revised structure in Year 2, having both GE and ECE units qualified recipients for a higher stipend.

Although the initial stipend amount offered was the same in both programs (\$500), the maximum amount granted was higher in Alameda county, at \$5,100 for a program director, compared to the \$4,500 awarded in San Francisco. Furthermore, while both counties recognized individuals who possessed graduate degrees, or who spoke languages other than English with children at work, the amounts offered for these additional stipends in each county differed: \$350 was awarded in Alameda and \$500 in San Francisco. To qualify for the language stipend in Alameda, staff had to be bilingual in English and another language; in San Francisco they had to speak a language other than English (not necessarily English as well).

Continued Eligibility

A primary area where the two programs diverged was the requirements for maintaining eligibility in the program. While both counties asked that recipients continue their education through completing coursework or professional growth hours, Alameda also required participants to apply for a Child Development Permit and conduct an assessment of their classrooms. Corps members were also required to receive training, offered free of charge by the Corps, on implementing the assessment tool (ECERS,

ITERS, or FDCERS) and analyzing assessment results. Although Level 1 recipients in San Francisco were required to take an ECE or GE class, at Level 2 both programs allowed for considerable flexibility in fulfilling units and hours, including enrolling in classes at local colleges, attending trainings at community organizations, or participating in activities organized by the CRI program. In Year 2, Alameda added a six credit entry level to their stipend matrix.

Year 2 Program Implementation

Detailed below are perspectives and experiences of a variety of constituencies and stakeholders on salient aspects of structure and implementation of the two CRI programs in their second year.

Home Agency

The programs in San Francisco and Alameda present different administrative scenarios. In San Francisco the administering agency of the ECE staff retention-incentive program was a private non-profit, community-based organization that operated ECE centers. In contrast, Alameda’s program was run by Every Child Counts (First 5 Alameda County), an agency that manages all Proposition 10 funding and programs for the county. One of the challenges faced in San Francisco—in Year 2 as in Year 1—involved avoiding claims of favoritism, as the home agency employed potential stipend recipients. When discussing their relationship with the home agency, Wu Yee Children’s Services, program staff stated that, although

they “function as a part of the agency... there was a real effort for [SF CARES] ... to be seen as a program for the entire county and not just Chinatown,” the community where Wu Yee is located and with which it is identified. Moreover, to further convey a sense of non-partisanship, the program devised a conflict-of-interest agreement, which mandated that any applications or appeals associated with the home agency were subject to an external reviewer. Staff believed that this autonomy was particularly important, and made them “a better program,” imparting them with credibility.

In Alameda, program planners and staff thought that the positioning of the Child Development Corps within Every Child Counts enhanced the strength and quality of the program and provided it with resources that would be more difficult to access if the Corps were a stand-alone program. Furthermore, as the Corps was one component of a larger plan for coordinating Proposition 10 funding in the county, it was part of an integrated system offering a range of educational and health services aimed—directly and indirectly—at young children and their families.

Staffing

In both counties, program staff enumerated a number of skills they considered essential for implementing the program. First, across programs, staff members stressed the importance of personnel possessing strong interpersonal and communication skills, as well as the ability to network with others and facilitate groups. Further, they thought it was useful for staff members

to have a background in child development, and be familiar with the local ECE community and delivery system.

In addition, program staff thought that potential employees should have an understanding of the profession and relevant issues. In their words, it was helpful for people to have “been in the trenches for a little while,” to possess work experience as practitioners in the ECE field. SF CARES staff also expressed their hope that individuals would possess a commitment to the goals and purpose of the program; as one staff member expressed, it is important for prospective employees to be “passionate about our issues.”

In the eyes of program staff in San Francisco, it was extremely important that they be viewed as a “user-friendly” program, as a helpful and useful resource for applicants and recipients. Repeatedly, staff mentioned that they strived to approach their work with a “customer-service attitude,” and that such a tactic was essential if they were really to be seen as “serving the public.” In the words of one staff member: “If the program is not ... being user-friendly, then people aren’t going to come. I think it’s really important ...[to be] ... very patient, [and have] that customer-service attitude.”

Due to increased funding in Year 2, SF CARES was more fully staffed than in the first year, and thus more adequately equipped to administer the program. During the second year, the program had a total of seven full-time staff members contributing to the range of tasks and responsibilities posed by such a program. There were also a number of languages represented among the

staff, including Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Alameda’s program employed two full-time staff members and one part-time. In addition, Alameda County had 27 “consultants”, called Corps Enrollment Specialists, who worked part time for two months, helping applicants enroll. They provided an initial review of applications and documentation. All final review and approval of applications and data entry was completed in-house by staff with minimal, part time temporary assistance. San Francisco conducted the application review primarily in-house.

Both counties contracted with consultants (also called Corps Enrollment Specialists in Alameda), who were paid a stipend to conduct outreach for the program and provide technical assistance to applicants during the application process. Informal (friends and colleagues of applicants and consultants) and formal volunteers also assisted in the initial application stages of the programs and performed such duties as outreach and advocacy. In Alameda, the Corps contracted with each of three area Resource & Referral Agencies, which provided Career Advocates to advise Corps members regarding professional development opportunities and training. At the Community College level, Professional Development Advisors provided a similar service, offering assistance to participants in accessing and navigating the college system.

Outreach

Outreach was a very important program component in Alameda and San Francisco counties. In Year 2, both

Outreach Strategies

- Use a variety of print and visual media to create awareness and disseminate information about the program; utilize local organizations and existing networks to conduct outreach, by making presentations at meetings, for example
- Identify underserved and isolated constituencies within the local ECE arena and devise specific strategies for addressing the needs of these populations and reaching them
- Provide applications and materials in languages spoken by members of the local ECE community
- Hire consultants to offer individualized technical assistance to applicants, keeping in mind that they should represent the diversity of the local ECE community (languages spoken, types of centers and care arrangements); provide consultants' phone numbers to applicants
- Offer workshops and open houses to assist potential applicants with the application; ensure that these workshops are accessible to a variety of constituencies by hosting them in convenient locations and at multiple neighborhood venues. If possible, provide refreshments, child care, and translators
- Collaborate with local training and educational agencies to provide on-going outreach and technical assistance to applicants and recipients

programs greatly expanded their outreach efforts, and program staff utilized a number of strategies to inform the local ECE community about the programs, including mailings, flyers, brochures, and formal presentations. In addition, across counties many recipients recounted how they learned about the program through less formalized means, such as at community college classes, or via word of mouth from peers and colleagues.

In both counties, certain elements of the advisory and support structure greatly facilitated the expansion of dissemination efforts. In Alameda, many thought that the placement of Career Advocates at Resource & Referral agencies, and the Professional Development Coordinators at community colleges, had

contributed to the enhancement of outreach to a variety of populations. San Francisco's decision to have individuals active in the field serve as consultants for the dissemination of information about the program among the ranks of ECE staff was commended by several focus group participants. SF CARES recipients in particular repeatedly mentioned the role that existing networks played in raising awareness and knowledge about SF CARES in a variety of communities, particularly among family child-care providers.

However, while many lauded the variety of strategies utilized to get the word out in both counties, focus group participants acknowledged that there were still communities that were not reached. In particular, some in Alameda identified

a need to conduct more outreach among non-English-speaking populations. Community stakeholders emphasized the importance of translating more materials into languages other than English and simplifying requirements so as to make them easier to understand. In San Francisco, despite "a conscious effort" to target ECE centers and communities in which information was not being disseminated, there were still instances of ECE staff being unaware of the program. Particularly problematic was the situation at some centers in which directors were unfamiliar with SF CARES and thus did not make information available to teachers at the site, or, in some cases, provided misinformation regarding eligibility requirements. In order to avoid these scenarios, where center-based teachers are "at the mercy of directors," some focus group participants suggested sending materials directly to individual teachers and targeting centers more directly, by making personal visits and presentations.

Year 2 Challenges and Successes

The implementation of the CRI programs in San Francisco and Alameda involved several successes and challenges in the second year. Program staff improved certain elements of the initiatives based on feedback and experiences from Year 1. These improvements pertained to streamlining the application process, and providing outreach prior to, and support during, the application period. Successes of program implementation related to the continued eligibility requirements, which encouraged

training among ECE staff. However, there were some challenges faced in Year 2 of the programs in both counties, especially with regard to specificities of eligibility requirements and stipend levels. These successes and challenges are detailed below, and may provide direction to others planning similar programs elsewhere.

Application Process

The general consensus in San Francisco and Alameda, among ECE staff, was that the Year 2 application was much easier to understand and complete than that in the first year. Many returning recipients attributed this to the fact that they had their documents in place from Year 1. The majority of recipients described the process as “simple,” “clear,” and less “complicated,” and center directors in San Francisco referred to the application as “provider-friendly.” However, one of the more cumbersome areas for new applicants in both counties involved obtaining documentation, such as transcripts and employment verification. Some thought that the signatures required for documentation were time-consuming and placed additional, and undue, demands on applicants.

For those who did have difficulty filling out the application, there were multiple opportunities provided to assist them as they navigated the process. Across counties, focus group participants described the various forms of support available to applicants. In San Francisco, the program offered three application workshops in Year 2, which guided attendees through the application packet. In both counties, consultants and advisors were available to answer

individualized and recipient-specific questions. In San Francisco, consultants’ names and phone numbers were distributed to participants; while in Alameda, applicants were provided Corps Enrollment Specialists’ contact information, and community colleges and Resource & Referral Agencies provided training on how to apply. Furthermore, support was offered in a variety of languages other than English. In San Francisco and Alameda, there were consultants who spoke Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Tagalog; San Francisco also employed consultants who spoke Japanese and Greek. The application in both counties was available in Spanish and Chinese. One ECE staff member summarized the sentiments of many: “There were so many staff workers everywhere for you to ask questions and get your questions answered. It was so convenient.”

Eligibility and Stipend Issues

Experience versus education: In general, recipients in both counties thought that the eligibility requirements were fair and justified. However, a continuing point of contention centered on the importance and value of education versus experience. Focus group participants in both Alameda and San Francisco debated the merits of possessing educational degrees against having experience in the field, and disagreed regarding which contributed more significantly to the quality of care provided. In Alameda some recipients voiced their opinion that experience in the field should “count for something” and thought that recipients should receive credit for work and life experience in addition to awards for formal education. In San Francisco, this issue

was more hotly contested. While some thought it was important to retain educated professionals, such as individuals with Master’s degrees or doctorates, because “they know how to deal with children better than just common sense,” others thought it was unfair that those with more education received larger stipends, because they viewed years working in ECE as an important factor contributing to their work with children. Still others could see “both points of view” and thought it was important to have both education and experience in order to “be really well-rounded.”

Language stipend: Both SF CARES and the Alameda Corps continued to offer additional stipends to ECE staff who could speak a language other than English to communicate with children and their parents at work. While most everyone involved with the initiative in both counties endorsed the rationale behind awarding stipends to individuals who used their language skills in their work with children, there existed differences of opinion regarding the specificities of these awards. For example, in Alameda, there was some confusion around the requirements for receiving the award, while in San Francisco a number of individuals were concerned, and confused, about the program’s definition of “bilingual.”²⁴ Some thought that the rules should be broadened, so as to encompass individuals who could communicate with children, but not with parents; others thought the requirements should be more clearly defined altogether. A few particularly vocal recipients in San Francisco thought that these language stipends were discriminatory and an “unreachable goal” for those who did not know a second language.

TABLE 2a. Training and Professional Development in Alameda County

	Number of courses offered at community colleges* (enrollment)	Number of workshops and trainings offered at community-based organizations (enrollment)
Summer 1999-Spring 2000	217 (6,313)	n/a
Summer 2000-Spring 2001	257 (7,516)	40 (577)
Summer 2001-Spring 2002**	252 (6,370)	62 (1,312)

* Community colleges included in sample are: Ohlone, Chabot, Las Positas, and Merritt

** Missing data from Las Positas

TABLE 2b. Training and Professional Development in San Francisco

	Number of courses offered at City College (enrollment)	Number of courses offered at community-based organizations (enrollment)
Summer 1999-Spring 2000	181 (4,928)	n/a
Summer 2000-Spring 2001	192 (4,485)	19 (466)
Summer 2001-Spring 2002	179 (5,081)	35 (816)

Taxes: One of the few criticisms of the stipends themselves involved the issue of taxes, which were not deducted from the awards. This caused problems for some recipients at tax time, when they needed to pay more taxes than usual. Although programs in both counties had informed recipients of tax implications, some thought that staff should emphasize the tax issue more, to prepare recipients for the payment due in April. Others suggested that taxes be taken out beforehand, sparing recipients the burden of having to take care of it themselves (although legally this was not an option, as recipients were not employees of the CRI programs).

Continuing Eligibility Requirements

Although many recipients described Alameda's requirements for continuing eligibility as "stringent," and compared them to those in other counties where many fewer activities and trainings were required, they praised the stipulations

guiding the stipend awards as "comprehensive." In general, recipients in both counties were satisfied with the requirements and thought that they provided incentive for making progress towards educational goals, or "stick[ing] to" a professional development plan.

More specifically, in Alameda some expressed their approval of the ECERS training and assessment, stating that it was valuable, because: "it makes you look more at your program and what you don't have ... [and] identifies things in the classroom that could be improved." In San Francisco, although professional development forums organized by the program received mixed reviews, many recipients acknowledged that these types of activities "brought teachers together," and thus contributed to networking and advocacy efforts. Overall, recipients agreed that building professional development into the program was a good idea and contributed to their advancement as ECE professionals.

Across counties, among all the recipients, there was the perception that enrollment in childhood development classes at local city and community colleges had increased since the initiation of the program. One focus group participant in San Francisco observed that "classes were never filled before," while another detailed the following scenario: "Some people are competing for classes and can't even get in." In Alameda, one recipient provided an account of a class with 41 enrolled students: "and that never would have been if they had not had the Corps in action."

Alameda stakeholder:

"Staff are taking classes and feeling better about their work."

As illustrated in Table 2a, the number of ECE/child development courses offered in Alameda community colleges decreased from 2001 to 2002,²⁵ but training in community-based organizations (CBOs) increased 55% and enrollment increased twofold.

Table 2b documents that while the number of courses offered at City College in San Francisco decreased from 2001 to 2002, enrollment increased by over 13%, indicating a heightened need for these classes. Furthermore, training opportunities available at CBOs in San Francisco nearly doubled over this time period.

Table 3 details the number of, and percent change in, Child Development Permit applications processed by the Child Development Training Consortium for the two counties and statewide in the year prior to the inception of the CRI programs and in Years 1 and 2 of the programs. The largest change is of course in 2000-2001 of the program in Alameda, the time immediately preceding stipend applications for Year 2 of the Corps program, which required application for a Child Development Permit as one of the criteria for maintaining eligibility. The number of applications processed in Alameda decreased the next fiscal year, possibly because some ECE staff had already obtained their permits the previous year.²⁶ Permit applications in San Francisco continued to increase.

Conclusions: Findings and Implications

This section summarizes the main findings from this qualitative study of the implementation of the SF CARES and Alameda Child Development Corps programs in their second year. It highlights perspectives of participants regarding the role and effects of such CRI programs in the local ECE communities, and implications for promoting retention and professional recognition in the field more generally.

The great demand for stipends in Year 1 of the CRI programs, indicated by the large number of applications in that year, was a driving force behind program planners' efforts to procure additional funding for Year 2. However, in San Francisco, applications initially did not match the level of increased funding in Year 2, causing program staff to undertake expanded outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure comprehensive stipend distribution. Following feedback from Year 1, these efforts were particularly targeted towards family child-care providers, who were underrepresented among stipend recipients in the first year of the program. Program staff in

both counties reported amplifying outreach and information dissemination in the second year of their programs. There was some indication that potential recipients noticed these increased efforts, but they recommended further outreach in particular populations, such as non-English-speaking communities.

Year 2 stipend recipients in both counties were, overall, satisfied with the application and stipend disbursement processes, and with the level of support received from program staff. As in Year 1, there continued to be some contention around eligibility requirements and stipend levels, especially around awards based on (multiple) language skills and graduate education. Yet, recipients were largely positive about the rationale behind rewards for already-attained and continuing education/professional development. They opined that initial requirements for stipend eligibility and rigorous criteria for maintaining eligibility in subsequent years of the CRI programs (particularly in Alameda) encouraged ECE staff to seek further training and advance professionally, thereby boosting both staff morale and the quality of the ECE settings in which

TABLE 3. Child Development Permit Applications Processed* by the Child Development Training Consortium

	FY 1999-'00	FY 2000-'01 (Percent change from previous year)	FY 2001-'02 (Percent change from previous year)
Alameda	295	989 (+235%)	553 (-44%)
San Francisco	132	175 (+33%)	221 (+26%)
Statewide	5,224	6,551 (+25%)	8,251 (+26%)

* Source: California Child Development Training Consortium and PACE Matching Funds Evaluation. Includes all types of permit applications processed, including first-time, renewals, and new-type. Revised version.

they work. Stakeholders in each county's ECE community commented that before the initiation of these programs it was difficult to induce teachers and staff to participate in professional development opportunities. Preliminary quantitative data indicates that ECE staff in these two counties did participate in training in greater numbers over the two years of the CRI programs compared to previous years; however, less is known about the content and quality of those trainings—which are likely to be highly variable—and their actual impact on quality of care.

A salient theme running through the variety of perspectives on, and experiences with, the CRI programs in Year 2 was that ECE professionals are underpaid and undervalued, and that programs such as Alameda Corps or SF CARES operated to rectify this lack of monetary and professional recognition. The support for continued professional development, and the recognition and sense of professional community conferred through participation, together with the extra compensation from the stipend award may have functioned to heighten recipients' satisfaction as professionals.

*Alameda center director:
"this is more than receiving money...all
over the state children are getting
better care because their caregivers
feel better about themselves,
feel respected."*

Nevertheless, focus group feedback in both counties indicated that while CRI programs provided valuable support and acknowledgment to ECE professionals, they could not be depended

upon as the single or lasting solution to the more pervasive problem of low wages in the field. While recipients across counties expressed their appreciation of these programs, few stated that the stipend was *the* factor keeping them in the field. Several recipients indicated that they were deeply committed to remaining in the field of ECE; some expressed that they would never leave. It is difficult, at this time, to determine how much the stipend would affect the career decisions of such dedicated and long-term professionals. Furthermore, in assessing the effect of the stipends on turnover, disentangling the components of the program to identify one factor that may solve the retention problem may not be possible.

Many focus group participants, particularly those involved on the administrative end of the program, indicated that, in order to be successful, retention initiatives need to be implemented within a larger system of support and advocacy for the ECE field. Such a system would include raising public awareness of ECE workforce issues, expanding local opportunities for professional development, and exerting pressure on policymakers for sustained funding to augment ECE staff salaries permanently.

The need for quality ECE and the demand for qualified and well-trained staff remain high. Recent federal changes in welfare legislation mandating longer work hours for welfare recipients and the continued participation of parents generally in the workforce may make the ECE staffing problem more acute in the years to come. Regardless of shifts in the economy that affect employment patterns in various ways, nationwide,

parents and families will persist in their need for a range of ECE arrangements, the provision of which will depend largely on the field's ability to secure, train, and retain qualified staff. Furthermore, as the movement for universal preschool continues to gain support nationally, issues surrounding the retention of qualified staff will persist; planners of such initiatives have acknowledged that compensation and training are crucial elements to ensuring their success.²⁷ While the retention-incentive models depicted here are by no means the *only* ways to address the problems facing the ECE field—such as staff retention and quality of care—they are plausible methods, particularly when leveraged with other types of retention and training programs and initiatives, and implemented within an overall system of professional development, support, and advocacy for ECE staff.

Appendix One: Methodology

Participants

The data for this report were collected via focus groups conducted with various meetings of individuals who were involved in the planning and/or implementation of the CRI program in each county, or who were directly affected by the initiative. Ten focus groups were conducted in each county, and included representatives of a variety of constituencies, including program staff, advisory groups, funding agents, stipend recipients, ECE center directors, and consultants who conducted outreach and/or technical assistant services for the program. Phone interviews were completed with first year recipients who did not re-apply in Year 2. In addition, representatives from city and community colleges and other local organizations and institutions providing early care and education (ECE) training were interviewed via mail and telephone.

Data Analysis Procedures

Focus groups were about 45 minutes to 1½ hours in length and primarily took place at local community centers and organizations. The number of participants in each focus group varied widely, from 3 to 12, with the average being 5 people. Individuals were chosen for inclusion in the focus groups, except for the four recipient groups, on account of their role and involvement in their county's initiative. Stipend recipients participating in the groups were selected randomly from a list of recipients who had provided their consent to participate in the evaluation. Individuals participating in most of the focus groups, except those that took place during the work day were reimbursed \$45 to cover transportation and any child-care costs. All focus group participants signed consent forms that confirmed their acknowledgment of research procedures, such as confidentiality.

Focus group members were interviewed to elicit their perspectives and feedback on a variety of issues and topics related to the implementation of the CRI program. While specific questions were tailored to the distinct role and purview of each audience, general areas covered with the majority of groups were: role, program goals and purposes, reaction to program components, and program effect and impact.

Focus group sessions were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Each transcript was analyzed qualitatively to identify relevant themes and topics using the *NVivo* computer program. Findings were then organized into individual reports, which were used to develop a case study for each county; this cross county report represents a comparison of the county case studies. As much as possible, findings are meant to be descriptive, using ideas and thoughts gleaned directly from participants' own statements, rather than from researchers' interpretations. Furthermore, while assertions made about the program often utilize quotes and thoughts from individuals, and therefore may not reflect generally-held views, they have been made from gathering evidence from a variety of sources, including focus group transcripts, program materials and resources, and meeting notes.

Note: Individual Year 2 county case studies are available at PACE (<http://pace.berkeley.edu>).

Endnotes

¹ *How many children need subsidized care in California?* California Budget Project, June 7, 2000.

² California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (2001). California Child Care Portfolio 2001. Available: <http://www.rrnetwork.org/calchildcare/onramp/article.php?ID=624>

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¹⁰ NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2000). The relation of child care to cognitive and language development. *Child Development*, 71 (4), 960-980.

¹¹ Burchinal, M. R. (1999). Child care experiences and developmental outcomes. *The Annals of the American Academy*, 563, 73-97.

¹² NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2000). Characteristics and quality of child care for toddlers and preschoolers. *Applied Developmental Sciences*, 4, 116-135.

¹³ Cryer, D., Hurwitz, S., & Wolery, M. (2001). Continuity of caregivers for infants and toddlers in center-based child-care: Report on

a survey of center practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15, 497-514.

¹⁴ Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1998). *Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages; The National Child Care Staffing Study*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

¹⁵ Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Gerber, E., Howes, C. (2001)

¹⁶ See Appendix 1 for the study's methodology

¹⁷ California's Pioneering Training and Retention Incentives for Early Childhood Educators: Lessons from San Francisco and Alameda Counties. PACE Policy Brief 02-1. Available: http://pace.berkeley.edu/policy_brief_02-1.pdf

¹⁸ *Study cites divide for rich, poor kids: Big inequities seen in Bay Area*, San Francisco Chronicle, November 28, 2001

¹⁹ California Budget Project (2001). *Making Ends Meet: How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Family in California?* Available: <http://www.cbp.org/2001/r0109mem.htm>

²⁰ See Year 1 Report of the Qualitative Implementation Sub-Study for further details.

²¹ Alameda Corps disbursed roughly the same *total* amount of stipend funds in both Year 1 and Year 2, but awarded fewer individual stipends in Year 2.

²² See Year 1 report.

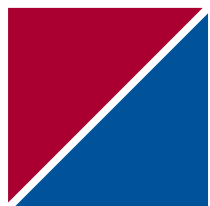
²³ In Year 3, SF CARES changed this requirement to 9 months.

²⁴ While focus group participants referred to the stipends as for "bilingual" individuals, terminology for this particular stipend in SF CARES described them as for individuals who spoke a language other than English in their work with children, which could include monolingual individuals who were non-English speakers. On the other hand, Alameda County's stipend was for bilingual speakers, of English and another language.

²⁵ This could be in part due to data missing from Las Positas in Year 2.

²⁶ PACE's Matching Funds evaluation indicates an overall increase in *new* Permit applications in Alameda.

²⁷ *Universal preschool a daunting task*, Los Angeles Times, September 16, 2002



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